



Political developments in Ireland 2

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

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In 1914, many saw British involvement in World War 2 as Ireland's opportunity for freedom, in particular the Irish Republican Brotherhood had this view as well as The Irish Citizen Army so these two groups joined forces. The IRB hoped that the 10,000 members of the IVF would participate in the rebellion so they needed MacNeill's support. In an attempt to gain his support, they forged the Castle Document which stated that the British Government was about to round up the volunteer leaders. MacNeill agreed to help but as soon as he discovered the forgery of the Castle Document, he called off all volunteer involvement in the rising. On Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, around 1,500 members of the combined ICA, IRB and IVF forces marched through Dublin and captured important buildings such as the Four Courts and the General Post Office. Padraig Pearse read the Proclamation of the Irish Republic from the Porch of the GPO whilst British troops were getting ready to attack. On 29 April 1916, there was fierce fighting from early morning so the rebels surrendered at 3:45pm. Huge numbers of rebels were arrested and the rising leaders were executed except for Markievicz and de Valera. Between 1916 and 1918, the Irish people began to support the rising leaders and the focus of this support was the revived Sinn Féin movement now led by Eamon de Valera. In 1919, the first Dáil Eireann met at the Mansion House, Dublin. De Valera was in prison but was later elected president. Sinn Féin now began to rule the country. On January 1919, the same day as the first Dáil, the IRA (formerly known as the IRB), attacked a British convoy in Tipperary, capturing arms, ammunitions and explosives. This was the first of a series of attacks on the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) barracks throughout the country and by 1920, the RIC were losing control of Ireland. The Black and Tans, and the Auxillaries arrived in Ireland that year and were given total freedom in the methods they used against the IRA. In November 1920, Michael Collin's squad assassinated 14 British spies so the British retaliated by entering Croke Park during a game and shooting at the crowd and players – this event became known as Bloody Sunday. In July 1921, a truce was agreed by both sides, as the fighting had reached a deadlock. In December that year, the Treaty was signed by the Irish delegation as war was threatened otherwise. Shortly, Ireland was a self-governing member of the Commonwealth and was known as the Irish Free State. Members of the Free State government were to swear an oath of allegiance to the British crown. A Boundary Commission would be set up to decide on the Border between north and south. The debate on the treaty began in the Dáil in December 1921, with the pro-treaty side being led by Griffith and Collins and the anti-treaty side being

led by de Valera and Brugha. When the final vote was taken 64 TDs were in favour of the treaty and 57 were against. De Valera, Brugha and their followers walked out and Griffith was elected president with Collins as his deputy. The IRA also split into two groups – the pro-treaty troops known as Free Staters and the anti-treaty troops known as the Irregulars. In April 1922, Irregular troops captured the Four Courts and Collins responded by shelling that building. By April 1923, many leaders of the independence were dead – Griffith, Collins, Childers and O'Connor. The Civil War caused much long-term structural damage and hatred. After the 1922 elections, a constitution or set of laws was drawn up. TDs were elected using the proportional representation system and there were to be two houses of Parliament – Dáil Eireann and Seanad Eireann. The pro-treaty side renamed themselves as Cumann na nGaedheal and Cosgrave and O'Higgins took over as leaders.

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