

1882 — 1982

Éamon de Valera

Comóradh Céad Bliain





DO ÉAMON de VALERA

An raibh bandéithe na cinniúna
Ag foluain thart san áit
Nuair a cumascadh tusa
Sa ríocht dhorcha dhiamhair?

Nuair a tháinig tú ar an saol
An raibh caipín an tsonais
Go follas ar do cheann
Nuair a leagadh i mbaclainn do mháthar tú?

Bhí séala ar chlár d'éadain
Branda an náire bhí ort
Is tú fós id' naí bheag,
An sórt a bhí ar gach fial-mhac.

Náire uasal a bhí oraibh
B'áil liom sin a ríomhadh;
Bhúr dtír uile a bhí
Faoi dhrámh na daoirse.

Gan ag cuid dá clann
Ach briatharchathanna seasca,
Is iad i gcónaí fós
Á mealladh ag galla.

Briatharchathanna níor leor libh
Mar fhuascailt ar a ceasna,
Is b'as an armchath ar fad
A bhí bhúr muinín feasta.

Nuair a séideadh an Barr Bua,
Bí Fianna ár linne ag fanacht,
Go ligidís na geimhle síos díobh,
Go dtagaidís i seilbh a n-athardha.

Nuair a fearadh an cath,
Ní ar deireadh a bhí tú,
Ach sheas an fód sa tréanghal;
Tú sásta seasamh go deireadh déanach.

Daoradh chun báis tú ach grodscaoileadh
Nuair nár tuigeadh dod' námhaid
An sórt a bhí acu:
Bheadh sé ina chath anois gan mhagadh.

Gaois a scaoilfí feasta
An fhírinne a chur san áit
Nár bh' fhéidir í a threascairt:
An bhréag a thochtú go tapaidh.

Lean an spéirling dheacair
Ar feadh ceithre bliana fada,
Tháinig an conradh is go gairid
Ar a shála-Cogadh na gCarad.

Bhí do chroí lena linn
Traochta is tuirseach tinn;
Nó go dtug ár muintir
Duit arís an chraobh.

Chuaigh tú thar lear
I gceannas Chomhairle na Náisiún,
Is thugais foláireamh feidhmláidir uait,
Is comhairle a bhí ciallmhar.

Chuiris fainic ar chách
Go mb'fhearr cloí leis an bhfírinne;
An fhírinne i ngach cás
Is an mhacántacht taobh léi.

Níor fhágais focal ag an tionól
A bhí ag súil le milisbhriathra,
Ach chuaigh do cháil i bhfad
Is níor nár le hÉirinn a mac.

Tréith a shíúil leat
Sa mbaile is i gcéin duit,
B'ea an dínit a thabhaigh
D'imeacht is do theacht i láthair duit.

Le himeacht aimsire
Is an cáirde caite,
Tháinig an bás dod' iarraidh;
Chuaigh an námhaid tréan ag triall ort.

Nuair a thit ár mbile ar lár
Cé go raibh an samhradh fós go hard;
D'aithneodh duine gan dua
Go raibh smúid ar ghnúis na tíre.

Nuair a síneadh síos i gcré tú
Ní toirt amháin a dhearbhaigh
Go mba fathach fir is rí
A d'imigh isteach san alltar.

Iar ndul san alltar duit, a rí,
(Óir b'shin é gan bhréag do theist);
Is gan freasúra fós a bhí:
An bhean sí dá gcluintí níorbh ionadh.

*Máirtín Ó Direáin.
Lúnasa, 1982.*



With his mother 1929



President and Bean de Valera celebrating their Diamond Jubilee 1970

EAMON DE VALERA

1882 – 1975

by Thomas P. O'Neill

The Formative Years

Eamon de Valera's life spanned almost a century of Ireland's history and his name is associated with the major events of his time. Even in his birth in New York in 1882 he had a link with the major social phenomenon of nineteenth century Ireland, emigration, for he was the son of an Irish emigrant, Kate Coll from Bruree, County Limerick, and the husband she had married in the United States, the Spanish-born Vivion Juan de Valera. Fate, however, was to dictate that the infant would grow up not in the New World but in the Old — not in the United States but in the Ireland of the land troubles. The death of his father saw the child sent to his maternal grandmother in Bruree at the age of two and a half years and there he grew up in an agricultural labourer's cottage, tasting the poverty and difficulties of the Irish countryside in an era in which prosperity was little known. In his formative years he was inspired with a love of rural Ireland which was to remain with him to the very end of his days for, despite the years he was to spend in Dublin, he always prided himself on being what he would call a countryman.

Those early years were to make him what he was, a self-reliant man who was taking decisions as to his own future while still a schoolboy. He showed determination in his pursuit of education. Whether it was the facing of the seven mile walk daily from the nearest secondary school at

rostrum, first at Rockwell College near Cashel, County Tipperary and later in the Sisters' of Mercy College for training women teachers at Carysfort, south of Dublin City.

The chalk of the schoolmaster was to cling to de Valera through his life. He had a didactic manner even on the public platform. But perhaps the most noted characteristic which he owed to his academic background was his detached judgement and his ability to isolate problems as if they were mathematical propositions. Also he gained from it a broad cultural interest which stayed with him to the end of his life.

The Gaelic Revival

Perhaps it was his cultural interest which involved him from 1907 in the movement for the revival of the Irish language. With typical dedication he learned the language and was to be a fervent supporter of the revival movement throughout his career. It was in his Irish class that he met Sinéad Ní Fhlanagáin, his teacher, whom he married in January 1910. Their long happy partnership was to last sixty-five years until her death in January 1975 and they were to have five sons and two daughters. Mrs. de Valera provided unobtrusive but incalculable support for her husband through the long years of his public life. She was also one of the most charming women who graced Irish life in her generation.



Eamon and Sinéad de Valera after their wedding on 8 January, 1910.



Under arrest before his courtmartial, 1916.

Rathluirc (Charleville) or in his concentration on winning the scholarships necessary if he were to continue on to higher education, de Valera showed a single-minded determination which was to become a marked characteristic of his adult life. He passed from the Christian Brothers' school in Rathluirc to Blackrock College and ultimately to a university degree in mathematics and to the teacher's

The 1916 Rising

From the Irish language movement of the early decades of this century came the leaders of a new Ireland and one of them was Eamon de Valera. When the movement towards Irish independence was threatened by Carson's Ulster Volunteers in 1912 and 1913, de Valera was one of the thousands who joined the Irish Volunteers to give back-

bone to John Redmond's demand for Home Rule. In this Volunteer movement he showed again the dedication which marked his career and he rose in the ranks until, in 1915, he became commandant of the Third Dublin Battalion and adjutant of the Dublin Brigade. The thoroughness of his planning was seen in the deployment of his forces in the Ringsend area during the 1916 Rising when he and his battalion withstood the assault of the Sherwood Foresters who had landed at Dun Laoghaire.

In the aftermath of the Rising de Valera escaped execution by a hair's breadth in the military rule of the first week of May 1916. His death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. As the senior surviving officer who had participated in the Rising he had an acknowledged position among the prisoners. The leadership which he exerted in Dartmoor and Lewes Jails was to strengthen his pre-eminence. He came out of prison in June 1917, when the

a compromise settlement with Britain which was to fail to meet Irish aspirations especially on the issue of partition, and a bitter war was to follow.

Sovereignty of the People

In the wake of the civil war de Valera showed his perseverance in building a new political movement, in founding a new party, Fianna Fáil, in 1926, in leading it into the Dáil in 1927 and in reaching Office in 1932. During the next sixteen years he eroded almost all the unfavourable terms of the Treaty of 1921. He abolished the oath of allegiance to the Crown; he reduced the status of King's representative in Ireland, the Governor-General; he changed the whole constitutional relationship between Britain and Ireland. Indeed his policy in this period brought about the very relationship with Britain and with the British Commonwealth which he had envisaged in 1921 but,



Returning from prison in England in 1917.



Defending Ireland's policy of neutrality, May 1945.

last of those who fought in the Rising were released, as the acknowledged leader in a movement which had inspired the national imagination. Indeed on his release he was elected as M.P. for East Clare but did not take his House of Commons seat. He became president of a new revitalised political organisation, Sinn Féin, and of the Irish Volunteers. He was imprisoned again in 1918 and made a spectacular escape from Lincoln Jail the following year with the aid of Michael Collins and Harry Boland.

President of the First Dáil

In the meantime Sinn Féin, in the 1918 general election, had a sweeping victory in Ireland and had established an Irish parliament, Dáil Éireann. De Valera became President in April 1919 and established an Irish Government the aim of which was to undermine the British administration in Ireland. He went to the United States to raise a loan for the Dáil and to seek international recognition for Irish independence.

In the height of Black and Tan repression, after the arrest of Arthur Griffith, de Valera returned secretly to Ireland to lead the Dáil administration again. This he did during the following twelve months which saw a Truce with the British and negotiations for a settlement which led to a Treaty. This agreement was to be the wedge on which the united movement of the previous four years split. There was to be

which the Treaty of that year failed to achieve. Perhaps the most clear example of his astute political sense of timing was seen in his use of the abdication of Edward VIII to remove the last symbol of allegiance to the British Crown from the Irish Constitution. These changes were to be codified in a new constitution passed by referendum in 1937, in which, despite English pressure, there was no reference to membership of the British Commonwealth.

De Valera did not bring about these changes without considerable opposition from the British government. Indeed economic sanctions were imposed to prevent him from loosening ties with Britain. With the constitutional issues decided by the plebiscite of 1937, de Valera entered into negotiations regarding outstanding differences between Britain and Ireland. The result was a triumph in which British rights to the use of certain forts on the Irish coast were surrendered and the economic sanctions against Ireland were withdrawn.

Irish Neutrality

Already there were clear threats to the peace of Europe. At the League of Nations in 1932, when he was president of the Council, de Valera had warned of the dangers arising from the weakness of the League. As the years passed he saw the failure of collective security. In 1938, when he was elected president of the Assembly of the League, he tried

in vain to involve that almost discredited body in the last efforts to avoid war at Munich. When war came, de Valera announced that Ireland would be neutral.

This policy was made possible by the agreement of the previous year with Britain by which the defence clauses of the Treaty of 1921 were cancelled. For the first time in modern history an Irish State was able to assert its independence of world power by staying outside the conflict. The policy was supported by the vast majority of the people and by all the political parties in the State but it was the nerve of de Valera which had to withstand the pressures. Never did he speak so clearly for the nation as he did at the end of the war when he answered a final Churchillian broadside. Never was the nation so proud of him.

In 1948 the sixteen unbroken years of de Valera administration came to an end but the success of his

A Lifetime of Dedication

At that time I had begun work on a biography of de Valera and I had a rare opportunity of observing him at work and of sharing many an hour with him. The bright intelligence of his comments and the sharpness of his understanding of shades of meaning of words stand out in my memory. The most remarkable thing about him, however, was the long hours he spent at his desk. He was nearly blind but not totally so. Yet his intellect remained unimpaired through fourteen years as President of Ireland. (He was elected for a second term in 1966.)

He was a man of simple tastes. Mathematics which he deserted for politics was to remain for him an abiding interest — something to turn to in spare moments. As President he was able to give more time to them. He purchased new mathematical books, many of them in French, which his secretary, Máire Ní Cheallaigh, read to him. He even taught her the Greek alphabet and



Presiding over the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in September 1932, as President of the Council of the League of Nations.

policies were to be seen even when he was out of office. The breaking of the last link with the British Commonwealth in 1948 was the logical conclusion to his years of office. In succeeding years he was twice again to be back as head of Government but they were for short terms. The main battles were already fought and the issue of partition, which he always felt strongly, was outside the field of practical politics at that stage. Perhaps his principal contribution in those later years lay in his quiet and tactful withstanding of pressures of Church on State.

Head of State

In the summer of 1959 de Valera retired from Leadership of the Government to become a candidate for the Presidency of Ireland. The reins of Government passed to Seán Lemass while the people elected de Valera to the highest office in the land. He was in his seventy-seventh year but he filled the office with remarkable vitality and with quiet dignity.

When occasion demanded he travelled abroad to represent the Irish people — notably at the funeral of John F. Kennedy. When I asked him, on his return, was he tired, his answer was "Not too tired. It is alright as long as I am able to do my duty". That was the spirit which drove him to stand bareheaded in the snow and sleet at the side of Roger Casement's grave in Glasnevin in 1965, despite the fact that he was suffering from jaundice at the time.

mathematical symbols necessary to the task and got Linguaphone records to improve his and her French pronunciation. The ancient classics too, were to give him pleasure in his later life. The Bible was a continued source of inspiration to him, for he was a deeply devout Catholic. His ascetic appearance belied the warmth of his friendship or kindness of his relationship with those around him. A veil of austerity hid his lively sense of humour. He was too rigidly accurate to be a good raconteur but he certainly could enjoy a well told story, especially if it related to people he had known. He seldom had an original joke, though I liked his remark to me when Nelson's Pillar was blown up. When I met him that morning he said, 'The newspapers missed it'. 'Missed what, President', I asked. 'Ah, the headline: "Noted British admiral leaves Dublin by air".'

De Valera retired to a nursing home in 1973 in his ninety-first year. It was Talbot Lodge, Blackrock, run by the Irish Sisters of Charity. There he lived out the last two years of his life in peace. His official activities were confined to duties as Chancellor of the National University of Ireland; a role he filled for over half a century. His memories stretched back to the days of the land war and of Parnell, to the changes that had come in his own life-time. But then he had wrought many of those changes himself for he was a life-size slice of Irish history.

Thomas P. O'Neill is a lecturer in history at University College, Galway, and is co-author with Lord Longford of the official biography on Eamon de Valera.



Eamon de Valera, as a student 1898



*Eamon de Valera in uniform in 1916 as Commandant 3rd Batt. Dublin Brigade, Boland's Mill garrison.
His was the last garrison to surrender.*

Quotations

"If I had to make a choice between political freedom without the language, and the language without political freedom. I would choose the latter. For that freedom which a nation loses can be regained, but a language once it is dead can never be revived.

If our national tongue were to disappear, that characteristic upon which our nationality most depends would be lost . . . Our very nationality — the artery of which feeds freedom — would decay and we would no longer have the right to be reckoned among the nations of the world."

"Language is a chief characteristic of nationhood — the embodiment, as it were, of the nation's personality and the closest bond between its people. No nation with a language of its own would willingly abandon it . . . They know that without it they would sink into an amorphous cosmopolitanism — without a past, or a distinguishable future". (*Address 10 April 1966. The fiftieth anniversary of Rising of 1916.*)

Throughout the past it has been precisely this that has been the issue in the contest between Ireland and Britain — it is this that is the issue between Ireland and Britain today: that Ireland will not give up her own individuality as a nation and will not surrender her title to independence as a separate nation. (*At Lowell, Mass. February 8, 1920*)

My ideal is now, as it has always been, that of an independent Irish Republic. This is also the ideal of the Irish people. (*Press interview, January 15, 1922*)

There is no difficulty in finding the boundaries of Ireland. The Almighty marked them forever in the Atlantic. (*At Sinn Féin Ard Fheis, October 28, 1921*)

You sometimes hear Ireland charged with a narrow and intolerant nationalism, but Ireland today has no dearer hope than this: that true to her holiest traditions, she may humbly serve the truth and help by truth to save the world. (*Opening broadcast from Athlone Broadcasting Station, February 6, 1933*)

It is vain to think that the natural aspirations of Irishmen for the liberty of their country are going to be stifled now. If the road of peaceful progress and natural evolution be barred, then the road of revolution will beckon and will be taken. Positive law and natural right will be involved in the old conflict. The question of majority rule and minority right will be again bloodily fought out, and when the fight is over it will probably be found out once more that the problem has remained and that force is not the solution. (*Addressing first Fianna Fáil Ard Fheis, November 24, 1926*)

If a cause cannot stand on the solid ground of truth, how long do you hope to prop it up with falsehood? (*Letter published January 30, 1918*)

The political and social principles of Fianna Fáil are those enshrined in the Constitution. We believe in the right of the people to choose their Government, and in final resort to determine all questions of national policy. We believe in preserving for the individual the fullest freedom consistent with the rights of his fellow citizens and the general welfare. We respect the dignity of the human person and the indefeasible place of the family as the fundamental unit group of society. We regard the State as being ordained for the individual, not the individual for the State. We believe in the right to private property and in its widest practicable diffusion. We believe in private initiative and private enterprise, supplemented where necessary by the efforts of the State, as best conducing to the well-being of the community as a whole and, with the necessary safeguards, as being best calculated to promote the common good.

The political, social, economic, and cultural programmes for the national development formulated by Fianna Fáil are in accord with these principles.

Material conditions alone will make neither the individual nor The Nation great or happy. We can become a great people only if things intellectual and spiritual are held in proper esteem amongst us and if we fashion our individual lives according to noble ideals. If we make the doing of this our highest national aim we can hope to prove worthy of the past and of the sacrifices that have been made to make us free. (*Two quotes from "The Policy of Fianna Fáil."*)



"It is indeed hard for the strong to be just to the weak".

A VISION OF A NOBLER ENDING

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 answer that first springs to the lips of every man of Irish blood who heard or read that speech, no matter in what circumstances or in what part of the world he found himself.

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.

Allowances can be made for Mr. Churchill's statement, however unworthy, in the first flush of his victory. No such excuses could be found for me in this quieter atmosphere. There are, however, some things which it is my duty to say, some things which it is essential to say, I shall try to say them as dispassionately as I can.

Our Neutrality

Mr. Churchill makes it clear that, in certain circumstances, he would have violated our neutrality and that he would justify his action by Britain's necessity. It seems strange to me that Mr. Churchill does not see that this, if accepted, would mean that Britain's necessity would become a moral code and that when this necessity became sufficiently great, other people's rights were not to count.

It is quite true that other Powers believe in this same code — in their own regard — and have behaved in accordance with it. That is precisely why we have the disastrous succession of wars — world war no. 1 and world war no. 2 — and shall it be world war no. 3?

Surely Mr. Churchill must see that if his contention be admitted in our regard, a like justification can be framed for similar acts of aggression elsewhere and no small nation adjoining a great Power could ever hope to be permitted to go its own way in peace.

It is, indeed, fortunate that Britain's necessity did not reach the point when Mr. Churchill would have acted. All credit to him that he successfully resisted the temptation which I have no doubt, many times assailed him in his difficulties and to which I freely admit many leaders might have easily succumbed. It is, indeed, hard for the strong to be just to the weak but acting justly always has its rewards.

By resisting his temptation in this instance, Mr. Churchill, instead of adding another horrid chapter to the already bloodstained record of the relations between England and this country, has advanced the cause of international morality an important step — one of the most important, indeed, that can be taken on the road to the establishment of any sure basis for peace.

As far as the peoples of these two islands are concerned, it may, perhaps, mark a fresh beginning towards the realisation of that mutual comprehension to which Mr. Churchill has re-

ferred and for which he has prayed and for which, I hope, he will not merely pray but work also, as did his predecessor who will yet, I believe, find the honoured place in British history which is due to him, as certainly he will find it in any fair record of the relations between Britain and ourselves.

If England lost Six Counties —

That Mr. Churchill should be irritated when our neutrality stood in the way of what he thought he vitally needed, I understand, but that he or any thinking person in Britain or elsewhere should fail to see the reason for our neutrality I find it hard to conceive.

I would like to put a hypothetical question — it is a question I have put to many Englishmen since the last war. Suppose Germany had won the war, had invaded and occupied England, and that after a long lapse of time and many bitter struggles she was finally brought to acquiesce in admitting England's right to freedom, and let England go, but not the whole of England, all but, let us say, the six southern counties.

These six counties, those, let us suppose, commanding the entrance to the narrow seas, Germany had singled out and insisted on holding herself with a view to weakening England as a whole, and maintaining the security of her own communications through the Straits of Dover.

Let us suppose, further, that after all this had happened, Germany was engaged in a great war in which she could show that she was on the side of the freedom of a number of small nations, would Mr. Churchill as an Englishman who believed that his own nation had as good a right to freedom as any other, not freedom for a part merely, but freedom for the whole — would he, whilst Germany still maintained the partition of his country and occupied six counties of it, would he lead this partitioned England to join with Germany in a crusade? I do not think Mr. Churchill would.

Would he think the people of partitioned England an object of shame if they stood neutral in such circumstances? do you think Mr. Churchill would.

Ireland's Lone, Long Stand

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; that endured spoliation, famines, massacres in

endless succession; that was clubbed many times into insensibility, but that each time on returning consciousness took up the fight anew; a small nation that could never be got to accept defeat and has never surrendered her soul?

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. We of our time have played our part in that perseverance, and we have pledged ourselves to the dead generations who have preserved intact for us this glorious heritage, that we too will strive to be faithful to the end, and pass on this tradition unblemished.

Many a time in the past there appeared little hope except that hope to which Mr. Churchill referred, that by standing fast a time would come when, to quote his own words, "the tyrant would make some ghastly mistake which would alter the whole balance of the struggle."

I sincerely trust, however, that it is not thus our ultimate unity and freedom will be achieved, though as a younger man I confess I prayed even for that, and indeed at times saw no other.

In latter years, I have had a vision of a nobler and better ending, better for both our peoples and for the future of mankind. I regret that it is not to be this nobler purpose that Mr. Churchill is lending his hand rather than, by the abuse of a people who have done him no wrong, trying to find in a crisis like the present excuse for continuing the injustice of the mutilation of our country.

I sincerely hope that Mr. Churchill has not deliberately chosen the latter course but, if he has, however regretfully we may say it, we can only say, be it so.

Meanwhile, even as a partitioned small nation, we shall go on and strive to play our part in the world, continuing unswervingly to work for the cause of true freedom and for peace and understanding between all nations.

As a community which has been mercifully spared from all the major sufferings, as well as from the blinding hates and rancours engendered by the present war, we shall endeavour to render thanks to God by playing a Christian part in helping, so far as a small nation can, but bind up some of the gaping wounds of suffering humanity.

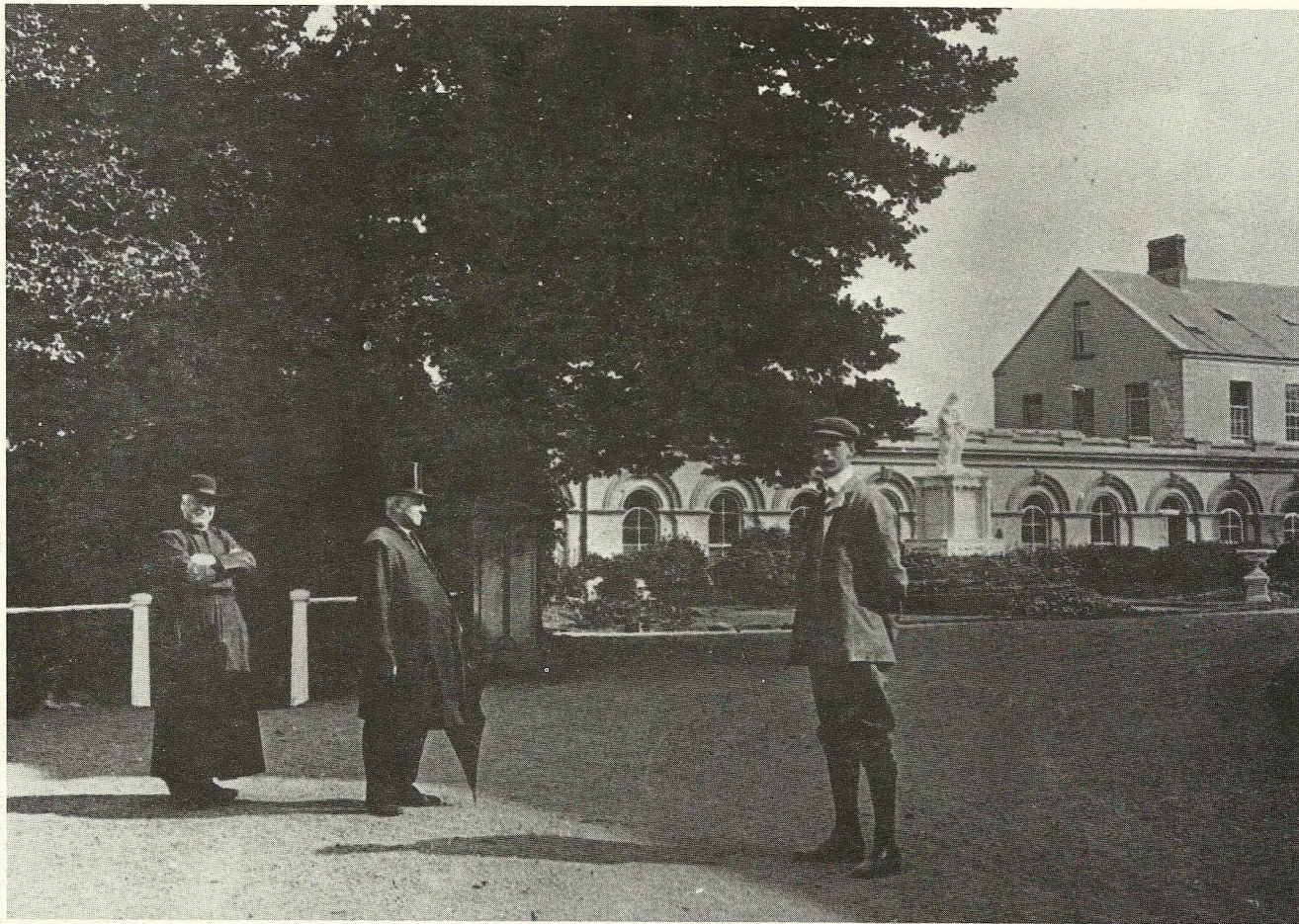
Agus anois, caithfidh mé slán a fhágáil agaibh. Nuair a bhíos ag caint libh i dtús an chogaidh, chuireas ar tír agus a muintir faoi choimirce Dé agus a Mháthar Muire, agus isé mo ghuide anocht: Go raibh an choimrí chumhachach chéanna oraibh san aimsir atá romhainn.



Entering Dáil Éireann August 11, 1927



Arriving at Ard-Fheis Fianna Fáil 1949.



Teacher Rockwell College 1903



The Family.



Chancellor National University of Ireland.



Hon. Docturate in Louvain.



First Fianna Fáil Cabinet.



1916 Golden Jubilee Celebrations, Kilmainham Jail, Dublin



Eamon de Valera's visit to the Arran Islands in the course of his tour of the Islands off the West Coast in the corvette Macha, July 15th, 1947.

1882 — 1982

EAMON de VALERA

*Centenary Commemoration
Celebration*

*The National Concert Hall
Dublin*

Sunday 24th October, 1982

Programme

“But they chose for leader a stern sure man
That looked not back on the waste of story:
For his country he fought in the battle’s van,
And he won her peace and he won her glory”
The Poet Captain — Thomas MacDonagh

1882 EAMON de VALERA

Prog

1. THIRD DAY CHORALE..... Conductor: Marie O'Shea
 National Anthem
 (i) *Finlandia* — Sibelius
 (ii) *Oft in the Stilly Night* — Traditional
 (iii) *Battle Hymn of the Republic* — Traditional

2. ORAID by AN TAOISEACH — Presentation by An Taoiseach of prizes to winners of Ogra Fail National Speaking Contest.

3. INIS EALGA DANCERS

4. FRANK PATTERSON..... Accompanist: EILY O'GRADY
 (i) *The Minstrel Boy*..... — Traditional
 (ii) *She is far from the Land*..... — Moore/Lambert
 (iii) *My Lagan Love*..... — arr. Herbert Hughes
 (iv) *An Poc ar buile*..... — Traditional
 (v) *Slán le Máigh*..... — Traditional
 (vi) *The Derry Air*..... — Molloy
 (vii) *Máire my Girl*..... — Keegan Casey/Aitken

INTERVAL 15 MINUTES

CENTENARY CONCERT 1982

Programme

1. INIS EALGA DANCERS

2. DINNY McLAUGHLIN..... *Traditional Fiddler*

3. MARY SHERIDAN..... Accompanist: BERNARD GEARY

- (i) *Tuirne mháire*..... — *Traditional*
- (ii) *Habanera (Carmen)*..... — *Bizet*
- (iii) *Ireland, Mother Ireland*..... — *Moore/Lambert*

4. THE WOLFTONES

Brian Warfield, Derek Warfield, Tommy Byrne, Noel Nagle

Compere: PADRAIC O'RAGHALLAIGH

AN COISTE

Eamon de Valera Comóradh Céad Bliain

Chairman

FRANK V. McDONNELL P.C.

Vice-President

JOHN P. WILSON T.D.
*Minister for Transport and
Posts and Telegraphs*

GERARD COLLINS T.D.
Minister for Foreign Affairs

ALBERT REYNOLDS T.D.
Minister for Industry and Energy

BERTIE AHERN T.D.
*Minister of State
Department of the Taoiseach*

TREAS HONAN
Cathaoirleach Seanad Éireann

SILE de VALERA
Member of European Parliament

A. A. HEALY
Vice-President

SEAMUS de BRUN
Seanadóir

ML. CRANITCH
Seanadóir

GERRY FLYNN

RICHARD HEALY

PAUL KAVANAGH

JOSEPH DOWLING

SEAMUS POWER

PASCAL MOONEY

RAY WALSH

MÁIRE NÍ CHEALLAIGH

PÓL MacMURCHÚ

FRANK A. WALL
General Secretary

AIDAN EAMES

SEAN HANRATTY
Hon. Secretary

CAPT. JACK O'CARROLL

BUÍOCHAS

A word of warm appreciation and thanks is due to all our good friends who have so generously contributed to the success of this historic occasion. The Organising Committee especially wish to express their gratitude of the artists for their distinguished and accomplished performances. They also express sincere thanks to the media, to Mr. Fred O'Donovan, Mr. Frank Murphy, the Board of Directors and Staff of the National Concert Hall for their generous assistance and co-operation.

Céad buíochas de Mháirtín Ó Direáin ar son an dáin: "Do Éamon de Valera". Go bhfága Dia a shláinte agus a chumas cumadóireachta aige.



Inauguration as President of Ireland, 1959.



With Pope Paul in Rome in 1963 when he attended the coronation.



With Pope John XXIII March 1962.

THE VITAL YEARS – A CHRONOLOGY

1882

October 14th: Born in New York, U.S.A.

1885

Brought to Ireland and reared in a farm labourer's cottage in Bruree, Co. Limerick.

1898 – 1910

Student, teacher, athlete.

Founder member of Association of Secondary Teachers. Joined Gaelic League.

1910

January 8th: Married Sinéad Ní Fhlannagain in St. Paul's Church, Arran Quay, Dublin. They had five sons, two daughters and eighteen grandchildren.

1913

November 25th: Joined Irish Volunteers.

1914

Received B.Sc. degree from National University of Ireland.

1916

Easter Rising: Commandant of Boland's Mills Garrison.

May 8th: Imprisoned cell number '59' Kilmainham Jail.

May 9th: Sentenced to death. Sentence commuted to penal servitude for life.

Imprisoned Mountjoy, Dartmoor, Maidstone, Lewes and Pentonville jails.

1917

Released from jail; elected M.P. for East Clare.

October 25th: Elected President of Sinn Féin.

1917 – 1922

President Irish Volunteers.

1918

May 17th: Arrested Greystones.

Imprisoned in Gloucester and then Lincoln jails.

1918 – 1921

M.P. for East Mayo.

1919

February 3rd: Escaped from Lincoln Jail.

1919 – 1922

April 1st 1919: Elected President of Irish Republic.

Declaration of Independence.

First Dáil Éireann.

1919 – 1920

In the United States seeking official recognition for Irish Republic. Raised U.S. Dollars 6 million loan for Dáil Administration.

January 17 1920: Granted Freedom of New York.

1921

June 22: Arrested by British Forces in Blackrock, Dublin, taken to Bridewell and subsequently transferred to Portobello barracks.

Released next day.

December 5th: Granted Freedom of Limerick City.

December 12th: Gave detailed exposition of Document No. '2' to Dáil Éireann.

July 11th: Truce between Irish and British forces.

July-October: Negotiated with Lloyd George.

December: Rejected Anglo-Irish Treaty.

1921 – 1929

M.P. for South Down.

1921 – 1975

Chancellor, National University of Ireland.

1922

Paris. Elected President Irish Race Congress.

June 16th: "Pact Election".

June 28th: Provisional Government forces attack the Four Courts.

Civil War begins.

1923

May: Civil War ends.

1923 – 1924

Interned by Free State Government, having been arrested while addressing a meeting in O'Connell Square, Ennis on August 15th.

He was lodged in Arbour Hill prison until October, then in Kilmainham Jail until Spring 1924 when he was transferred again to Arbour Hill. He was released on July 16th 1924.

1926

Resigned from Presidency of Sinn Féin.

May 16th: Founded Fianna Fáil — The Republican Party, first meeting La Scala Theatre, Dublin.

Elected Uachtarán Fianna Fáil.

November 24th: First Ard Fheis Fianna Fáil.

1927

Entered Dáil Éireann.

1931

Founded Irish Press.

1932 – 1948

Fianna Fáil government in power.

President of Executive Council and Minister for External Affairs.

1932

President of Council of League of Nations.

1933

May: Abolished Oath of Allegiance.

November: Abolished Right of Appeal to the Privy Council in London.

1933 – 1937

M.P. for South Down.

1937

Introduced Constitution of Ireland in Dáil Éireann.

Constitution ratified.

1937 – 1948

Taoiseach and Minister for External Affairs.

1939 – 1940

Minister for Education.

1938

Anglo-Irish Agreement ended economic war.

Irish Ports handed back without reservations to Irish Government.

Raised Irish tricolour over defence post at Spike Island, Cobh.

1938

September: Elected the nineteenth President of the Assembly of the League of Nations.

1939 – 1945

Achieved neutrality for State.

1940

Founded Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies with Constituent Schools, Celtic Studies, Theoretical Physics, Cosmic Physics.

1941

Founded Irish Shipping Limited.

May 1st: Belfast bombed and ablaze, sent Dublin Fire Brigade.

May 26th: Succeeded in opposing Conscription in the Six Counties.

1944

March: Appealed to belligerents to agree and save Rome — “this great centre of Christian faith and civilization”.

1945

May 16th: Broadcast reply to Churchill. It was said — “No speech ever made such an appeal.” Never had he spoken so clearly for the people never had the nation been so proud of him.

1948 – 1951

Leader of Opposition in Dáil Éireann.

1948

Visited Australia, New Zealand and United States as guest of Irish Societies.

Visited India and on last night of British Rule he was the guest of Lord and Lady Mountbatten.

1949

Strasbourg. Taking part in beginning of the European Movement and Council of Europe.

1950

Holy Year: Attended ceremonies at Luxeuil in France to commemorate St. Columbanus. Then went as pilgrim to Rome and to the Holy Land. Also visited Jordan.

1951 – 1954

Taoiseach. Fianna Fáil returned to Government.

1954 – 1957

Leader of Opposition in Dáil Éireann.

1957 – 59

Taoiseach.

May 26th 1959: Made last speech in Dáil Éireann after 33 years, closing debate on P.R.

1959 – 1973

President of Ireland.

1962

Received Order of Christ decoration from Pope John XXIII on St. Patrick's Day.

1964

May 28th: Addressed joint session of the Houses of Congress in Washington D.C.

1965

Attended interment of Roger Casement's remains at Glasnevin on 1st March.

1973

March: Conferred with Freedom of City of Cork.

1975

January: Death of Bean de Valera.

March: Conferred with Freedom of the City of Dublin.

August 29th: Death of Eamon de Valera. in his ninety-third year.

He received the following decorations and honours:—

Grand Cross of Order of Pius IX — 1933

Grand Cross of the Order of Charles — 1961

Supreme Order of Christ — 1962

Fellow of the Royal Society — 1968

Honoris Causa — LL.D., Ph.D. (N.U.I.), Sc.D. (Dublin), Dr. (Louvain)

Honorary Bencher of the Honourable Society of King's Inns.

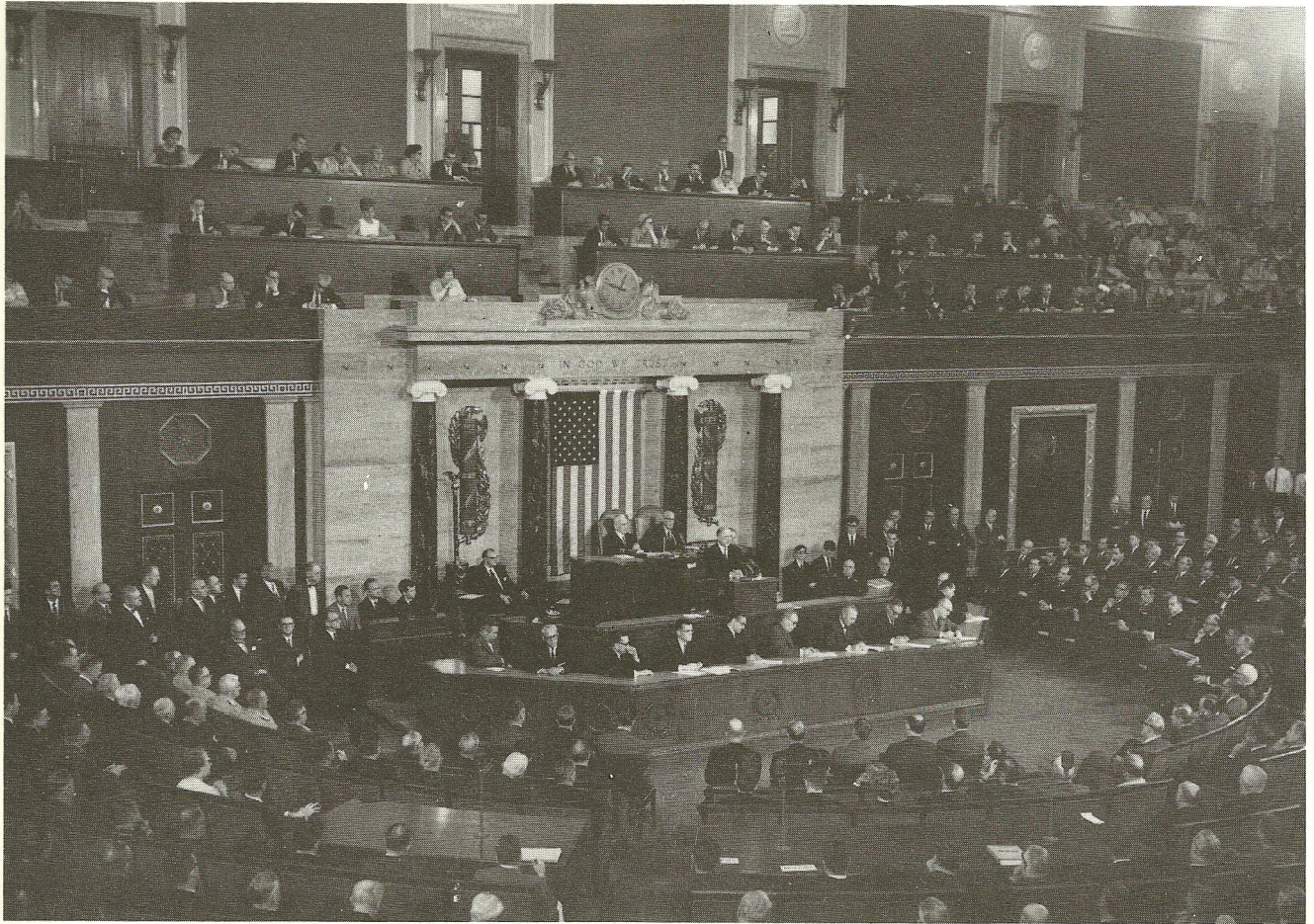
Hon. F.R.C.S.I.

Hon. F.R.C.P.I.

He was a member of the Royal Irish Academy and Patron of the Irish Mathematics Teachers Association.

Towards the end of his life he had written these words:

I have had a wonderful life . . . I want to thank God for it . . . I have had all the things that in a human way make for happiness . . . and a firm belief in the life to come . . . In my life I have had as co-workers some of the finest people that God has made — noble, devoted, loyal.



Addressing joint session of Congress in Washington, May 28, 1964.

Terry O'Sullivan Recalls (Evening Press, August 30, 1975)

The Day Mr. de Valera held U.S. Congress in thrall.

"I shall never forget President Eamon de Valera's address to Congress of the United States, May 29th, 1964.

The Chamber in Washington filled with the Ambassadors of national of antiquity . . . and of youth . . . and underneath the press gallery there were the Representatives of the power and the glory of the then world, the world that had not yet accepted the Third World.

As the seats of nations of the earth were filled by men who, one felt, had been here before, their presence demanded by boring protocol, I wondered, just how would the sophisticated members of the Diplomatic Corps, Washington, accept de Valera.

The entry of Eamon de Valera to the Chamber of the United States House of Congress was a moving occasion.

The old man entered to a standing ovation from the largest Embassy in the world, escorted to his desk by John W. McCormack, and then came the flaccid voice, so empty of nuances of accent and the skills of rhetoric that the Assembly, accustomed to meaningless nothings in Wagnerian accents were at first bored by this flat voice.

But . . . for almost half-an-hour the President of Ireland held the House of Congress in thrall. He stood on the dais

of honour and spoke with the overwhelming sound of honesty and sincerity . . .

When Eamon de Valera had ended his speech to the Congress of the United States there was the astonishing sight of a standing ovation.

An audience accustomed to dramatically tuned voices had heard an old, and almost blind man, speaking in a flat Limerick accent.

It was the sincerity that came through all.

To address the United States Congress, the President took full advantage . . . without losing the dignity of the country he represented.

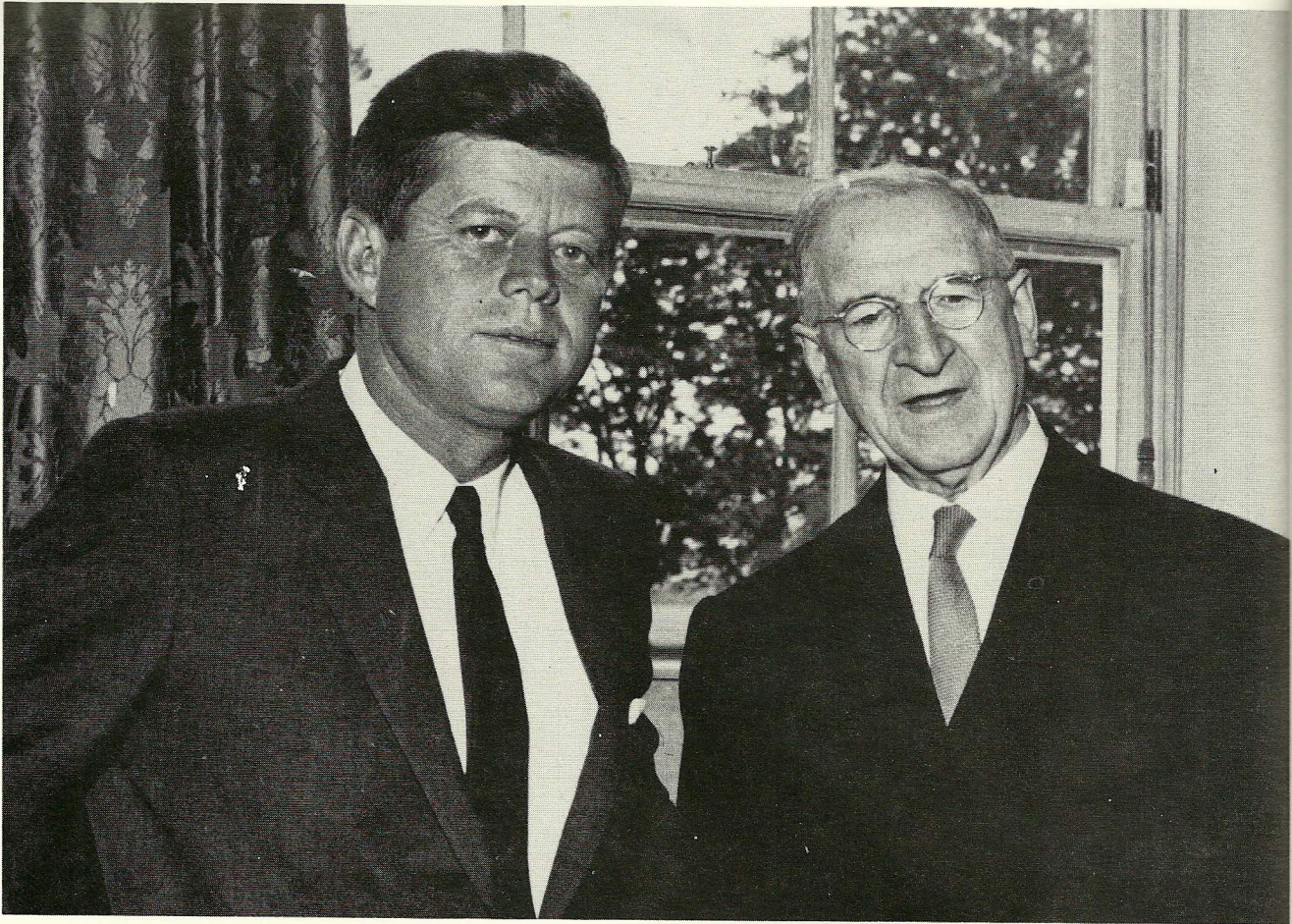
"The partition of Ireland was the one serious setback in the past 45 years. When I was here in 1919, Ireland was undivided. Since then she has been divided by a cruel partition."

He said that:

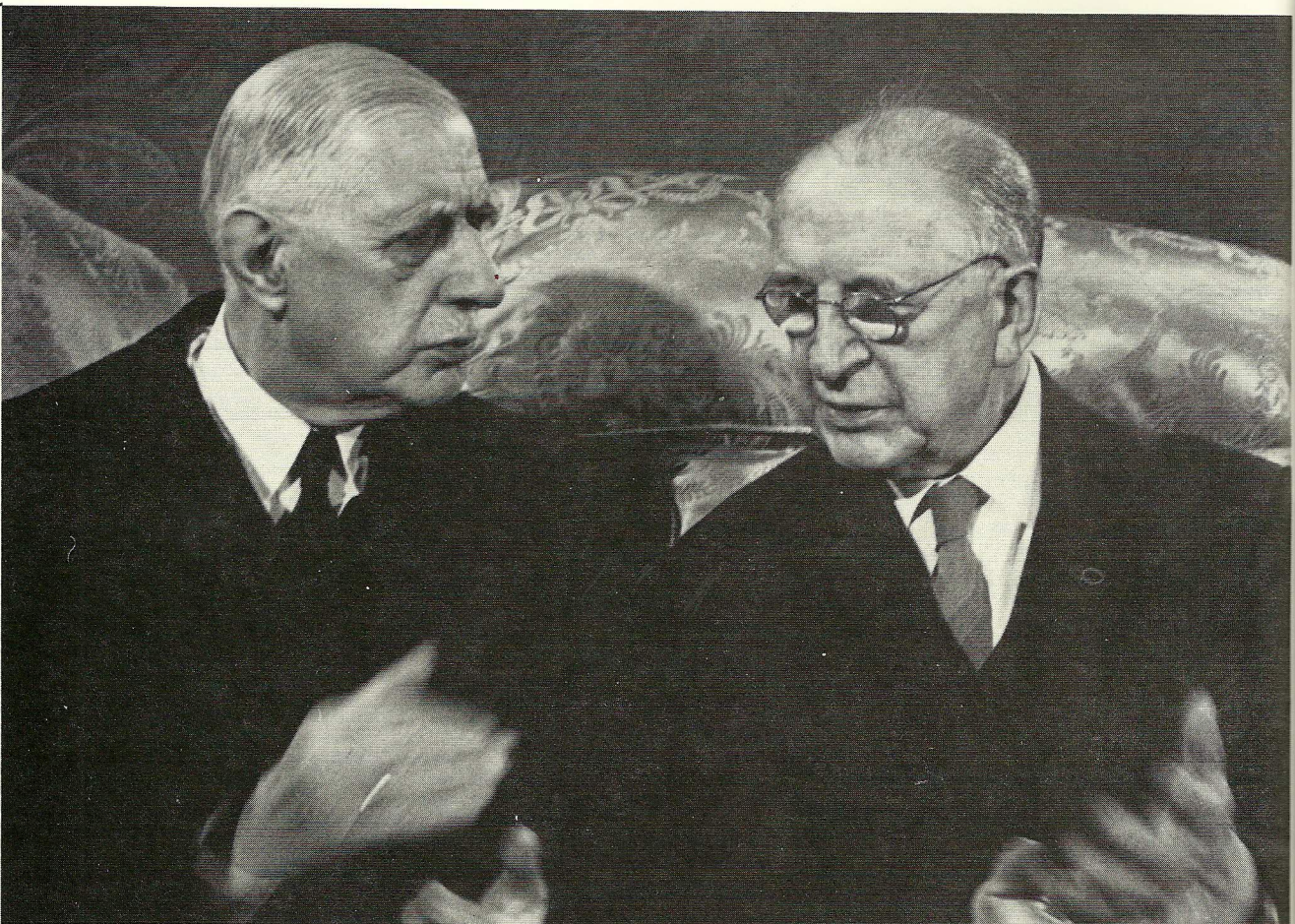
"partition is one of our most serious problems. But please God that too will be solved."

Several times when he mentioned Irish unification the Congress Assembly burst into applause. Not once did Eamon de Valera speak from notes.

It was a remarkable performance but then the speaker had also once dominated a League of Nations in Geneva.'



Two Presidents, Eamon de Valera and John F. Kennedy.



With President de Gaulle 1969.



The old homestead at Bruree.



Seated in school desk, Bruree.

THE WORLD PAYS TRIBUTE

Messages of Sympathy were received from all over the world following the announcement of the death of Mr. de Valera. Amongst those who sent tributes were the following:

President Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh

"One of the towering figures in Irish history has answered the last call, with a smile upon his lips.

"But his spirit abides with the land he loved unwaveringly. To the end, he bore himself as a scholar, a statesman and a soldier.

"Throughout the world, and, in particular, among peoples striving to be free, his name has been a synonym for the struggle for Irish independence.

M. Pierre Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada

"His life was entwined with the history of Ireland and his principles and determination deservedly earned for him the admiration and esteem of the world. He was loved and respected by Canadians, many of whom knew him personally, and the loss which Ireland has suffered in the death of this great Irishman is felt by Canada also."

M. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, President of France

"The name of this eminent statesman whose actions were so decisive for his country belongs to history, where he will occupy a prominent place. France, for her part, will not forget the marks of friendship which he so often showed her and therefore she very sincerely shares in the sorrow which has come upon Ireland."

Pope Paul VI

"With his passing, we recognise the loss of one of the most outstanding figures of your country's history and also of a true statesman of Europe. In mourning him as a faithful Christian leader and servant of his beloved people, we pray that the Lord may receive him into his heavenly Kingdom and grant him peace and joy in the risen Christ."

Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India

"He led his country to freedom and nurtured the fledgling Republic for many decades during his long and dedicated service to Ireland. During our own freedom struggle, we drew inspiration from de Valera. My father regarded him as a friend and it was a privilege to receive him in India. We held him in great respect and admiration."

His Excellency Brigadier Murtala Ramat Mohammed, Head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria

"Mr. de Valera's indomitable courage, sacrifice and

steadfastness in the national struggle for the liberation of Ireland have been a source of considerable inspiration to the oppressed peoples all over the world and have marked him out as one of the great freedom fighters of this century. The enormous contributions he made for over half a century to the development of modern Ireland both as Taoiseach and President are remembered with admiration in the developing world."

Mr. Gerald R. Ford, President of U.S.

"Our common tradition of struggle for liberty and justice was personified in the life of this distinguished Statesman. We are proud that this son of the United States became the father of modern Ireland. Our sense of loss is heightened by the intimate ties of friendship and kinship between our people."

M. F. X. Ortoli, President of the European Commission

"The life of Eamon de Valera was part of the history of Ireland and the history of Europe. The nations will remember his eminent role as a teacher, as a soldier and as a leader. The peoples of Europe will remember particularly his stature as a great statesman."

Mr. Kurt Waldheim, U.N. Secretary-General

"He was a most respected and esteemed servant of his country and a statesman of great distinction. Mr. de Valera's career as a dedicated and inspiring leader of Ireland will long be remembered and his passing will be widely mourned."

Mr. Henry Kissinger, U.S. Secretary of State

"We in the United States knew him as a brave leader of his people and as a distinguished statesman devoted to achieving international peace and freedom for all nations. This renowned son of America will always have a special place in our hearts, and his ideas will continue to inspire all of us."

Mr. V. V. Giri, former President of India

"My association with him dates back to 1913 when I joined the University in Dublin. It was my privilege to have worked with him and the other Irish freedom-fighters and my participation in their activities resulted in my externment under the orders of the British Government in 1916. In fact it is the early training that I derived from the Irish patriots and Mahatma Gandhi that inspired me to plunge later into the freedom struggle in India. The manner in which the Irish organised the working class as a bulwark of the freedom struggle made me determine and resolve that I too should similarly organise the workers as a part of the mass movement for independence."

DEATH OF A STATESMAN



Requiem Mass was celebrated at the Pro-Cathedral, Dublin.

Mr. Eamon de Valera, former Taoiseach and President of Ireland died in Dublin on 29th August, 1975. Aged 92, his death was the result of a bronchial pneumonia which had developed from a cold he contracted several weeks earlier. In his lifetime, Mr. de Valera had served his country in turn as teacher, revolutionary, President of the first Dáil, Opposition leader, Taoiseach and finally President.

On the evening following his death the body of the former President was brought, with full civil and military honours, from the nursing home where he had lived during his years of retirement to Dublin Castle for the official lying-in-State. His family, civil and religious dignitaries were first to pay their respects in St. Patrick's Hall, which was then opened to the general public.

During the lying-in-state over 100,000 people from all walks of life filed past Mr. de Valera's coffin and diplomatic representatives came to the catafalque at quarter-hour intervals to pay their last respects.

From Dublin Castle the remains were taken forty eight hours later to the Pro-Cathedral in Marlboro St. in

preparation for the funeral service there. Foreign dignitaries, political figures, members of the judiciary, hierarchy and the public gathered on the morning of 2nd September to hear Requiem Mass celebrated in Irish by Mr. de Valera's grandson, an tAthair Seán Ó Cuiv.

In a sermon delivered during the service the President of Maynooth College, the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Tomás Ó Fiach paid tribute to this great statesman, saying that despite his high office and his prominence among world leaders, he had never lost the naturalness or the friendliness or the common touch characteristic of the rural population among whom he was reared. His life was "full of natural dignity which required no conscious effort on his part and of a humility which recognised that everything was in the hands of God".

Following the service the coffin, draped in the Tricolour, was borne on a gun carriage through the streets of Dublin, lined with mourners, to Glasnevin Cemetery where Mr. de Valera was finally laid to rest beside his wife, Sinéad, who died in January of that year.



National Memorial, Ennis, Co. Clare.



The President and Ben de Valera at prayer.



Spike Island, 1938.

THE CHIEF

All who have identified themselves with Fianna Fáil as workers, electors or subscribers are entitled to be jubilant as our Organisation attains its 50th Anniversary. They can look back with pride on their part in the great resurgence of the nation which gave us a succession of political, social and economic achievements that are unmatched in all our history.

And yet our pride is permeated with sadness; for Eamon de Valera is not with us tonight. It was he who inspired us all, he who founded our great Organisation and gave to it its significant name. Under him we became true soldiers of Destiny, leading the van in the nation's march to sovereignty and independence. And it was he whose intrepid statesmanship brought us safely through the hazards of World War II, with that independence and sovereignty not only intact, but enhanced and confirmed.

Because the man who founded Fianna Fáil was so closely identified with the fight of the Irish people for independence and sovereignty, the tendency has been to dilate and dwell on his stature as a soldier, or as a master of the art of politics, or as an international statesman. All of which, indeed, Eamon de Valera was. But he was also, and this fact is less frequently adverted to than it ought to be, an earnest social reformer.

When, in 1932, de Valera first took over the Government of the twenty-six counties, the Irish Free State, which was then in existence had all the trappings of a British Monarchy. Thus, as a pre-condition for taking their seats in the Oireachtas, deputies and senators were required by its Constitution to take or subscribe to an Oath of Fidelity to H.M. King George V., his heirs and successors. The Constitution furthermore declared that the Executive Authority of the State was vested in the King, and, as a manifestation of this fact required the people to pay for and maintain here as His Majesty's Representative, a Governor-General. Yet, with all this pomp and show, the then Government made only the scantiest provision for those unfortunates, among our people, who were poor and hungry because of age, illness or unemployment. Poverty, dire poverty, even destitution was widespread; and to ease it there existed only the inadequate measures that had been inherited from the British regime, to wit, (i) a restricted pension scheme with a minimum pension equivalent, in present day monetary denominations, to 45 pence per week, and (ii) a system of medical and pecuniary relief based on the British Poor Law.

This was in 1932. Sixteen years later, when, as a result of the 1948 General Election, de Valera's Government was replaced by the first Coalition, the lot of the people had been signally improved. The marked deficiencies in our social code had been rectified by a succession of enactments which, if not initially specifically conceived and projected by 'Dev' himself, owed their ultimate realisation to the support, sympathy and drive which he put behind those of his Ministers to whom he had delegated responsibility for social reform. Under successive Fianna Fáil Governments which he headed, the pensions for the aged and for the blind were greatly improved, provision for the unemployed enlarged and extended, pensions for widows and orphans initiated and children's allowances introduced, the Departments of Health and Social Welfare, previously non-existent, were established in 1947 and in the same year, with the late Dr. Jim Ryan as Minister for Health, the first Health Act was enacted. No

political leader could have manifested a more active concern for the circumstances of the people than de Valera did when he was in control of their affairs.

When Eamon de Valera took over the Government in 1932 our lop-sided economy could hardly provide even frugal comfort for the mass of the people, probably no less than one-tenth of whom were indeed living on the verge of destitution. He quickly grasped the stark economic significance of this situation, to wit, that the primitive industries of the then existent Irish Free State could not support the cost of those public services which were requisite if the majority of its citizens were to be cushioned against dire hardships associated with illness, unemployment or other misfortune. Only a highly developed industrial economy, geared to meet, where possible, the demands of the home market and, as well, to produce an exportable surplus to pay for essential imports from abroad, could provide the substantial resources for this purpose.

And so there began, in 1932, the great industrial drive which gave us virtually all our great modern industries, like our cement industry, our air line and our shipping lines, together with those other similar industrial concerns, now to be found in every town in the Republic, which did not exist when Eamon de Valera came to power in that year. Nor should it be forgotten that also under him our bogs were developed and the investigation of our mineral resources began. It does not abate from the credit and honour due to the late Sean Lemass for conceiving and carrying through this enormous nation-building programme to recall that it was done under the aegis of the great man who founded and, in the critical days of our history, led Fianna Fáil.

For well-nigh fifty years Eamon de Valera's eminence in the active political life of his country was more commanding than that of any contemporary or predecessor, more commanding even than that of Daniel O'Connell in his heyday. And his aim was more ambitious; for like James Fintan Lalor, whom in his election speeches he often quoted, he sought 'not just to repeal the Union, but to undo the Conquest'. Hence his emphasis on the need to preserve our cultural inheritance and, especially our native language.

Magnetic as a leader, de Valera exercised a special influence and authority over public opinion. Whether he headed a Fianna Fáil Government or led Fianna Fáil in Opposition, his were the words that were listened to by the greatest number of voters, sometimes, indeed, by an overall majority of them, but never by less than the largest part of them. His brinkmanship, when keeping us out of World War II was unsurpassable. Flanked, as Ireland was, on the east by Great Britain and on the west by the United States, and withstanding simultaneous pressure from Churchill and Roosevelt, it sometimes seemed that the nation stood on the very edge of disaster. But de Valera's courage and resolution never failed him. In strong faith, and against all odds, he held his chosen ground. So that, when the crisis passed and the fighting ceased, Ireland was still at peace, her territory unravaged, her sovereignty unimpaired, and her prestige the higher for having refused to be bullied or blandished into a conflict that was not of her making.

The man who founded Fianna Fáil was remarkable for his physical courage, but not for this only. In moral

courage and attributes, he was just as outstanding. In his public life, as in the privacy of his home, his devotion to truth and justice was steadfast and absolute. It was perhaps his salient characteristic. So those who negotiated with him soon came to know exactly where he stood and learned to *take him for what he was, a man of his word. But, and it is* to be noted, a man of his exact word, being always careful to express with precision and exactness, not blindly and bluntly as a tub-thumper might, but as a man who knew the weight and value of words and was careful in their use. His critics accused him of hair-splitting and subtleness, as though these were faults. If they were, they were faults that served his country well in the delicate diplomacy which characterised de Valera's conduct of the Republic's foreign policy before and throughout World War II.

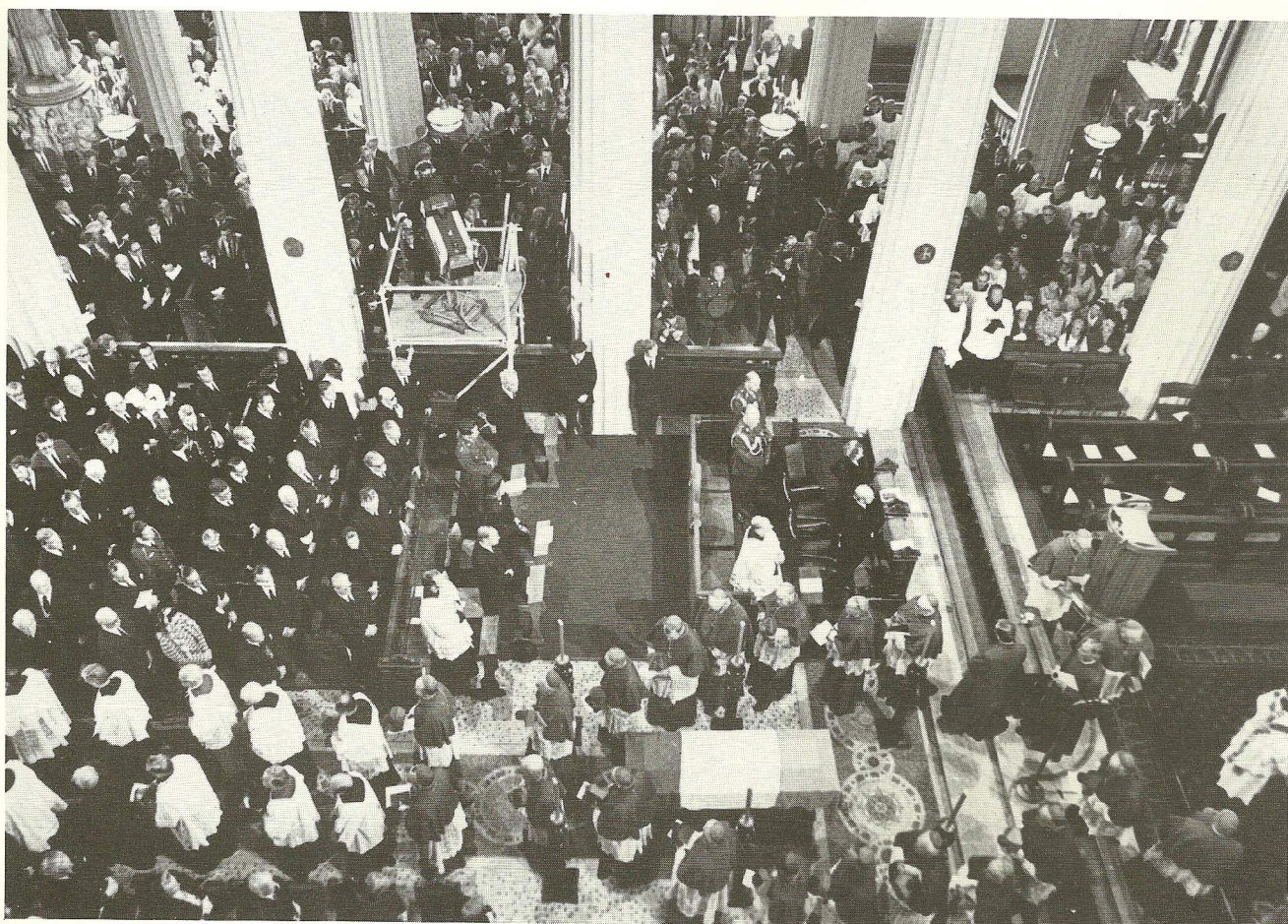
Truly great men are not be assessed in relation to each other by mathematical standards, awarded points, as it were, for this or that virtue or quality, and graded accordingly, 1, 2 or 3. But one may safely say of Eamon de Valera, without giving rise to invidiousness, that he ranked with the greatest. To have had him with us tonight a happy participant in our festivities, would have given abundance to our joy. Recalling how, in his prime, he had been first in the field and first in the forum, we should have been able to manifest to him that now, in the plenitude of his age, he was first in the hearts of all 'who stood with Fianna Fáil', and therefore, 'first in the hearts of his countrymen'.

Those who had the privilege of speaking with 'Dev' during the last months of his life know how he was looking

forward to this month of May; how he hoped that he would be spared to share with his contemporaries, and share, even more avidly, with the younger generations, on whom his hopes for Ireland's future were set, the pride and satisfaction of celebrating Fianna Fáil's 50th Anniversary. *But it was not to be. On 29th August, 1975, Eamon de Valera, who founded Fianna Fáil passed to his reward, a reward assured to him by the nobility an integrity of his life.*

Throughout the World, where men could read or hear, Eamon de Valera's passing evoked warm tributes to him as a man and a patriot and in praise of his work for his country. Only here in Ireland were words spoken that were icy in their coldness. But those who spoke thus, spoke not for the people of Ireland, certainly not for the masses who passed in reverent tribute by his bier, giving a part of their lives to gaze on him who was indeed the chief of Ireland's men. Alive, de Valera was a truly noble man, but his nobility shone out with a special effulgence as he lay, garmented in white, within his coffin. Dead, he wore no spectacles; so one saw at the end of his lifetime that finely-chiselled nose and his wonderful head and face. At peace, as he was, the high and austere nobility of his countenance was breath-taking. Seldom has there been so majestic a figure. Tall, slender, serene, aristocratic, he looked like a medieval prince, who was at once a soldier and a statesman. As indeed our Chief was throughout his life. May we who seek to serve Ireland in Fianna Fáil be worthy of him.

This tribute to 'The Chief' was written by Sean MacEntee for An Iubhaile Órga Fianna Fáil 22nd May 1976.



High Mass in Pro Cathedral, August 1975.

MEMORANDUM

(The following was supplied by the Spanish Embassy 24/12/1965)

At the request of the Spanish Ambassador, the VALERA Coat of Arms has been acquired through the good offices of the Marqués de Ciadoncha, Decano de los Cronistas Reyes de Armas del Archivo Heráldico de España (Dean of the Chroniclers Kings at Arms of the Spanish Heraldic Archive).

Description of the Coat of Arms is as follows:

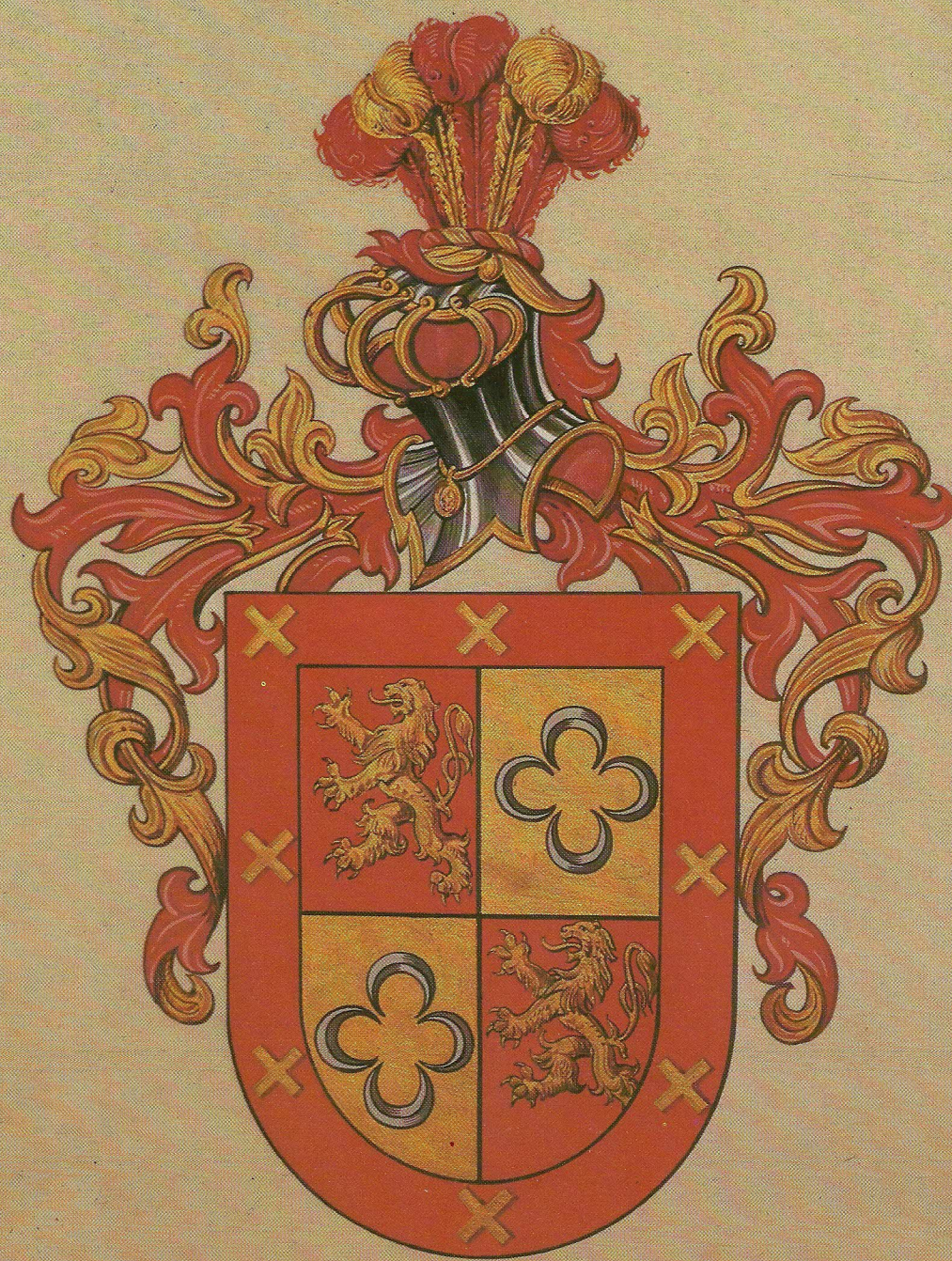
Quarters: 1st and 4th on a gules background with a rampart lion in gold; 2nd and 3rd in gold, a moon of four crescent moons pointing inwards; general bordure of gules bearing eight crosses in gold in X shape. Helmet with plumes and mantelets in gules and gold.

The said Coat of Arms is described and verified in numerous old books dealing with Spanish nobility, amongst them those of Fray Francisco Lozano, volume III, folio 311; the Biblioteca Alfabética of noble names of Don Francisco Zaro y Rosillo, volume XXXVI, folio 97; Don Juan Flórez de Ocariz, volume I, folio 237; Florian de Ocampo, folio 193 etc.

The name De Valera is one of the oldest in Spain and whilst the exact date cannot be fixed it probably appeared in the early days of the Reconquista (the long-drawn-out struggle of the Catholic King and Queen (Reyes Católicos) to reconquer Spanish Territory from the Moors, which terminated the same year as the Discovery of America in 1492). Most likely it is a corruption of the latin name — Valerius or Valeri.

The Coat of Arms is common to all branches of families named de Valera. Certain branches have modified the original Coat of Arms by adding new quarters, mottos etc. The lions which appear in the 1st and 4th quarters constitute one of the oldest heraldic figures of Spain, appears in the Spanish Coat of Arms as representative of the ancient Kingdom of Leon. The origin of the name "Leon" which came to be represented by means of the animal of that name, is a corruption of the latin LEGIO which described determined places in which the different Roman Legions had their seat.

The half-moons or crescents which appear in the 2nd and 3rd quarters are without doubt, a reminder of the victories won during the Reconquista by persons of the name De Valera, over the Moors whose emblem was — as is known — the Crescent. This heraldic figure appears in one form or another in numerous Coats of Arms of families of the Spanish Aristocracy.



De Valera

