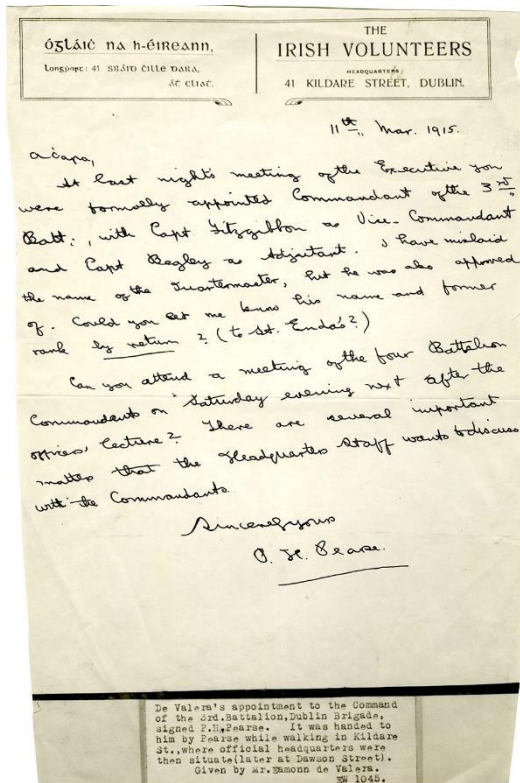


Was Éamon de Valera a Great Leader?

Yes, de Valera was a Great Leader

1. He dedicated himself to Irish independence.

Source 1



A Chara,

At last night's meeting of the Executive you were formally appointed Commandant of the 3rd Batt., with Capt Fitzgibbon as Vice-Commandant and Capt Begley as Adjutant. I have mislaid the name of the Quartermaster, but he was also approved of. Could you let me know his name and former rank by return? (to St. Enda's?)

Can you attend a meeting of the four Battalion Commandants on Saturday evening next after the officers' lecture? There are several important matters that the Headquarters staff wish to discuss with the Commandants.

Sincerely yours

P.H. Pearse

Letter from P.H. Pearse to Eamon de Valera, March 11, 1915
Eamon de Valera Papers, UCD Archives P150/450
<http://www.ucd.ie/archives/html/collections/devalera-amon.htm>

<https://exhibitions.lib.udel.edu/easter1916/home/war-of-independence/de-valera/>

Source 2



A comic depicting de Valera's welcome to the USA in 1919.
Published in the American, Catholic comic *Treasure Chest*, Volume 24 No. 6, 21 November 1968

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/theirishrevolution/collections/mapping-the-irish-revolution/de-valeras-american-tour-1919-20/>

2. He was a masterful statesman.

Source 3



Fianna Fáil Election Poster, 1948

PARALLEL HISTORIES

Source 4

The aim of our policy, I said, would be to keep our people out of the war...Certain newspapers have been very persistent in looking for my answer to Mr. Churchill's recent broadcast. I know the kind of answer I am expected to make...I know the reply I would have given a quarter of a century ago. But I have deliberately decided that that is not the reply I shall make tonight. I shall strive not to be guilty of adding any fuel to the flames of hatred and passion which, if continued to be fed, promise to burn up whatever is left by the war of decent human feeling in Europe...Mr. Churchill is proud of Britain's stand alone, after France had fallen and before America entered the War. Could he not find in his heart the generosity to acknowledge that there is a small nation that stood alone not for one year or two, but for several hundred years against aggression...Mr. Churchill is justly proud of his nation's perseverance against heavy odds. But we in this island are still prouder of our people's perseverance for freedom through all the centuries

De Valera's response to Winston Churchill's public criticism of Ireland's policy of neutrality during World War II, broadcast on 16 May 1945. This speech was very popular in Ireland.

<https://www.rte.ie/archives/exhibitions/eamon-de-valera/719137-de-valera-response-to-churchill/>

3. In the Civil War, he backed real independence rather than a compromise with the United Kingdom.

Source 5



A Sinn Fein poster announcing a demonstration to be held in Downpatrick on St Patrick's Day 1918, at which de Valera was to speak

<https://ifiarchiveplayer.ie/the-irreconcilable-mr-de-valera/>

Source 6

De Valera Acts to Establish Irish Republic

DUBLIN, May 1 [Saturday].—(AP)—A new constitution declaring all Ireland a “sovereign, independent democratic state” was published early today by President Eamonn De Valera of the Irish Free State.

Revolutionary in scope and hailed as a personal triumph for De Valera, the document declares the “inalienable” right of the Irish nation “to choose its own form of government, to determine relations with other nations, and to develop its life, political, economic, and cultural, in accordance with its own genius and traditions.” It provides for the election of a president by direct vote.



Eamon de Valera.
[Acme Photo.]

Since coming into power De Valera has consistently fought for Irish freedom. Last December, during the abdication crisis, he erased the name of the king from the constitution of 1922 and abolished the office of governor general, the king’s agent.

Article from the Chicago Tribune, 1 May 1937

PARALLEL HISTORIES

4. He ensured that Ireland secured not only political independence, but safeguarded its distinctive culture from British influence

Source 7



Liam Ó Rinn's successor, Tomás Page, continued the work of developing the official written version of the language and in 1945 the then Taoiseach, Eamon de Valera, asked Rannóg an Aistriúcháin to update and simplify the official spelling of the language. This resulted in the publication of *Litriú na Gaeilge: lámhleabhar an chaighdeáin oifigiúil* the same year. In 1957, Chief Translator, Séamas Daltún, was asked by An Taoiseach de Valera to provide a guide on the official grammar of the language. As a result, *Gramadach na Gaeilge agus Litriú na Gaeilge – An Caighdeán Oifigiúil* was published in 1958.

Extract from the website commemorating the 100th anniversary of Dáil Éireann

<https://www.dail100.ie/en/long-reads/the-irish-language-in-the-oireachtas/>

Source 8



Poster promoting the Gaelic League's 'Seachtain na Gaeilge' [then spelt 'Seachtmhain na Gaeilge'] Irish Language Week fundraising efforts, 1913

<https://athenry.org/record/the-conradh-na-gaeilge-oireachtas-in-galway-in-1913-and-published-here-thanks-to-the-galwayadvisor-201/>

PARALLEL HISTORIES

5. He kept the young, new country of Ireland together without resorting to dictatorship

Source 9

GERMANY AND IRELAND.

“The Third Reich, as the guardian and energising force of European policy is inevitably interested in the continuity of these principles of national freedom enunciated in the past by Germany and the other Great European Powers and if, in the prosecution of the present war, German forces should land in Ireland. they will land. as they did in 1916, as friends and liberators of the Irish people.

Extract from an open letter by the IRA called "Ireland's Answer", that rejected calls for them to reconcile with the UK because of the Nazi threat, 25 May 1940

<https://www.macgillsummerschool.com/our-society-needs-fundamental-political-reforms/>

Source 10

Bill Kissane

Éamon de Valéra and the Survival of Democracy in Inter-War Ireland

By 1939 Eire was the only successor state created after the end of the first world war to have retained a democratic form of government. Born into civil war in 1922, it saw repeated bouts of crisis and instability; the emergence of radical groups on the left and right in the 1930s; and the subsidence of political unrest late in that decade. In 1937 a new constitution was introduced, which retained a parliamentary form of government, and represented a unique amalgam of Catholic, liberal, and republican principles of government. Despite its flaws, the constitution has survived two reviews and is now one of the oldest of Europe's constitutions. Yet nowhere is the ambiguity of Ireland's democratic achievement better exemplified than in the person of Éamon de Valéra, author of the constitution, but symbol of the intensely conservative society he presided over for so long. The constitution itself, while testimony to the resilience of Irish democratic values, is subject to frequent criticism by virtue of its nationalist, Catholic — some would say, its authoritarian features.¹ Nevertheless, the constitution was a product of its time, and was one man's response to the instability that affected independent Ireland in the inter-war era. Moreover, since that instability was part of a European crisis, the constitution is also a statement of how societies can withstand periods of turbulence and disorder, while remaining ostensibly true to democratic ideals. That something was lost in this process is undeniable, but the longevity of de Valéra's constitution and the long period of political stability it introduced suggest a wider significance in the annals of contemporary European history.

Kissane, Bill. "Éamon de Valéra and the Survival of Democracy in Inter-War Ireland." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 42, no. 2, 2007, pp. 213