

A NEW IRELAND BEGINS

Democratic Programme Of The First Dáil

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first President, Pádraig Mac Phiarais, we declare that the Nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.

We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality, and Justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of Government in the willing adhesion of the people.

We affirm the duty of every man and woman to give allegiance and service to the Commonwealth, and declare it is the duty of the Nation to assure that every citizen shall have opportunity to spend his or her strength and faculties in the service of the people. In return for willing service, we, in the name of the Republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the Nation's labour.

It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter, but that all shall be provided with the means and facilities requisite for their proper education and training as Citizens of a Free and Gaelic Ireland.

The Irish Republic fully realises the necessity of abolishing the present odious, degrading and foreign Poor Law System, substituting therefor a sympathetic native scheme for the care of the Nation's aged and infirm, who shall not be regarded as a burden, but rather entitled to the Nation's gratitude and consideration. Likewise it shall be the duty of the Republic to take such measures as will safeguard the health of the people and ensure the physical as well as the moral well-being of the Nation.

It shall be our duty to promote the development of the Nation's resources, to increase the productivity of its soil, to exploit its mineral deposits, peat bogs, and fisheries, its waterways and harbours, in the interests and for the benefit of the Irish people.

It shall be the duty of the Republic to adopt all measures necessary for the recreation and invigoration of our Industries, and to ensure their being developed on the most beneficial and progressive co-operative and industrial lines. With the adoption of an extensive Irish Consular Service, trade with foreign Nations shall be revived on terms of mutual advantage and goodwill, and while undertaking the organisation of the Nation's trade, import and export, it shall be the duty of the Republic to prevent the shipment from Ireland of food and other necessaries until the wants of the Irish people are fully satisfied and the future provided for.

It shall also devolve upon the National Government to seek co-operation of the Governments of other countries in determining a standard of Social and Industrial Legislation with a view to a general and lasting improvement in the conditions under which the working classes live and labour.

Adopted by Dáil Éireann, 21 January 1919



First Dáil in session, January 1919 in the Mansion House, Dublin

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The First Dáil | An Chéad Dáil

73 Sinn Féin candidates had been elected in the Westminster elections of December 1918. They refused to recognise the legitimacy of the British House of Commons in Westminster and instead of attending there, established an independent unicameral revolutionary parliament in Dublin, to be known as Dáil Éireann.

The first meeting took place on 21 January 1919 in the Round Room of the Mansion House in Dublin, the residence of the Lord Mayor of Dublin. Representatives to the new Dáil were given the newly minted title of Teachtaí Dála (T.D.s).



First Dáil "proposed to call into being a new democracy, using the methods of democracy itself"

- Fintan O'Toole



JJ Walsh had fought in the 1916 Rising



The proceedings began with a prayer from Fr. Michael O'Flanagan. In a highly symbolic move the proceedings of the Dáil were conducted entirely in Irish, except for previously drafted declarations, repeated in French and English. The Dáil elected Cathal Brugha as its Cenn Comhairle (chairman, literally 'head of council') and the main resolutions of the assembly were formulated:

- a brief, provisional, constitution;
- a Declaration of Independence;
- a message to the free nations of the world, asking for recognition of Ireland as a separate nation, free from British rule; and
- a Democratic Programme [see next panel].

The Declaration of Independence asserted that the Dáil was the parliament of a sovereign state called the "Irish Republic". The Dáil established a cabinet or Ministry – called in Irish "Aireacht" – and an elected head of government known both as the "Príomh Aire" and the "President of Dáil Éireann". The first, temporary, president was Cathal Brugha. He was succeeded by Éamon de Valera, following his escape from Lincoln Jail, on 1 April.

The British response

The British did not immediately see the danger posed by the establishment of Dáil Éireann. By spring 1919, however, they began to counter the Dáil's influence. The Dáil itself was banned in September 1919. Dublin Castle started a military campaign to suppress the Republic and a constitutional process to subvert it, culminating in the Government of Ireland Act, 1920. This Act denied the unity of Ireland and claimed British sovereignty over the entire island. Under the Act, Ireland was partitioned and a separate parliament was inaugurated in the North, thus creating Northern Ireland.

Second Dáil

The parliamentary election of May 1921 in the 26 southern counties returned all 128 candidates unopposed, of these 124 were Sinn Féin and 4 were Unionists representing Trinity College. The second Dáil met for the first time on 16 August 1921 and took a public oath to preserve the Republic, unanimously rejecting Lloyd George's offer of dominion status.

Cork's First TDs

Of the eight Sinn Féin TDs for Cork, only two, JJ Walsh of Cork City and Seán Hayes for West Cork, were able to attend. JJ Walsh was subsequently imprisoned for taking part in an illegal government. He was released in 1921.

Seán Hayes also did two stints in prison during the lifetime of the First Dáil. He served three months in prison following a raid on Sinn Féin offices in November 1919, and was re-arrested in 1920.

Both men would go on to support the Anglo Irish Treaty, with JJ Walsh taking up the position of Minister for Posts and Telegraphs in the Cumann na nGaedhal government between 1924 and 1927.

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“As Láthair”



The initial business of the First Dáil was conducted swiftly: the appointment of Cathal Brugha to chair proceedings, the appointment of clerks, and the calling of the roll. While 105 elected representatives were entitled to be present, the majority of them were either unable or unwilling to attend. No oath was administered on 21 January.



Twenty-nine names were recorded as present – in Irish (i láthair) – but in reality the number was twenty-seven. Harry Boland and Michael Collins were recorded as “i láthair” but this was a cover story to conceal their mission to rescue Eamon de Valera from Lincoln Jail in England.

Of the remaining 32 representatives invited but not present were six members of the Irish Parliamentary Party [IPP]:

- Patrick Donnelly (Armagh South),
- Joseph Devlin (Belfast Falls),
- Edward Kelly (Donegal East),
- Jeremiah McVeigh (Down South),
- Thomas Harbison (Tyrone North East) acknowledged his invitation but stated that “he should decline for obvious reasons”. He expressed his sympathy with the demand of Ireland for a hearing of her just Cause at the Congress of the Nations and the contents of his letter were ordered to be published, and
- William Redmond (Waterford City), brother of John Redmond, former leader of the IPP.

Other absentees included 26 unionists, mainly from the six counties in the north east of the island. In addition to the Ulster Unionists, the Attorney General for Ireland, Arthur Samuels and the surgeon, Sir Robert Woods from Dublin University, refused to attend.



34 of the 78 Sinn Féin representatives were described as being “imprisoned by the foreigners” (fé ghlais ag Gallaibh) and three as being “deported by the foreigners” (ar díbirt ag Gallaibh) An Dr. P. Mac Cartáin [Pat McCartan], Liam Ó Maoilíosa [Liam Mellows] and Diarmuid Ó Loingsigh [Diarmuid Lynch].



Pat McCartan



Liam Mellows



Diarmuid Lynch

Of the nine Cork TDs elected in December 1918, only two were in attendance:

Cathair Chorcaighe	S.S. Breathnach	i láthair
Cathair Chorcaighe	Liam de Róiste	as láthair
Co. Chorcaighe (thuaidh)	Pádraig Ó Caoimh	fé ghlais ag Gallaibh
Co. Chorcaighe (thoir)	Dáithí Ceannt	as láthair
Co. Chorcaighe (meadh)	Toirdhealbhadh Mac Suibhne	fé ghlais ag Gallaibh
Co. Chorcaighe (thoir thuaidh)	Tomás Ó Fiachra	fé ghlais ag Gallaibh
Co. Chorcaighe (theas)	Micheál Ó Coileáin	as láthair
Co. Chorcaighe (thiar)	Seán Ó hAodha	i láthair
Co. Chorcaighe (thoir theas)	Diarmuid Ó Loingsigh	ar díbirt ag Gallaibh

Elected Twice

Arthur Griffith was elected for two constituencies; Cavan East and Tyrone North West and Eamon de Valera was elected for two constituencies; Clare East and Mayo East.

Liam Mellows was elected for two constituencies; Galway East and Meath North.

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Ireland 1919 – Writers and Artists

1919 was also a crucial year for Irish writers and artists



Francis Ledwidge *Complete Poems*

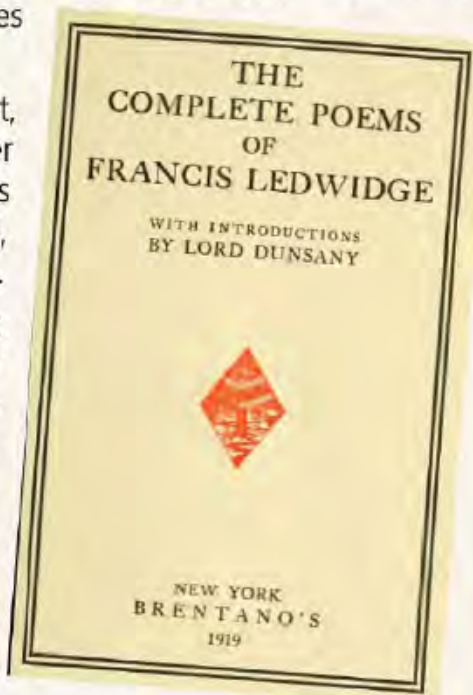
Francis Ledwidge grew up near the village of Slane Co. Meath. His father died when he was only four years old leaving his mother to support nine children by working as a farm labourer. Despite this hardship his literary talent flourished from a young age, and he read classic stories like *The Arabian Nights*, *Robinson Crusoe* and the works of Shakespeare.

His poems soon began to be published in the literary magazine *Saturday Review* and he met poets in the Irish literary circle of the time, including AE (George Russell), Thomas MacDonagh, Katherine Tynan and James Stephens.

As well as a poet, Ledwidge was a political activist and was a founder member of the Slane corps of the Irish Volunteers in 1913. When World War I broke out in 1914, Ledwidge enlisted in the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers.

Over the next three years, Ledwidge fought at and survived Gallipoli, Serbia and the Battle of Arras. He was devastated by the execution of his good friend and fellow poet Thomas MacDonagh following the Easter Rising in 1916. On 31 July 1916 Ledwidge died when a shell exploded beside him and his unit as they were repairing a road six miles north of Ypres on the Western Front.

In 1919, the *Complete Poems of Francis Ledwidge* was published and included Ledwidge's poem 'Lament for Thomas MacDonagh', which is regarded as one of his greatest works.



W.B. Yeats *The Wild Swans at Coole*

W. B. Yeats was a central figure in the Irish literary renaissance. One of the greatest poets of the 20th century in any language, he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.

Born into an Anglo-Irish family in Dublin who moved to London when he was two years old, Yeats spent much of his boyhood and school holidays in Sligo with his grandparents. The scenery, folklore and supernatural legends of the Sligo landscape had a significant influence on his life's work and was the setting of many of his poems. Indeed much of Yeats's

early work focused on the dream-like and ecstatic atmosphere of legends and folklore.

Between 1916 and early 1917 Yeats wrote the lyric poem "The Wild Swans at Coole". It was first published in the June 1917 issue of the *Little Review* and became the title poem in his 1919 collection *The Wild Swans at Coole*.

The poems in *The Wild Swans at Coole* are concerned with Irish nationalism and the creation of an Irish aesthetic. They also mark a turning point in the work of Yeats, a new directness with which he confronted reality and its imperfections.



An Seabac *Jimín Mháire Thaidhg*

An Seabac (born Pádraig Ó Sióchfradha) was a prominent figure of early 20th century Irish culture - author, storyteller, folklorist, activist and politician. The pen-name 'An Seabac' (the Hawk) is thought to be a consequence of his years as a travelling teacher. He published his most famous book *Jimín Mháire Thaidhg* in 1919 using this pen name. The book - in English *Jimeen* - is a fictionalised account of life growing up in the country, and follows the tribulations and

misadventures of a young boy who can't stay out of trouble.

An Seabac worked as a teacher from 1910 until 1922 and was a member of the Gaelic League from early in his life. He became an active organiser for the Irish Volunteers in 1913 and was imprisoned three times for his activities. In 1922 he moved to Dublin under the auspices of the Department of Education and spent a great deal of energy in the 1920s establishing Irish-speaking schools across Dublin. An Seabac continued to stay active in a large number of writing and political projects. In later life he was secretary to the Irish Manuscripts Commission and a member of Seanad Éireann.



Harry Clarke *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*

Harry Clarke was Ireland's most renowned stained glass artist. During his short life, plagued by ill-health, he created over 160 stained glass windows for religious and commercial commissions in Ireland, England, USA and Australia, some of the finest stained glass work produced in the 20th century. Clarke was also an illustrator of books and his illustrations show a remarkable genius in the area of graphic art; they continue to fascinate and delight readers worldwide.

His mother died from tuberculosis when he was just 14 years old. Clarke left school and began work as

an apprentice with his father in a studio at the rear of the family home in Dublin. His exceptional abilities were quickly evident; Laurence Waldron, a Nationalist MP, was an influential friend and patron. By 1913 Clarke had secured his first commission from Harrap & Co., to illustrate the *Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*, published in 1916.

Between 1915 and 1918 Clarke created nine windows for the Honan Chapel, in University College Cork. These magnificent windows were central to building a solid reputation for his skilled craftsmanship and originality. In the meantime, he continued to illustrate books for the London publishers including Edgar Allen Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* which was published in 1919 and *The Year's at the Spring*, published the following year.

Harry Clarke was diagnosed with tuberculosis in 1929. He died in Switzerland at the age of 41 two years later.

