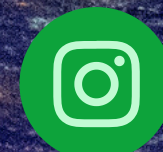


Ch. 5 - FIANNÁ FÁIL IN POWER, 1932-39



Introduction

In this chapter you will learn about:

- The Eucharistic Congress (Case Study)
- Dismantling the Anglo-Irish Treaty
- Fianna Fáil's Policies
- The Blueshirts
- The Economic War

Useful Terms

- **Veterans:** ex-soldiers or ex-IRA; men who had fought in the War of Independence.
- **ACA:** Army Comrades Association – set up to help pro-Treaty veterans looking for work; protected meetings of pro-Treaty supporters; became known as the Blueshirts.
- **Blueshirt:** a member of the ACA. They adopted a blue shirt as their uniform in 1933. The phrase came to be used by opponents to describe anyone who was pro-Treaty.
- **Cattle wars:** the dispute between cattle farmers and the government over the payment of land annuities to the Irish government.
- **Fine Gael:** a new political party formed by a merger of Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Centre Party, the Farmers' Party and the National Guard.
- **Governor General:** the king's representative in Ireland, who signed bills into law.
- **Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs:** a Cabinet-level position created in 1925. The holder was responsible for British relations with the various dominions.
- **Economic war:** Anglo-Irish trade war, when Britain and Ireland placed tariffs on each other's goods. This arose when Ireland withheld the land annuities.
- **Bunreacht na hÉireann:** constitution introduced in 1937 by de Valera. Ireland, now Éire, was a republic in all but name.
- **Protectionism:** putting taxes (duties/tariffs) on imported goods in order to encourage people to buy Irish-made goods.
- **Land annuities:** repayments to Britain of loans given to Irish farmers to buy their land.

Useful Terms

Cultural identity: how someone defines themselves in terms of language, literature, music and often religion.

Censorship: the control of books, films and other materials to protect public morality or promote a form of government.

Conformity: accepting rather than challenging the 'norm' or commonly held viewpoints.

Gaeltacht: Irish-speaking area in Ireland.

Conservatism: commitment to traditional values and ideas with opposition to change or innovation.

Moral: a sense of what is right or wrong.

Non-denominational school: a school that is open to people of all religions, with no particular religious ethos and that does not follow any particular religion.

Eucharist: the ceremony in the Mass where Catholics believe the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Eucharistic Congress: a gathering of Catholics to celebrate the Eucharist, held every 2–4 years.

Vatican: a city state in Rome, Italy. It is the home to the Pope and the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church.

Papal Legate: a representative of the Pope to foreign nations.

Excommunication: official exclusion of someone from the Catholic Church – they cannot participate in the sacraments.

Benediction: Catholic Church service; a benediction is a blessing.

5.1 CASE STUDY THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS,
5.1 CASE STUDY The Eucharistic Congress, 1932

A New Government is Formed

- On **9 March 1932**, the new Dáil assembled to elect a government. With the support of the **Labour Party**, **Fianna Fáil** formed the government, and **Éamon de Valera** was elected **President of the Executive Council**. Fearing that members of the **Cumann na nGaedheal Government** would be reluctant to hand over power to those they had defeated in the **Civil War**, some Fianna Fáil TDs carried guns in their pockets. However, **W.T. Cosgrave** was determined to uphold the **democratic will of the people**, and he arranged a peaceful transfer of power. He advised the **army, the Garda Síochána** and the **civil service** to co-operate with the new government. Despite the desires of many of his followers, de Valera did not dismiss soldiers or civil servants who had opposed him during the Civil War and subsequently.
- Within a few months of its formation, the Fianna Fáil Government was given an opportunity to enhance its reputation, when the **Eucharistic Congress** took place in **Dublin in June 1932**.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland

- To understand the significance of the **Eucharistic Congress**, it is necessary to examine the role of the **Roman Catholic Church** in early-twentieth-century Ireland. Before the granting of **independence in 1922**, the Catholic Church had become quite powerful under the British administration. As the power of landlords declined, the local priests became more powerful throughout the country. At a time when only one person in every ten went beyond **primary school**, people often depended on priests for guidance to a far greater degree than in modern times. Unlike in most countries in Europe, where the Catholic bishops had been associated with the rich and powerful, in Ireland they had been far closer to the ordinary people. The leaders of the Church had usually been sympathetic to **nationalist movements**, as long as they did not involve violence.
- Through the extensive involvement of **Catholic priests and religious orders** in **healthcare and education** from the 1850s onwards, the Church catered for people who were not provided for by the state. The Church's control over education, in particular, gave it a powerful influence in turning the minds of future generations in its favour. With the widespread decline of the **Irish language**, many people valued their Catholic religion as one of the main signs of their **Irish identity**. In this way, being **Catholic** and being **Irish** were often closely connected, and this linkage was encouraged by the Catholic bishops. With the rising number of priests, brothers and nuns, and the high numbers of Catholics attending church regularly, the Irish bishops frequently declared that Ireland was one of the **most Catholic countries in the world**.

The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland

- Between 1916 and 1922 the Catholic bishops had to balance condemnation of **IRA violence** with denunciations of **British atrocities**. However, after the signing of the **Anglo- Irish Treaty (1921)**, they spoke out decisively in favour of the **Free State**. During the **Civil War** they condemned those fighting on the republican side and excommunicated them (excluded them from membership of the Church). Once peace was restored in 1923, the bishops confidently expected to be highly influential in the new state, with its predominantly **Catholic population**. In **Northern Ireland**, the Catholic Church faced problems of a different kind: being a minority church in a largely **Protestant state**.

The Role of the Catholic Church in the Irish Free State

- During the 1920s in the Irish Free State the **power of the Catholic Church was strong**, but on occasion other influences prevailed. For example, the **Free State Government ignored the objections** of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Edward Byrne, when ordering the **execution of republican prisoners** in December 1922. W.T. Cosgrave showed his concern for the views of the Protestant minority when he **nominated a large number of Protestants** to the first Senate of the Irish Free State.
- However, many citizens of the Free State in the 1920s regarded the granting of independence as a triumph for the **long-suffering Catholic Irish against an officially Protestant British state**. This narrow view of the independence struggle, which downplayed the involvement of Protestant nationalists, was frequently propagated in **Catholic schools**. Hence, it is not surprising to find that elaborate commemorations were organised in 1929 to celebrate the **centenary of Catholic Emancipation**. The identification of **Catholic with Irish identity**, which had developed strongly from Daniel O'Connell's time onwards, was now widely accepted as the natural order of life. In the same year, the Pope finally agreed to send a **nuncio** (papal diplomatic representative) to Dublin and to receive an **Irish ambassador at the Vatican**.

The Role of the Catholic Church in the Irish Free State

- While strongly supportive of the Catholic Church on most matters, the **government of W.T. Cosgrave** had taken an independent line on occasion. Nevertheless, most **bishops strongly supported the Cumann na nGaedheal Government**. The arrival of **de Valera to power in 1932** along with many followers who had been condemned by the Catholic Church during the Civil War caused apprehension among certain Catholic bishops and priests. They need not have worried, however, as **de Valera and the Fianna Fáil Government were strongly influenced by the teachings of the Catholic Church and the views of the bishops**. One of de Valera's ways of seeking acceptance as a suitable government leader was to secure the approval of the Catholic Church. It was his good fortune that a major Catholic event took place three months after his election as President of the Executive Council. This was the **Eucharistic Congress of 1932**, and it gave him an ideal opportunity to prove to Ireland and the outside world that he was worthy to rule the largely Catholic Irish Free State.

The Eucharistic Congress

- The Eucharistic Congress was a **religious festival** that took place in different countries throughout the world every few years. It celebrated the Catholic belief in the **real presence of Christ in the Eucharist** and consisted of Masses, processions, conferences and receptions. **Pope Pius XI** (1922-39) decided that it should take place in **Dublin in 1932** because it was 1,500 years since the arrival of **St Patrick** in Ireland in AD 432.
- The Congress began with the arrival at **Dún Laoghaire Harbour, Co. Dublin**, of the Pope's representative, or legate, **Cardinal Lauri** (Document 1).

DOCUMENT 1: THE ARRIVAL OF THE PAPAL LEGATE AND HIS ENTRY INTO DUBLIN

The coming of the Papal Mission was eagerly awaited at Dún Laoghaire. Elaborate preparations had been made by the local authorities, by the State, and by the Congress officials, to give the Legate a reception worthy of the Holy Father's representative and worthy of the great occasion. The people, on their part, joined enthusiastically in the work of preparing a royal reception. The whole town of Dún Laoghaire was decorated with festoons and garlands and flags. The Papal colours were everywhere in evidence. A battery of guns had been mounted at the East Pier to fire a royal salute in honour of the Legate's arrival ... By two o'clock more than 50,000 people had gathered round Dún Laoghaire Harbour to greet the Legate's arrival. The weather was perfect. The order of the multitude was excellent. The gorgeous sunshine, the vividly bright flags and festoons gently moving in the breeze, the sea of eagerly watching faces - everything combined to make a beautiful and memorable scene... At 2.55 p.m. the booming of a gun announced that the Cambria was in sight. A squadron of aeroplanes flying in perfect cross formation had gone out to meet the Cambria and escort it into harbour. As the steamer and the aeroplanes approached the harbour a royal salute was fired from the battery on the East Pier, and a thunderous cheer of welcome was raised by the assembled multitude. Dún Laoghaire had often received royalties, but never had it given such a royal reception as the representative of the Holy Father received on 20 June... As the steamer came to its moorings at the Pier everyone was deeply moved, and the Cardinal Legate must have felt that no representative of Christ's Vicar had ever received a more genuine, gladdening and splendid welcome than this typically Irish welcome of Dún Laoghaire ... As soon as the Cambria was moored, His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin went on board. He was followed by Mr De Valera, President of the Free State Executive Council and members of his cabinet ...

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress, Dublin 1932 - Pictorial Record (Dublin, 1932)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

QUESTIONS

1. Where did the papal legate land in Ireland?
2. Describe how the people had decorated the town.
3. What was the purpose of the aeroplanes in the welcome given to the papal legate?
4. What evidence is there that the author of this document strongly supported the events that were described?



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The journey between Dún Laoghaire and the Catholic Pro-Cathedral in the centre of Dublin was described as follows by a visiting journalist from the French newspaper **Revue des Deux Mondes** (Document 2).

DOCUMENT 2: THE JOURNEY OF THE PAPAL LEGATE INTO DUBLIN CITY CENTRE

From Dún Laoghaire Harbour to the Pro-Cathedral, a distance of ten kilometres, there was an unbroken mass of people, compact, deep, on both sides of the route. In the city the pavements and the squares were completely covered by the multitude. Nor are to be forgotten the bouquets of heads in all the windows, and the daring spectators seated on the roofs of the houses. Without exaggeration, five hundred thousand persons! And what joy was in these people! Yes, joy was the dominant note. Oh without any doubt, there was an ardent enthusiasm which found expression in acclamation as the procession approached, a profound veneration, expressed in bowed heads and bended knees at the blessing of the Papal Legate... One felt, there was here the happiness of a large family welcoming their father.

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin, 1932)

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the crowds that watched the journey of the papal legate from Dún Laoghaire to Dublin city centre.
2. How did they respond to the blessing of the legate?
3. Would you agree that the enthusiastic tone adopted by the author of Document 1 is also evident in this document? Support your answer by reference to both documents.

Having disembarked at Dún Laoghaire, Cardinal Lauri, accompanied by **de Valera** and **Archbishop Byrne of Dublin**, was driven through the streets on the way to the centre of Dublin. After being formally welcomed to the city by the Lord Mayor, Alderman **Alfred Byrne**, Cardinal Lauri replied in English (Document 3).

DOCUMENT 3: CARDINAL LAURI'S RESPONSE TO THE LORD MAYOR'S ADDRESS OF WELCOME

I feel honoured to be the Pontifical Legate of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI, and to preside as his Ambassador at the Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress now about to meet in this historic city of Dublin, the centre, heart, and capital of Ireland so justly renowned in all the world for the strong practical faith and the special attachment to the Holy See which have ever been characteristic of her noble people. I confide the success of the Congress to Divine Providence, and to the intercession of your great Apostle, St Patrick, who fifteen centuries ago planted the Catholic faith. so deeply in Irish hearts ... In accordance with your desire I shall at once very willingly communicate with the Holy Father, and inform His Holiness of your sincere cordiality and exquisite kindness, and of the very warm welcome which the great and good Irish people has given to the Representatives of the Pope.

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin, 1932)

QUESTIONS

1. Why, according to Cardinal Lauri, was Ireland 'so justly renowned in all the world'?
2. Explain the message that Cardinal Lauri promised to take to the Pope.

Many contemporary observers were impressed by the **decorations in the poorest areas of Dublin**. Most of the poor were very sincere Catholics. In addition, the Congress was a welcome period of colour and excitement in the difficult struggle of their everyday lives. Documents 4 and 5 contain **tributes to their efforts**.

DOCUMENT 4: DECORATIONS IN POORER AREAS

The Decorations Committee had spared no pains to make the great roads about Dublin and the chief streets of the city fit for the occasion... But quite outside the sphere of the influence of the Congress Committees and the Corporation a scheme of city decoration on a vast scale had been carried out unofficially by the very poorest of Dublin's folk. Away from the great centres and arteries of traffic and business, down in the back streets and the alleys and slums the faith of the poorest of Dublin's people had, of itself, and without any expert guidance, produced schemes of decoration huge in extent, brilliant in colouring, and often most touching in effect ... The poorest streets were the richest in colour. Shrines and altars had been set up in dingy nooks and alley-ways by loving hands, and the sordidness of grim poverty was hidden away behind the brightness of well chosen colour schemes. To purchase materials for their Congress decorations the poor working people had deprived themselves, in many instances for months, of certain kinds of food, or certain pleasures, or little recreations. There probably was not one scrap of bunting or one solitary flag in the slums and backstreets, the procuring of which had not meant some serious self-denial for some poor worker. But the joy of helping to make Dublin fit for the coming of Our Lord was, for the poor people, a complete recompense for every self-denial and sacrifice.

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin, 1932)

QUESTIONS

1. What evidence is there of the deep faith of the poorest of Dublin's people?
2. What sacrifices had the poor made, according to the author, in order to buy decorations?
3. List at least one advantage and one disadvantage of this document as a primary source.

DOCUMENT 5: CHESTERTON'S IMPRESSION OF THE DUBLIN POOR

Men who could not paint had painted pictures on their walls; and somehow painted them well. Men who could hardly write had written up inscriptions; and somehow they were dogmas as well as jokes. Somebody wrote, 'Long live St Patrick', as hoping that he might recover from his recent indisposition. Somebody wrote, 'God Bless Christ the King', and I knew I was staring at one of the staggering paradoxes of Christianity. I went through all this glow and glory of poverty quite bewildered... One nameless impecunious person, in a slum, heard that the Legate was coming and laid down a red carpet on his doorstep.

G.K. Chesterton, Christendom in Dublin (Dublin, Sheed & Ward, 1932)

QUESTIONS

1. Explain the praise of the poor contained in the opening sentence of this document.
2. Why did 'one nameless impecunious person' lay down a red carpet outside his front door?
3. From reading this document, do you consider that the overall impression made on the author by the Dublin poor was positive or negative? Explain your answer.

In his official address to Cardinal Lauri, **de Valera stressed the close connection between Ireland and the popes of Rome** through the centuries (Document 6).

DOCUMENT 6: DE VALERA'S OFFICIAL ADDRESS OF WELCOME

The records of centuries past bear eloquent testimony to that loving zeal with which the Apostolic See has ever honoured our nation. That special affection was ever the more amply given, in proportion to the sufferings of Ireland. Repeatedly over more than 300 years, our people, ever firm in their allegiance to our ancestral faith, and unwavering even to death in their devotion to the See of Peter, endured in full measure unmerited trials by war, by devastation, and by confiscation. They saw their most sacred rights set at naught under an unjust domination. But repeatedly also did the Successors of Peter most willingly come to our aid, in the persons of Gregory XIII, Clement VIII, Paul V, Urban VIII, Innocent X and many others of the line of Roman Pontiffs down to the present day. Today with no less favour and goodwill, His Holiness Pope Pius XI has turned his august regard to our country, our Metropolitan City, in this present year, a year of deep significance for our people ... There is also for us a further cause of public rejoicing. At this time, when we welcome to Ireland this latest legation from the Eternal City, we are commemorating the Apostolic Mission to Ireland, given fifteen centuries ago to St Patrick, Apostle of our Nation. Who can fail on this day to recall to mind the utterance of our Apostle, recorded in the Book of Armagh. 'Even as you are children of Christ, be you also children of Rome.'

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin, 1932)

In this address de Valera clearly identified the **Irish nation with the Catholic people**, whose ancestors had suffered persecution for their loyalty to their faith. Indeed, one of the main themes of the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin was to emphasise the contrast between the **freedom of Catholics in independent Ireland and the sufferings of their ancestors under British rule**.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

QUESTIONS

1. According to de Valera, why had the Irish people suffered for more than three hundred years, and who came to their assistance?
2. What does this document reveal about de Valera's tendency to identify the Irish nation with the Catholic faith?
3. Compare Cardinal Lauri's comments on the links between the Irish people and the Catholic faith (Document 2) with de Valera's observations on the same theme in this document.

The Open-Air Mass in the Phoenix Park

- At the conclusion of a week of religious functions and celebrations, the highlight of the Congress was an **open-air Mass in the Phoenix Park**, followed by a **procession of the Blessed Sacrament** through the streets of Dublin (Document 7).

DOCUMENT 7: THE MASS IN THE PHOENIX PARK

SUNDAY 26 JUNE 1932

The last and greatest day of the Congress dawned with promise of perfect weather. While it was yet scarcely day streams of pilgrims could be seen converging from every direction on the Phoenix Park... The whole ceremony was broadcast. The loud-speakers in the 'Fifteen Acres' functioned excellently, and the immense multitude of worshippers were able to follow the High Mass as easily as if they were in a comparatively small church... At the Offertory Count McCormack, who wore the very distinctive robes of a Knight of Malta, sang the Panis Angelicus of Cesar Franck. The great singer sang the beautiful and delicate composition with an intensity of devotion, and a glorious perfection of voice and artistry that befitted the great occasion. As Count McCormack stood quietly for an instant before the beginning of the Motet and looked up at the Altar, one felt that the privilege now given to the singer of using his great gifts for the praise of God in the Congress Mass, in the name as it were, of the Irish race, was for him one of the greatest triumphs of his career ... Just before the Blessing... the voice of Padre Granfranceschi, SJ, the radio expert of His Holiness the Pope, was heard announcing from the Vatican: Attention, the Holy Father is about to address you! Almost immediately the clear quiet voice of the Holy Father was heard by the whole congregation in words of fatherly greeting and apostolic blessing... It was the first time that an International Eucharistic Congress was directly addressed by the Holy Father, and the vivid realisation by all who were present at the Mass that the Pope himself had been listening to the Mass, and that his own voice was now addressing them, produced an atmosphere of profound emotion.

Thirty-First International Eucharistic Congress (Dublin, 1932)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the solo singer at the Congress Mass in the Phoenix Park, and what hymn did he sing?
2. Explain the radio broadcast that took place at the end of the Mass.



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The Open-Air Mass in the Phoenix Park

- In all, over a **million people attended the ceremonies** in the Phoenix Park. The Congress concluded with a **procession of the Blessed Sacrament** through the streets of Dublin from the Phoenix Park to O'Connell Bridge. On the bridge a temporary altar had been set up, and a service of **Benediction was held**. That night the legate, Cardinal Lauri, sent a **telegram to Pope Pius XI** in which he declared that the Irish people were united in uttering 'the cry which sums up the tradition, the faith, the very life of the whole nation: **God Bless the Pope!** The success of the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin was clearly appreciated at the Vatican. The official papal newspaper, **L'Osservatore Romano**, carried a highly favourable report (Document 9). The connection made in this report between **Irish identity and the Catholic religion** had been clearly evident throughout the Eucharistic Congress. Historians have used the word '**triumphalism**' to describe the self-congratulation and assertion of power displayed by the Catholic Church during the Congress.

DOCUMENT 8: COUNT JOHN MCCORMACK OFFERS TO TAKE PART IN THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

Mr Dear Archbishop,

May I offer to your Grace my services during the Eucharistic Congress, whether as a Papal Chamberlain or in my more familiar role as singer. On the 8th of the month we had a wonderful Pontifical High Mass celebrated by the Apostolic Delegate here in Los Angeles for the 150th anniversary of the founding of the city... And there before the mightiest audience of my long career I sang 'Panis Angelicus' by the great Catholic composer César Franck. It would be a great honour and I would deem it a privilege to sing the 'Panis Angelicus' during the opening High Mass of the Congress and to offer my services to Your Grace is the object of this letter. My debt of gratitude to Dublin is too great to ever be repaid, but I would be proud to help next year and at the same time make public demonstration of that faith, for which I ever thank God.

Believe me,

Your Grace's most affectionate servant, John, Count McCormack.

Letter of Count John McCormack to Archbishop Edward Byrne of Dublin, 18 September 1931, Dublin Diocesan Archives

QUESTIONS

1. What offer did John McCormack make at the start of the letter?
2. What did he sing at a special mass in Los Angeles for the 150th anniversary of the city's foundation?
3. State two reasons why he would be proud to help at the Eucharistic Congress.
4. Is this document a useful primary source for the historian? Explain your answer referring to the document.

DOCUMENT 9: THE COMMENTS OF L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO ON THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

Every sphere of life is affected by the great event - from schools, which are closed, to the business houses, which have given their employees a short holiday. The newspapers from the first page to the last are full of notes and comments on the religious events. Politics are suspended and the Government administration interrupted. The Government, the Army, the University and the County Councils, the Town Councils - all bow down in adoration at the feet of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. Here there are no spectators - everyone from the highest to the lowest is an actor and plays his part in the great event with all the fervour and energy that is in him...

Everyone is at his post from the Bishop to the clerical student, from the President of the State to the policeman on the street... It is really nothing short of the miraculous - for here we see, after a century and a half of attempted laicisation, an entire people proud of its name, but prouder still of its Roman religion.

QUESTIONS

1. List three activities that were suspended during the Eucharistic Congress.
2. How did the author link the Irish people with the Catholic religion at the end of the account?



The Protestant Response to the Eucharistic Congress

- The reaction of the Protestant community in the Irish Free State to the Eucharistic Congress was largely positive. Although they disagreed with Catholic teaching on certain matters, many southern Protestants were **tolerant and open-minded**. Dr John Gregg, the **Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin**, welcomed the celebration of the Eucharistic Congress in the city. Certain leading Protestant businesses, such as **Guinness Brewery**, made generous contributions to the fund set up to cover the expenses of running the Congress. However, a very different attitude was displayed by certain sections of the Protestant community in **Northern Ireland**.

DOCUMENT 10: PROTESTANTS OF BELFAST OPPOSE THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

PROTESTANTS OF BELFAST

WHY BE REPRESENTED AT THE DUBLIN EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS BY ROMAN CATHOLIC MEMBERS OF THE BELFAST BELFAST CORPORATION WHO HAVE OBTAINED PERMISSION TO WEAR THE OFFICIAL ROBES IN A COUNTRY HOSTILE TO KING, COMMONWEALTH AND PROTESTANTISM COME TO A PROTEST MEETING TO BE HELD IN THE ULSTER HALL UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE ULSTER PROTESTANTS LEAGUE ON MONDAY 30 MAY AT 8PM AND SHOW THAT SUCH PERMISSION IS GREATLY RESENTED BY THE

... PROTESTANT COMMUNITY OF BELFAST
 Chaos REV. S. HANNA B.A., M.B. poby
 Si ROBERT KENNEDY, K.C., M.G.

MAJOR JH MCCORMICK DSO MP TAP MEKEOWN Esa DOORS OPEN AT 7-15 P.M.
 GOD SAVE THE KING

QUESTIONS

- To whom was this poster addressed?
- What permission had been received by Catholic members of Belfast Corporation?
- How did the authors of the poster regard this development?
- Would you regard this document as an unbiased source? Explain your answer referring to the document.

Cited in R. O'Dywer, *The Eucharistic Congress Dublin 1932* (Dublin, 2009)

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.



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The Protestant Response to the Eucharistic Congress

- **Although the Congress received widespread publicity there**, certain unionists objected to Catholic members of **Belfast Corporation** attending the Congress in their robes of office. Many Catholics from throughout **Northern Ireland travelled to Dublin** for the event and **sectarian attacks** on pilgrims leaving and returning home led to widespread condemnation (Document 11).

DOCUMENT 11: ATTACKS ON PILGRIMS

Some Catholics travelling to the Congress were attacked by loyalist mobs. Congress flags in Catholic areas were often torn down, damaged or destroyed. In some cases deliberately provocative banners, intended to insult Catholics and the Congress, were displayed on streets. Some of the worst scenes were witnessed as Congress pilgrims from the North returned home. Although the Bishop of Down and Connor, Rev. Dr. Mageean and the Nationalist MP Joseph Devlin sent messages to the Minister of Home Affairs, Sir Richard Dawson Bates, demanding adequate protection for the returning pilgrims, that message was not sufficiently heeded. It was estimated that approximately 500 loyalists gathered outside the Central Train Station in Belfast, many with bottles and other missiles, to attack the Pilgrims. In Larne those returning on the ferry from Dublin were attacked ... At Ballymena buses were attacked and windows smashed. Similar scenes took place in Coleraine and in many other towns and villages in the North. Two weeks later, main streets in most Northern towns were profusely decorated with loyalist symbols for the Twelfth of July celebrations. There was no record of any damage to these decorations.

R. O'Dwyer, The Eucharistic Congress, Dublin 1932: An Illustrated History (Dublin, 2009)

QUESTIONS

1. Give two examples in this document of anti-Catholic responses in Northern Ireland to the Eucharistic Congress.
2. What request was made to the Minister for Home Affairs, Sir Richard Dawson Bates, by Catholic leaders?
3. From reading the final two sentences of the document, comment on the attitude of the author to the events described.

DOCUMENT 12: THE IMPACT OF THE EUCHARISTIC CONGRESS

On a political level the Congress proved fractious for the recently elected Fianna Fáil minority government, in particular for the new president, Éamon de Valera - the Congress provided him with the opportunity to demonstrate his Catholic bona fides [good faith] - very important given the overwhelmingly Catholic population of the state.. As regards old civil war animosities, the Congress undoubtedly aided the process of healing. De Valera and W.T. Cosgrave stood across from one another as canopy leaders during the procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the sense of common purpose and identity became foremost on the occasion... The Congress of 1932 saw the most remarkable fusion of state, nation and religion. Even if it may not have been 'the greatest moment in the religious history of Ireland' as many journalists and some members of the clergy proclaimed during the event, it was certainly the greatest festival in Irish history.

R. O'Dwyer, The Eucharistic Congress, Dublin 1932 (Dublin, 2009)

QUESTIONS

1. How, according to the author, did the Eucharistic Congress help Éamon de Valera?
2. What impact did it have on old civil war animosities?
3. How, according to the author, did the Congress affect relations between the state, the nation and religion?
4. What was the exaggerated claim made by some contemporary journalists and members of the clergy?

The Significance of the Eucharistic Congress

- The successful celebration of the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in June 1932 was significant on several levels. For the **Catholic Church** it was an open expression of a very high level of religious devotion and practice among clergy and laity. It was also a **triumphal assertion** that the Church had survived persecution in the past and expected to continue playing a powerful role in Irish society. During the Congress the **Catholic Church in Ireland** enjoyed the attention of Catholics from all over the world. The attendance of many bishops from abroad who were either **Irish born or of Irish descent** reflected the extensive work of Irish Catholic bishops, priests and nuns, especially in **English-speaking countries** like Great Britain, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand. The **support of many southern Irish Protestants** for the Congress reflected the more tolerant ethos of their communities.
- On the other hand, in **Northern Ireland**, the Congress became a focus of **resentment among more extreme members of the Protestant community**. The Eucharistic Congress also had implications for **civil society in the Irish Free State**. A few months before it took place, a peaceful handover of power had occurred when the **Cumann na nGaedheal Government was replaced by Fianna Fáil** after the general election. The Civil War enemies co-operated during the course of the Congress to ensure its success. The impressive organisation of the event was a high point in the life of the new state when the **eyes of the world were on it**. The Eucharistic Congress had the effect of emphasising the divisions between **Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State**. By seeking to identify the Irish people with the Catholic community, as **de Valera and others** had done during the Congress, they were unconsciously **strengthening partition** and reinforcing the deep cultural divisions between north and south.

Case Study: Review Questions

1. The Catholic Church in Ireland

- State one reason why Catholic priests were powerful in local communities in Ireland during the early twentieth century.
- Name two social services with which the Catholic Church was increasingly involved from the 1850s onwards.
- How was the Catholic Church influenced by the decline of the Irish language?

2. The Catholic Church and the Struggle for Independence

- What was the attitude of Catholic bishops to the use of violence in the struggle for independence?
- What balance did the Catholic bishops maintain in their public statements between 1916 and 1922?
- How did the Catholic bishops react to the outbreak of the Civil War in 1922?
- What expectation had the leaders of the Catholic Church concerning their role in the new Irish Free State from 1923 onwards?

3. The Catholic Church in the Irish Free State

- How did W.T. Cosgrave use the new Senate of the Irish Free State to reach out to the Protestant minority?
- Explain why certain Irish nationalists in the 1920s regarded the achievement of independence as a type of religious victory.
- What celebrations took place in the Irish Free State in 1929?
- Why did Éamon de Valera seek the approval of the Catholic Church during the 1930s?

4. The Eucharistic Congress

- What is a Eucharistic Congress?
- Why did Pope Pius XI choose Dublin as the venue for the Congress in 1932?
- Whose arrival at Dún Laoghaire marked the start of the Eucharistic Congress in June 1932?
- What was the main point made by Éamon de Valera in his official address to the papal legate?

5. The Success of the Eucharistic Congress

- How many people attended the open-air Mass in the Phoenix Park on 26 June 1932?
- What role did Count John McCormack play in the ceremonies?
- What message did the Pope broadcast over the radio to the assembled crowd?
- Explain what is meant by the word 'triumphalism' in relation to the Catholic Church in Ireland at the time of the Eucharistic Congress.

6. The Significance of the Eucharistic Congress

- How did Protestants in the Irish Free State react to the Eucharistic Congress?
- How did this differ from the reaction of Protestants in Northern Ireland?
- How did the Eucharistic Congress deepen divisions between north and south?

Case Study: Documents-Based Questions

1. Comprehension

- a. Who, according to Document 1, were the first people to go on board the ship to meet the papal legate?
- b. In Document 6, why did de Valera refer to 'this present year' as 'a year of deep significance for our people'?

2. Comparison

- a. Identify the main theme that is common to Documents 4 and 5.
- b. Both Document 3 and Document 7 contain references to Pope Pius XI. Compare these references.

3. Criticism

- a. From reading Document 5, do you consider that the overall impression made on the author by the Dublin poor was positive or negative? Explain your answer.
- b. Does Document 9 provide an unbiased account? Explain your answer.

4. Contextualisation

- a. What was the significance of the Eucharistic Congress for the Catholic Church in Ireland?
- b. Why was the Eucharistic Congress an important event in Irish history?

What was the significance of the Eucharistic Congress for the Catholic Church in Ireland?

The Eucharistic Congress held in Ireland in 1932 was a momentous event for the Catholic Church in Ireland, symbolising both a celebration of faith and a demonstration of the Church's influential position within Irish society. The Congress, which took place in Dublin, was one of the largest public events in the history of the new Irish Free State, attracting hundreds of thousands of participants from across Ireland and abroad. It served as a powerful assertion of Catholic identity, showcasing the central role of Catholicism in the cultural and spiritual life of the country. The Congress was a manifestation of the Church's confidence and strength, occurring at a time when Ireland was still consolidating its independence, and it played a crucial role in reinforcing the bond between the Irish state and the Catholic Church, underlining the Church's authority on moral and social issues.

Furthermore, the Eucharistic Congress had significant implications for the Catholic Church in Ireland, beyond the immediate celebrations. It acted as a catalyst for the Church's involvement in various aspects of Irish social life, from education and healthcare to social policy and family life. The visibility and success of the Congress bolstered the Church's position as a guardian of Irish identity, which was particularly poignant in a period marked by the struggle to define a distinct national identity separate from Britain. This event also facilitated the Church in projecting an image of unity and strength to the wider world, enhancing its international stature. In the years that followed, the legacy of the Eucharistic Congress contributed to the deepening of Ireland's Catholic character, affecting generations and shaping the socio-political landscape of the country in profound ways.

Why was the Eucharistic Congress an important event in Irish History?

The Eucharistic Congress of 1932 stands as a landmark event in Irish history, not merely for its religious significance but also for its profound impact on the socio-political fabric of the nation. Held less than a decade after the establishment of the Irish Free State, the Congress provided an opportunity for the newly independent nation to showcase its cultural unity and national identity on an international stage. It was an assertion of Ireland's sovereignty, displaying the nation's recovery and unity in the wake of the divisive Treaty negotiations and the subsequent Civil War. The Congress attracted attention from around the globe, enhancing Ireland's diplomatic standing and fostering a sense of pride among Irish people. It was a moment of national consolidation, during which the Catholic Church played a pivotal role in shaping the national identity, reinforcing the intertwining of Catholicism with Irishness in the public consciousness.

Moreover, the Eucharistic Congress served as a catalyst for significant social and political developments in Ireland. It reinforced the Catholic Church's dominance in Irish society, legitimising its influence over state policies, particularly in areas such as education, healthcare, and moral legislation. This event symbolized the unofficial endorsement of a Catholic moral code as a cornerstone of Irish state policy, laying the groundwork for the Church's substantial involvement in the governance of the country for decades to come. The Congress's legacy was far-reaching, affecting the trajectory of Irish political and social life by cementing the role of the Catholic Church at the heart of Ireland's national identity. Its impact was felt not just in the immediate aftermath but shaped Irish society and its values well into the latter half of the twentieth century, making the Eucharistic Congress a pivotal moment in the history of independent Ireland.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

5.2 Dismantling the Treaty

Abolishing the Oath

- On coming to power, **de Valera** was determined to increase the independence of the **Irish Free State** in order to move Ireland closer to the status of a republic. He himself took charge of the **Ministry of External Affairs** and set about gradually dismantling the **Anglo-Irish Treaty**. In **April 1932**, the **Dáil** passed a bill abolishing the **Oath of Allegiance**. However, the **Senate**, still under the control of **Cumann na nGaedheal**, rejected the measure. As a result, the oath was not finally abolished until **May 1933**. Although the **British Government** objected to this action, **de Valera** had acted legally and in accordance with the **Statute of Westminster (1931)**.

Downgrading the Office of Governor-General

- **De Valera** now proceeded to downgrade the office of **governor-general**, the **King's representative** in the **Irish Free State**. From 1928, this position had been held by **James MacNeill**. Functions and ceremonies attended by the **Governor-General** were boycotted by the government, and he did not receive an official invitation to the **Eucharistic Congress**. In **November 1932**, **MacNeill** was dismissed and replaced by **Dónal Ó Buachalla**, a loyal follower of **de Valera**. **Ó Buachalla** co-operated with **de Valera** in further demeaning the office of **governor-general**; he lived in a modest suburban house rather than in the **Viceregal Lodge**; he received a reduced salary; and he did not attend public ceremonies or functions. These measures paved the way for the eventual abolition of the office in **June 1937**.
- **De Valera** took a further step towards a republic by abolishing the right of appeal from Irish courts to the **British Privy Council**, a right provided for under the **Constitution of the Irish Free State (1922)**. The **Fianna Fáil Government** also abolished the **Senate** in **May 1936**. They had long regarded it as an obstacle on the road to a republic because of its anti-Fianna Fáil majority. The removal of the **Senate** facilitated further constitutional changes.

The External Relations Act (1936)

- The abdication of **King Edward VIII** of England in 1936 provided **de Valera** with another opportunity to weaken the link between **Great Britain** and the **Irish Free State**. The government introduced the **Constitutional Amendment Bill (1936)**, which removed all references to the **King** from the **Constitution of the Irish Free State**. A second measure, the **External Relations Act (1936)**, marked the end of any involvement by the **King of England** in the internal affairs of the **Irish Free State**. In future, the **King** would be recognised as a symbol of **Commonwealth** unity and could act in foreign affairs on the advice of the government. This situation was very close to the idea of **external association** proposed by **de Valera** as an alternative to the **Treaty** in 1921. These two important measures prepared the way for the introduction of a new constitution in 1937.

A New Constitution

- In 1937, **de Valera** introduced a new constitution - **Bunreacht na hÉireann**. This replaced the **Free State Constitution of 1922**, which was based on the **Anglo-Irish Treaty**. The new Constitution was passed by the **Dáil** in **June 1937** and subsequently ratified by a narrow majority of voters in a referendum held on **1 July**. Unlike its predecessor, it contained no reference to the **King of England** or to the **British Commonwealth**. De Valera stopped short of declaring an Irish republic because of the continuing existence of the **Northern Irish state**.
- The **Constitution of 1937** contained the following main points:
 - The **Irish Free State** now became known as **Éire** and was defined as an **independent, democratic state**.
 - Although **Article 2** claimed jurisdiction over the whole island of Ireland, **Article 3** limited the laws of the state to the twenty-six counties, pending future reunification.
 - The **Houses of Parliament**, or **Oireachtas**, consisted of a **Dáil** and a **Seanad**. A system of **proportional representation (PR)** was to be used in elections. The new **Seanad** had limited powers and could only delay a Bill for up to ninety days.
 - The **head of government**, or **Taoiseach**, was elected by the **Dáil**.
 - The **head of state** was the **President (Uachtarán na hÉireann)**, who was elected by the people to a seven-year term of office. Although it was largely a ceremonial office, the **President** signed Bills into law and dissolved the **Dáil** on the advice of the **Taoiseach**.

A New Constitution

- Although **Article 44** recognised the main Christian religions and the Jewish community, it gave special recognition to the **Catholic Church** 'as the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens'
- Special recognition was given to the **family**. Divorce was banned, and the constitution stated that women should be supported in their work in the home.
- The **Constitution** could only be amended or changed by a referendum of the people.
- The new Constitution came into effect on **29 December 1937**. Although de Valera was its main architect, he had consulted widely during the drafting of the document. He sought the advice of the leaders of the main Christian churches on the article dealing with religion. One of his leading advisers was the **President of Blackrock College, Fr John Charles McQuaid**, who became **Archbishop of Dublin in 1940**. Although **Pope Pius XI** had wanted the Constitution to declare the **Catholic Church** to be the 'one true church', de Valera had resisted this demand. Nevertheless, the influence of the **Catholic Church** was very strong in the **1937 Constitution**. The preamble recognising the authority of the **Blessed Trinity**, the articles on the **family** and the **prohibition of divorce** reveal a strong Catholic influence.

A New Constitution

- Although the **British Government** did not object to the new Constitution, **Ulster unionists** condemned **Articles 2 and 3**, which contained a territorial claim over **Northern Ireland**.
- The **Constitution of 1937** had created an Irish republic in everything but name. It represented the culmination of **de Valera's** efforts to dismantle the **Treaty** and create a sovereign, independent state. Side by side with the strong **Catholic influence**, the Constitution contained liberal and democratic principles, such as guarantees of basic rights and freedoms, and limits on the powers of government. Although later generations criticised various aspects of the Constitution, it accurately reflected the values of Irish society at the time and can be regarded as one of **de Valera's** most enduring achievements.
- Although constitutional issues dominated Irish political life and relations with **Great Britain** during the 1930s, deep division also arose over economic matters. This division took the form of the **Economic War (1932-8)** between **Britain** and the **Irish Free State**.

A New Constitution

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- Although constitutional issues dominated Irish political life and relations with **Great Britain** during the 1930s, deep division also arose over economic matters. This division took the form of the **Economic War (1932-8)** between **Britain** and the **Irish Free State**.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Which party formed the new government when the Dáil met on 9 March 1932?
2. State three steps taken by de Valera to dismantle the Treaty.
3. What was the External Relations Act (1936)?
4. How did the 1937 Constitution differ from the previous Free State Constitution?
5. Give one example of the Catholic Church's influence on the 1937 Constitution.
6. Why did Ulster unionists condemn the new Constitution?

PREPARING AN ANSWER QUESTION

During the period 1922-1939, who achieved more in Anglo-Irish relations, Cosgrave or De Valera? Argue your case, referring to both. (LC 2017)

General Guidelines

1. In answering this question, take note of the time limit, which extends from the foundation of the Irish Free State to the outbreak of World War II. The focus must be on relations between Great Britain and Ireland during that period.
2. This question requires you to compare and contrast the respective approaches of Cosgrave and de Valera, and to decide and justify who you consider to have been the more effective leader. In this regard, remember that there is no single correct answer: you are required to make an argument or case in favour of one or the other.
3. In building your case, you may adopt a chronological approach by first considering Cosgrave's handling of Anglo-Irish relations and then contrasting this with de Valera's approach.

ANSWER THE QUESTION, using the following structure as a guide:

Paragraph 1 (Introduction): Refer to the relationship with Great Britain as the dominant divisive issue in Irish politics during the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting differing views on the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Briefly outline your case here by referring to Cosgrave's progress towards greater Irish independence within the treaty settlement, and de Valera's determination to dismantle the treaty.

Paragraph 2: Assess here Cosgrave's handling of the Boundary Commission episode in 1925, and how his failure here consolidated partition and created future unresolved difficulties in Anglo-Irish relations.

Paragraph 3: Refer here to Cosgrave's view of the treaty as a stepping stone to greater freedom. Note the establishment from the outset of an independent foreign policy, reflected in the registration of the Anglo-Irish Treaty at the League of Nations and the appointment of Irish representatives abroad.

Paragraph 4: Consider the role of the Cosgrave Government in the Commonwealth conferences. Assess the significance of the Statute of Westminster (1931), a turning-point that facilitated the subsequent successes under de Valera in dismantling the treaty. Any argument in favour of Cosgrave should emphasise how essential this was in facilitating future moves towards greater Irish independence.

ANSWER THE QUESTION, using the following structure as a guide:

Paragraph 5: Contrast here the different approach of de Valera to Anglo-Irish relations after 1932, referring in particular to the various measures he took to dismantle the Anglo-Irish treaty and move Ireland towards a republic in everything but name. In arguing your case as to who was the more effective leader, consider whether de Valera's achievement in this regard would have been possible without Cosgrave's earlier role in achieving greater freedom within the Commonwealth.

Paragraph 6: Assess here the significance of the Economic War in terms of Anglo-Irish relations, and critically evaluate de Valera's decision to embark upon it.

Paragraph 7: Refer here to the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1938) and de Valera's role in the ending of the economic war and establishing the basis for the future policy of neutrality.

Paragraph 8 (Conclusion): Summarise your arguments in favour of one leader or the other, considering the strengths and weaknesses of each in their handling of Anglo-Irish relations.

5.3 *The* POLICIES OF *Fianna Fáil*

Agriculture and the Economic War

- The guiding principle of **Fianna Fáil's agricultural policy** was self-sufficiency based on economic protection. Under the Minister for Agriculture, **James Ryan**, there was a considerable increase in state intervention in the farming sector. The **Land Commission** was responsible for the division of large estates and redistribution of land to poorer farmers. A return to tillage was encouraged by a system of **guaranteed prices** and restrictions on foreign imports. However, the state of agriculture was largely determined by the **worldwide economic depression** that began in 1929. Even before Fianna Fáil came to power, a huge decrease had taken place in both the volume and value of agricultural exports to Britain. In response to the crisis, the British Government introduced measures to protect British agriculture from competition from foreign imports.
- The most controversial aspect of Fianna Fáil's agricultural policy was the refusal to continue paying **land annuities** to the British Government. These payments, amounting to £3 million per year, were collected from Irish farmers as repayment of loans received from the British Government for land purchase.
- On 1 July 1932 de Valera's Government withheld payment of the annuities. The British Government retaliated immediately by placing a **20 per cent duty** on Irish agricultural exports to Britain. The Fianna Fáil Government then imposed similar duties on British imports. This **tariff war** between Britain and the Irish Free State became known as the **Economic War**.

Agriculture and the Economic War

- The Economic War was to have disastrous consequences for the Irish economy. It added greatly to the difficulties experienced by Irish agriculture at a time of deep international depression. At this time, the British market accounted for 98 per cent of all Irish agricultural exports. As a result of the depression and the Economic War, the value of Irish agricultural exports fell from £36 million in 1931 to £13.9 million by 1935. The **cattle industry** was the worst affected: cattle exports to Britain fell from 750,000 in 1930 to 500,000 in 1934. The collapse in cattle prices led to the widespread **slaughter of animals** throughout the countryside as farmers failed to sell their stock.
- The Fianna Fáil Government used the Economic War to press ahead with its policy of economic self-sufficiency. There was a strong campaign to persuade farmers to move from livestock farming to tillage. Farmers were given **guaranteed prices** for wheat, and restrictions were placed on the import of agricultural products.
- Although the main burden of the Economic War fell on the Irish Free State, it also damaged the British economy. At a time of economic depression, Britain could ill afford to suffer losses in one of the country's main export markets. The British Government became alarmed at the prospect of the Irish Free State boycotting British coal and importing coal from Germany and Poland instead.
- Therefore, the first compromise in the Economic War was reached with the signing of the **Coal-Cattle Pact** in January 1935. In return for an agreement by the Irish Free State to buy British coal, the British Government agreed to increase the quota of imported Irish cattle by one-third.

The End of the Economic War - the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1938)

- The **Economic War** came to an end with the signing of the **Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938**. The Irish Government agreed to pay Britain **£10 million** as a final settlement of the annuities issue. The special duties introduced by both governments during the Economic War were withdrawn. As part of the settlement, Britain agreed to return the three Treaty ports of **Lough Swilly, Berehaven and Cobh** to the Irish Free State. The Anglo-Irish Agreement was a significant achievement for **de Valera** and **Fianna Fáil**. Not alone did it mark the ending of the Economic War, it was also an important landmark on the road to greater independence.
- Despite the successful Anglo-Irish Agreement, the agricultural policy of Fianna Fáil was largely unsuccessful. By and large, farmers did not switch from livestock to tillage. Indeed, cattle accounted for a higher proportion of Irish exports in 1939 than they had in 1932. However, in contrast to its performance in agriculture, the Fianna Fáil Government was to be more successful in the area of industrial development.

Industrial Development

- As with agriculture, the industrial policy of Fianna Fáil was based on economic self-sufficiency. The Minister for Industry and Commerce, **Seán Lemass**, was faced with the major challenge of developing industry in Ireland at a time of deep, worldwide economic depression. His task was made more difficult by the Economic War, which reduced the incomes of farmers and their ability to purchase goods.
- The basis of Fianna Fáil's industrial policy was the encouragement of native Irish industries, which were to be protected from foreign imports by high tariffs. Tariffs were placed on over a thousand separate items entering the state, and new Irish-owned industries were encouraged.
- This policy of extensive economic protection contrasted with the policies pursued by the previous government. Although the Cumann na nGaedheal Government had favoured free trade, it had been compelled to introduce some tariff protection with the onset of economic depression. Fianna Fáil, on the other hand, was committed to economic protection for largely political reasons: economic self-sufficiency was another expression of independence from Great Britain.

Industrial Development

- As well as promoting economic protection, Lemass encouraged the development of Irish industry in other ways. He introduced the **Control of Manufacturers Acts (1932 and 1934)**, which stated that Irish people must be involved in the ownership and management of any new industries. In response to a shortage of capital investment in Irish industry, Lemass set up the **Industrial Credit Corporation** in 1933 to provide loans for the establishment of new businesses. He also established a number of new semi-state bodies, including the **Irish Sugar Company (1933)**, the **Turf Development Board (1934)** and **Aer Lingus (1936)**. Because of the limited size of the Irish market, some companies were given monopolies, or exclusive access to the Irish market. Although this lack of competition helped industries to survive, it also led to high prices and poor quality goods.
- Against an extremely unfavourable background of economic depression, the Fianna Fáil industrial policy was remarkably successful. Employment in industry rose from 110,000 in 1932 to 166,000 by 1938, representing an increase of 50 per cent in six years. Despite this achievement, rates of unemployment and emigration remained high.

KEY CONCEPT: PROTECTIONISM

This economic policy supports the imposition of **taxes on imports** from abroad to **protect home industries**. It was a concept firmly backed by **Arthur Griffith**, who believed that Irish industries required economic protection in the form of **import duties** to guard against cheaper British products. Protectionism faced opposition from **Ulster unionists**, as the north-east region of Ulster had flourished under a regime of **free trade with Great Britain**. The **Cumann na nGaedheal Government** (1923-32) was generally against protectionism. However, it became a key policy for **Fianna Fáil** when they assumed power in 1932, leading to its widespread implementation.

The Social Policy of Fianna Fáil

- Fianna Fáil focused on addressing the **widespread poverty** across Ireland. Under **Seán T. O'Kelly**, Minister for Local Government and Public Health, a significant **house building and renovation** project was launched, marking a substantial effort to **eliminate slums** in urban areas. The **Housing Act (1932)** played a pivotal role, with the government covering approximately half of the costs for local authority housing. This initiative led to the construction or renovation of **132,000 houses** between 1932 and 1942, representing a key achievement in social policy under de Valera's administration.
- Efforts were also made to improve the welfare system. In 1933, **unemployment assistance** levels were raised, and coverage was extended to include **small farmers and farm labourers**. Enhancements were made to **pensions for the elderly and the blind**, and **pensions for widows and orphans** were introduced in 1932. Despite these improvements, which represented progress for the poorest segments of society, poverty continued to be a significant issue in both urban and rural areas.

Culture, Society and Education

- The close **relationship between church and state**, which emerged during the 1920s, would continue after **Fianna Fáil** came to power in 1932. In this regard, unlike other areas such as economic and foreign policies, **continuity rather than change** prevailed. Whereas the **Cumann na nGaedheal Government** had banned **divorce** and introduced **ensorship**, under Fianna Fáil strict censorship continued to be imposed, the **importation and sale of contraceptives** were outlawed, and **dance halls** were strictly regulated under laws passed in 1935.
- We saw in the last chapter how the **education system** was used by the Cumann na nGaedheal Government to promote the use and status of the **Irish language**. This approach was to continue after Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932. The new **Minister for Education, Thomas Derrig**, saw schools as having the major responsibility for reviving the Irish language. At **primary level**, a revised programme in 1934 provided that infant classes would be taught through Irish and reduced teaching time for other subjects in order to promote **Irish language and culture**. This programme was to remain almost unchanged until 1971. The number of **all-Irish primary schools** increased from 228 in 1931 to 704 by 1939. At **secondary level**, Irish was made a **compulsory subject** for the award of the **Leaving Certificate examination** in 1934, a requirement that remained in existence until 1973. Today it remains a core subject alongside English and Maths, Irish exemptions are granted in certain circumstances such as learning difficulties or for students whose education did not start in Ireland.

Culture, Society and Education

- **Radio Éireann**, the Irish radio service which had begun as 2RN in 1926, expanded during the 1930s and played a key role in promoting the **Irish language and traditional Irish music**.
- The **Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)** continued to form a central part of people's cultural identity at national and local level. In 1934, the GAA organised celebrations to mark the **Golden Jubilee** of its foundation in 1884, at which the aims of **Irish unification** and the **revival of the Irish language** formed a prominent part.
- One area of cultural achievement by Irish artists in the early years of the Irish Free State was the **design and painting of stained glass windows**. Of particular note here are artists such as **Harry Clarke (1889-1931)** and **Evie Hone (1894- 1955)**, a deeply religious woman who turned from painting to stained-glass work.

Key Personality: EVIE HONE (1894-1955)

- Evie Hone - one of **Ireland's foremost stained glass artists** was born in **Dublin** on 22 April 1894. **QUESTIONS**

She began her formal training as an artist at the **Byam Shaw School of Art in London** shortly before the outbreak of **World War I**. She then moved to **Paris**, where she studied under **André Lhote** and **Albert Gleizes**.

- With her close friend and fellow student, **Mainie Jellett**, she first exhibited her abstract paintings in **Dublin in 1924**. Hone soon developed an interest in stained glass and in 1933 began work with **Sarah Purser at An Túr Gloine** to develop the **Irish stained glass industry**. Her first commission was for a window in **St Naithi's Church, Dundrum, Co. Dublin**.
- During her lifetime she completed **forty-eight windows**, the most famous being the **east window for Eton College Chapel**, completed between 1948 and 1952. Irish examples of her work include windows in the **Jesuit seminary at Rahan, Co. Offaly**, and **St Mary's Church, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan**. Although she produced a secular work entitled **'My Four Green Fields' for the C.I.E. Offices in Dublin**, most of her stained glass windows were commissioned by churches in **England and Ireland**.
- Hone's work was greatly influenced by **medieval Irish carvings** as well as by **George Rouault** and other contemporary French artists. She died at her home in **Rathfarnham, Co. Dublin**, on 13 March 1955. By the time of her death she had earned her reputation as one of **Ireland's most distinguished artists**.

1. What type of art did Evie Hone become famous for?
2. Describe her early training and experience.
3. Where did she begin working in 1933?
4. Name some of her famous works.
5. Write a note on the contribution made by Evie Hone to Irish life.

Culture, Society and Education

- However, despite these notable achievements, the **social and cultural conservatism** that characterised the early years of the Irish Free State was further deepened from the 1930s. Against a background of high levels of **unemployment, rural depopulation** and widespread **emigration**, many leaders of church and state thought that the ideal Ireland should be **rural, Catholic and Gaelic**. This viewpoint received its classic expression in a famous **St Patrick's Day radio broadcast** by **de Valera** in 1943:
- That Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued **material wealth** only as the basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with **frugal comfort** and devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit - a land whose countryside would be bright with **cosy homesteads**, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of **sturdy children**, the contests of **athletic youths** and the laughter of **comely maidens**, whose firesides would be forums for the **wisdom of serene old age**. It would, in a word, be the home of a people living the life that God desires that man should live.

Culture, Society and Education

- Here de Valera was outlining his dream or ideal vision: based on the countryside and conservative in approach. Unfortunately for his dream, many of the young men and women in rural Ireland had to **emigrate** in order to earn a living, leaving dispirited communities behind them. Contrary to the views of de Valera and many bishops and priests, many young people welcomed the opportunity to escape from the conservative and inward-looking atmosphere of the Irish countryside to take up employment in **England** and **America**. While a widespread consensus between the **churches and politicians** developed in areas such as **education, morality** and **cultural identity**, there was no such agreement in **political life** where bitter conflicts would mirror the **civil war divisions** after Fianna Fáil came to power in 1932.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did the accession of Fianna Fáil to power in 1932 bring about significant cultural change? Explain your answer.
2. Give two examples of the conservatism of Irish society in the 1930s.
3. How did the Fianna Fáil Government set about reviving the Irish language?
4. What role did the GAA continue to play in Irish life?
5. How was radio an important vehicle for cultural revival?
6. Name two famous stained glass artists.
7. According to the extract from de Valera's broadcast of 1943, what vision of Ireland is expressed?
8. How did de Valera's vision differ from the reality?

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY, 1923-39

1. During the 1920s the economic policy of the Cumann na nGaedheal Government was very conservative, favouring low taxation, low government expenditure and balanced budgets.
2. The government led by W.T. Cosgrave supported agricultural exports and free trade. It also began establishing semi-state companies such as the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) in conjunction with the successful Shannon Hydro-electric Scheme.
3. The 1920s were marked by continuing high levels of unemployment and emigration as the low number of jobs in towns and cities could not provide for those leaving the land.
4. De Valera and Fianna Fáil introduced a policy of economic protection and self-sufficiency from 1932 onwards. During the 1930s there were increasing numbers employed in protected industries but economic depression and the Economic War led to continuing hardship and emigration.
5. During the 1920s and 1930s the Irish Free State was a deeply conservative society. The Catholic Church had a strong influence on both government and society. One of the first changes enacted by the Irish Free State was the banning of divorce in 1925.
6. A strict censorship of books and films was introduced; women had to leave many jobs when they got married; artificial contraceptives were banned.
7. In the areas of health and education provision for poorer people was lacking. In the absence of government investment, the Catholic Church was very involved in the running of schools and hospitals.

5.4.4 Political Challenges to De Valera and Fianna Fáil

Tension and Rivalry

- We have already seen that the **general election** that brought **Fianna Fáil to power in 1932** was a bitterly fought campaign. **Tensions** between Fianna Fáil supporters and the followers of **Cumann na nGaedheal** were heightened considerably following the release of **IRA prisoners** and the onset of the **Economic War**. In these circumstances, **Civil War rivalry** and bitterness surfaced again. In the autumn of 1932, a new party, under the leadership of **Frank MacDermot** and **James Dillon**, was founded - the **National Centre Party**. Consisting of independents and former members of the **Farmers' Party**, the new party called for an end to the **Economic War with Britain** and for the healing of **Civil War rivalries** between the two main parties.
- De Valera saw the new party as a threat and an effort to form a united opposition against him. In order to catch his opponents off guard and secure an overall majority, he called an unexpected - or **snap - general election** in January 1933. He also sought a mandate from the people for the **Economic War** and for the moves he had made to dismantle the **Anglo- Irish Treaty**. The **1933 election** was even more bitter and violent than that of the previous year. Whereas **Cumann na nGaedheal** denounced the constitutional and economic policies of **Fianna Fáil**, the government in turn defended its policies of seeking greater freedom from **Great Britain**.
- The **1933 election** resulted in an overall majority for de Valera and Fianna Fáil. This result was a significant advance for Fianna Fáil, which increased its representation from **72 to 77 TDs**, and a setback for **Cumann na nGaedheal**, which declined from **57 seats to 48**. However, despite its electoral victory, **de Valera's Government** faced major political challenges in the years ahead. These came from the **IRA** on the one hand, and a new organisation called the **Blueshirts** on the other.

Adapted from Modern Ireland (Fourth Edition) by Gerard Brockie and Raymond Walsh, Gill Education.

The IRA

- One of the first actions of the **Fianna Fáil Government** on coming to power in 1932 was to release republican prisoners and lift the ban on the **IRA**. However, de Valera hoped to reduce support for the **IRA**: he pursued republican policies, such as dismantling the **Treaty**, and recruited **IRA members** into the **Free State Army** and **An Garda Síochána**. However, some more extreme leaders in the **IRA** remained determined to continue with their activities.
- When the ban on the **IRA** was lifted, its members began an extensive campaign against **Cumann na nGaedheal**. **Peadar O'Donnell**, a leading figure in the **IRA**, advocated this in his newspaper, **An Phoblacht**, with the slogan '**No free speech for traitors**'. This called for violent disruption of **Cumann na nGaedheal** political meetings throughout the country. Some in the **IRA** also demanded expensive economic and social changes, such as the breaking up of large farms and their division among small farmers. Their opponents in **Cumann na nGaedheal** accused them of being communists and of wishing to turn the **Irish Free State** into a dictatorship on the model of **communist Russia**. As **Cumann na nGaedheal** meetings continued to be disrupted by **IRA men** and the **gardaí** failed to restore order, the supporters of the former government party decided to take steps to protect themselves.

The Blueshirt Movement

The Origins of the Blueshirts

- Just before the **general election of 1932**, former soldiers of the **Free State Army** had formed the **Army Comrades Association (ACA)**. In the beginning, its main aim was to promote the welfare of its members. In August 1932, **T.F. O'Higgins**, a brother of **Kevin O'Higgins**, became its leader. The ACA then began providing stewards for **Cumann na nGaedheal** meetings and declared that its members would oppose communism and defend freedom of speech. As a result, clashes broke out between the **ACA** and the **IRA** at public meetings, and rioting and personal attacks increased greatly, especially during the **general election of January 1933**.
- The return to power of **de Valera** and **Fianna Fáil** with an overall majority was a great blow to **Cumann na nGaedheal** and the **ACA**. Shortly after his re-election as **President of the Executive Council** in February 1933, de Valera dismissed **General Eoin O'Duffy** from his post as **Garda Commissioner**. Cosgrave and **Cumann na nGaedheal** took this as an indication that their followers could no longer rely on the **gardaí** to protect them from the **IRA**. In March 1933, members of the **ACA** started to wear a uniform of **blue shirts** and **black berets**. They then invited **Eoin O'Duffy** to take charge of the organisation. As a friend and associate of **Michael Collins** and an opponent of de Valera, O'Duffy was seen as the ideal leader. He took charge of the **ACA** in July 1933 and renamed the organisation the **National Guard**. Because of the **blue uniform** worn by its members, the organisation soon became widely known as the **Blueshirts**.

The Blueshirt Movement

The Ideas of O'Duffy and the Blueshirts

- The **Blueshirt programme**, as outlined by O'Duffy, included the following main points.
 - The Blueshirts supported the **abolition of political parties**.
 - They supported **reform of the Dáil** - TDs should be elected by vocational groups such as workers and farmers, instead of in territorial constituencies.
 - They had a strong sense of **nationalism** and emphasised the aim of a **united Ireland**. They had a **strongly Catholic outlook** - the group's social programme was heavily influenced by the views of **Pope Pius XI** (1922- 39), and **Jews were excluded from membership**.
 - They were **totally opposed to communism**.
- O'Duffy was deeply influenced by the **Italian fascist dictator, Benito Mussolini**, and his **Blackshirt movement**. O'Duffy saw the Blackshirts as a strong anti-communist force in Italy. The Blueshirts imitated the fascist practice of dressing in **uniform** and **saluting the leader**. When O'Duffy announced a **Blueshirt march in Dublin** in August 1933 to commemorate **Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins** and **Kevin O'Higgins**, the **Fianna Fáil Government** feared that he was trying to imitate Mussolini's seizure of power in Italy following his **march on Rome in 1922**.

The Blueshirt Movement

The Clash Between O'Duffy and De Valera

- Although no evidence exists that **O'Duffy intended to seize power**, **de Valera** took firm action against the **Blueshirts**. He banned the proposed **Blueshirt march** and used **garda reinforcements** to prevent disorder. These gardaí were known as the **Broy Harriers**, after **Colonel Ned Broy**, O'Duffy's replacement as **Garda Commissioner**. Many of them were former members of the **IRA**.
- Rather than break the law, O'Duffy cancelled the march, but local marches were held a week later. The government then moved to **outlaw the National Guard**. This represented a serious setback for the **Blueshirt movement**, whose members deeply resented the fact that the ban was not extended to the **IRA**.

The Foundation of Fine Gael

- The events of August 1933 alarmed the enemies of **Fianna Fáil**, who feared that **de Valera** was about to establish a dictatorship. As a consequence, three groups united to form a new political party in opposition to **Fianna Fáil**. These were **Cumann na nGaedheal**, led by **W.T. Cosgrave**; the **Centre Party**, led by **Frank MacDermot** and **James Dillon**; and the **Blueshirts**, under **Eoin O'Duffy**. The new party was called the **United Ireland Party or Fine Gael**, and O'Duffy was elected as its first leader. **Fine Gael** called for a united Ireland within the **British Commonwealth** and for an end to the **Economic War**.

The Blueshirt Movement

The Decline of the Blueshirt Movement

- Although O'Duffy was now the President of **Fine Gael**, he continued to lead the **Blueshirt movement** within the new party. After the **National Guard** was banned, it was replaced by the **Young Ireland Association**, whose members continued to wear the **Blueshirt uniform** and to engage in public marches and demonstrations.
- The **Blueshirt movement** drew its strongest support from larger farmers whose incomes fell considerably during the **Economic War**. O'Duffy encouraged farmers to refuse to pay **land annuities** to the government. As a result, the **gardaí** seized animals and farm equipment and auctioned them to recover the money due. The **Blueshirts** supported the farmers in resisting the actions of the **gardaí**, and widespread violence followed.
- Many leading figures within **Fine Gael** became increasingly alarmed by the violent tactics of the **Blueshirts**. They were horrified by the unpredictable and inflammatory speeches of O'Duffy, who called for the violent ending of **partition**. They warned him to moderate his speeches, but he refused to change his stance. A leading member of **Fine Gael**, **Professor James Hogan**, resigned from the **Fine Gael Executive** in protest. At the annual conference of **Fine Gael** in September 1934, O'Duffy was forced to resign as leader of the party. He was replaced by **W.T. Cosgrave**.

The Blueshirt Movement

The Decline of the Blueshirt Movement

- O'Duffy attempted to keep the **Blueshirts** going as a separate movement. However, they became increasingly irrelevant and declined in popularity. O'Duffy's final public action was to lead a group of his followers to fight in the **Spanish Civil War**. He formed an **Irish Brigade** to fight on the side of **General Franco**, whom he regarded as the defender of Catholic Spain against communism.
- Certain parallels existed between the **Blueshirts** and some fascist movements on the continent of Europe. The **Blueshirts** adopted the outward signs of fascism, such as uniforms, salutes and marches. However, unlike continental fascists, the **Blueshirts** supported democracy and did not engage in extreme violence. They owed far more to the divisive politics of the **Civil War** than to European fascism. They emerged out of the tensions between the former Civil War adversaries during the general elections of 1932 and 1933.
- While **de Valera** had taken decisive action against the **Blueshirt movement**, in the end it was O'Duffy's own colleagues in **Fine Gael** who distanced themselves from the movement and contributed to its decline. Whereas by 1935 the **Blueshirts** were a spent force, the **IRA** now posed a serious ongoing challenge to the authority of the **Fianna Fáil Government**.

De Valera Moves Against the IRA

- De Valera was initially reluctant to take action against the **IRA**, as many of its members had fought on his side during the **Civil War**. However, he became increasingly concerned during 1935, when the organisation resumed a violent campaign. Its members were involved in a number of murders throughout the country. As a result, **de Valera** banned the **IRA** on 18 June 1936, and some of its leaders were imprisoned.

The General Elections of 1937 and 1938

- In **June 1937** the **Fianna Fáil Government** faced the verdict of the people in a **general election**. The party won exactly half of the seats: **69 out of a total of 138**. **Fianna Fáil** then formed a government with the support of the **Labour Party**, and, as in 1932, **de Valera** waited for a chance to call a **snap general election**.
- However, **de Valera's** position was strengthened by the continued weakness of **Fine Gael**. A year later, in **June 1938**, **de Valera** - anxious to form a majority government - called another election. **Fianna Fáil** campaigned on its success in negotiating the **Anglo-Irish Agreement**, which had brought the **Economic War** to an end. The election resulted in a triumph for **de Valera** and **Fianna Fáil**. The party achieved its **highest ever vote** and was in a particularly strong position to guide the **Irish Free State** as the threat of **World War II** approached.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did de Valera call a snap general election in 1933 and what was its outcome?
2. What actions did de Valera take in the hope of reducing support for the IRA?
3. What were the main points contained in the Blueshirt programme?
4. What action did de Valera take against the Blueshirts?
5. How was Fine Gael formed?
6. What action did de Valera take against the IRA in June 1936 and why?
7. In what way was the 1938 election a triumph for de Valera?

