

## Publisher's Note

*Defining Documents in World History* series, produced by Salem Press, consists of a collection of essays on important historical documents by a diverse range of writers on a broad range of subjects in world history. This established series include *Ancient World (2700 BCE–c. 500 CE)*, *Middle Ages (476–1500)*, and *Renaissance & Early Modern Era (1308–1600)* in addition to the latest title: *Nationalism & Populism (320 BCE–2017 CE)*.

*Nationalism & Populism* offers in-depth analysis of a broad range of historical documents and historic events that illustrate the origin and evolution of the political ideas of nationalism and populism. The volume begins with a set of constitutions written by Aristotle and moves forward in time to the present day, with the forty-fifth president of the United States and his speeches that emphasize “America First.” The constitutions, declarations, speeches, articles, essays, laws and court orders cover a broad span of world history to demonstrate the ways in which the idea of a nation as more than a geographic location has come into being. The fifty-nine articles in this volume are organized into seven sections:

- **Nationalism in the Ancient and Medieval Eras**, with three constitutions written by Aristotle, as well as an excerpt from the Magna Carta and Japan’s Closed Country Edict, intended to maintain control of trade by Japanese merchants;
- **The American and French Revolutions** examines the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, along with other writings from the same era, including the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, a document that ended the ancien régime in France and the Cartagena Manifesto was a key document in the Spanish American wars of independence that took place in Mexico and South America from 1808 to 1829;
- **The Nineteenth Century** includes the National Petition from the People’s Charter, a product of the dissatisfaction within the working classes with the conditions in the United Kingdom during the early period of the Industrial Revolution and Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “The White Man’s Burden,” which presents a rationale for empire as a necessary and noble intervention by the more

“civilized” European white nations in other parts of the world;

- **The First World War** takes a look at the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia and the Serbian reply, the Balfour Declaration, one of a number of contradictory British pledges regarding the future disposition of Ottoman territories, and the Treaty of Lausanne, the final treaty that brought World War I (1914–1918) to a close;
- **Second World War** includes Benito Mussolini’s declarations concerning fascism, Adolf Hitler’s address to the German people, the United Nations’ Charter, and a Vietnam’s declaration of independence from French colonial domination;
- **The Cold War** marked a time when nations sought to secure their identities and borders and writings in this section examine Japan’s constitution of 1947, India’s constitution of 1949, and the Arusha declaration, the policies that constituted “Ujamaa”;
- **The Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries** includes the Constitution of the People’s Republic of China, which was adopted by the Fifth National People’s Congress in 1982, Treaty on European Union that provided the framework for the European Union, and the speeches of Donald Trump and his promise to put America first.

Historical documents provide a compelling view of dissent and protest, an important aspect of world history. Designed for high school and college students, the aim of the series is to advance historical document studies as an important activity in learning about history.

### Essay Format

*Nationalism & Populism* contains thirty primary source documents—many in their entirety. Each document is supported by a critical essay, written by historians and teachers, that includes a Summary Overview, Defining Moment, Author Biography, Document Analysis, and Essential Themes. Readers will appreciate the diversity of the collected texts, including treaties, letters, speeches, political and religious sermons, laws, memoirs, and diplomatic communications among other genres. An important feature of each essay is a close reading of the primary source that develops evidence of broader themes, such as the author’s rhetorical pur-

## Editor's Introduction

The “nation” is a peculiar and recent concept in world history. Terms like “nation” are thrown around liberally in the media without any concept of what the proper definition of the term means. For the purposes of this document collection:

- a “country” is the topography of a territory and the people, plants and animals which live there;
- a “nation” is the people themselves and the institutions that they share and which define them: ethnicity, language, economy, religion, history, culture, geography, education, values;
- a “state” is the permanent institutions that organize and manage the country and nation;
- a “government” is the ideological regime in charge of the state at that time.

In the larger span of world history, most states have been empires, and most governments have been some form of monarchy, hereditary one-person rule. Empires and their emperors dominated numerous ethnicities, established their own histories, advanced their geographical borders and celebrated the diversity of cultures and people within those borders. Empires were made up of all the institutions of multiple “nations” at the same time. Most of all, empires were created through simple military power, more powerful peoples beating up less powerful peoples and later controlling their populations, resources and economies to maintain that power.

The idea of a nation, then, is a highly unusual one. In particular, a nation-state – a set of permanent institutions whose reason for existence, whose basis for organizing and managing an ethnicity, language, economy, religion, and history comes from those institutions’ distinctions from those of other nations – is positively bizarre and unnatural in world history. Empires were based on power, and their greatness was measured in the wide variety of nations they dominated. “Nationalism” and nationalists asserted that just because one people was different from another, they should have the right to run their own state. A people might have to fight and die to achieve that goal, purely because they spoke a different language, had different values, or worshipped a different god in a different way. In its assertion of the distinctions between peoples as beautiful, nationalism was inspiring and uplifting; in its insistence that people be willing to die for the concept, nationalism was dan-

gerous. Over the span of 5500 years of civilized history, the nation-state has only existed as a concept in the past three hundred years or so; furthermore, as documents like the Treaty on European Union and the Constitutive Act of African Union demonstrate, nation-states are trying to reunite themselves across borders and bring the concept of nationalism to a peaceful end.

The essential element in a nation is people and their distinctions – their distinctions from other peoples, and the distinctions that bring them together as one. “Populism” is a good word to define this concept. The history of civilization has seen the revelation of the growing power of common people as individuals and communities, asserting their interests over those of emperors, kings, gods, warriors, economic and social elites, anyone who had been able to define themselves as the few in charge of the lives of the many. European civilization, with its basis in Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions, has always emphasized the power of the individual and the rationality the individual uses to make choices. So it is no mistake that as Europeans have come to spread their power around the world through colonization and emigration, so have the ideas of nationalism and populism that one finds in these documents spread around the world too.

An original conception of the relationship between nationalism and populism can best be found, then, in the original Greco-Roman tradition. Aristotle lectured on his ideas of the best forms of government, as collected in *Politics*, three excerpts from which appear here. Aristotle basically believed that the best states balanced the relationship between the people, monarchy and aristocracy. Variations on this theme abounded in European history for the next two thousand years, from the aristocracy trying to tame the power of monarchy in England’s Magna Carta to Dutch merchants and aristocrats begging for a new monarch to take them on as subjects in 1581. The exception to the European emphasis in this period comes from Japan, perhaps the most “western-like” of all non-western countries. That exception proves the rule. In its Seventeen Article Constitution, the Yamato clan tried to prove their legitimacy to the Japanese people; in the Closed Country Edict of 1635, the Tokugawa Shogunate tried to shut their country off from foreign influences specifically to keep their national character intact.

With the American and French Revolutions, the ideas of nationalism and populism began to found nation-states, for better and for worse. The historian and political scientist Benedict Anderson defined a nation as an “imagined community”, meaning that people pick and choose their own traditions to uphold in definition as a nation, and likewise ignore others that are just as valid because they are perceived as negative. In fact, following up on Anderson’s ideas, other historians even asserted that some nations simply invented traditions in order to establish a positive ideal to uphold. The documents from the American and French Revolutions are excellent examples of these concepts. Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence asserted that “all men are created equal”, despite the paradox of slavery that he practiced on his own plantation. Frenchmen used the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen to define the freedoms they believed they deserved as individuals, then promptly surrendered those rights during Napoleon’s rule in favor of power and empire. As this era proved, nationalism and populism allowed men to aspire to their highest levels of individuality, freedom and progress – at the same time they were pitted against one another, often to the death, as in the Napoleonic Wars and the American Civil War.

Nevertheless, the concept of nationalism grew along with the ideals of democracy and the institution of capitalism. It also spread through European imperialism in the nineteenth century. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo cemented the United States’ status as the most powerful nation-state in the western hemisphere; Frederick Jackson Turner’s lecture on the American frontier led many Americans to carry their vision of national expansion abroad. The Meiji constitution in Japan was a marvel of the absorption of western values; it also laid the foundation for the emperor’s status as a god – literally, an invented tradition – and prepared the Japanese people for expansion and empire in the twentieth century. Theodor Herzl aspired to reinvent the Jewish people as rooted in a homeland, to imagine themselves as a community in the same way that other European peoples did in the late nineteenth century. The result in the twentieth century would be the righteous creation of the state of Israel after the Holocaust, and the Palestinian problem which lasts to this day.

Imperialism – the expansion and maintenance of empire – led Europeans to spread their values on nationalism and populism all over the world. It also led in part to the First World War, kicked off by Austria-Hun-

gary’s ultimatum to Serbia in 1914. The war’s savagery and the involvement of colonies in its carnage led to the first widespread efforts to establish independence both during (the Irish Easter Rebellion) and after the war. The Covenant of the League of Nations spelled out the desire to bring all the nations of the world together in peace; now that colonized peoples like the Syrians and Koreans had experienced nationalism and populism, they wanted to be independent parts of that future world. Other populations at the end of empires – the Chinese and the Turks – wanted redefinition as nations in a world where their imperial domains had been dismantled.

The hope occasioned by the founding of the League of Nations fell apart quickly. Nationalism and populism had ugly sides that revealed themselves often in the 1920s and 1930s. Benito Mussolini’s conception of fascism and Hitler’s proclamation to the German people upon attaining the chancellery in 1933 defined nationalism in prejudicial terms, glorifying in people’s distinctions as making them racially superior and, in the Nazis’ case, identifying a scapegoat in opposition to the nation and people: the Jewish population of Europe. Come the war, nationalism fanned the flames of populist hatreds in the British Indian colony between Muslims and Hindus. Even the hopefulness of the United Nations Charter and Ho Chi Minh’s declaration of Vietnam’s independence would not last once the war was over.

By 1945 it was clear that nationalism and populism were responsible for the deaths of millions, and the coming Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union promised even worse. The two sides split into military alliances, and conflicts in Cuba, the Suez Canal and the Congo were attached overtly or obliquely to the populist facedown between capitalist democracy and communism. At the same time, however, the wave of colonial independence movements had grown into an irreversible tide. New states like Israel, India, Algeria and Tanzania struck for their freedom and defined themselves as nations, triumphantly. The documents attached to these states in this collection are sacred to their peoples, imagined communities and invented traditions that came true and gave their peoples pride and meaning and purpose. Even older states like Japan and South Africa remade themselves as nation-states: Japan with the help of the United States after the destruction of the war, South Africa in preparation for a hoped-for future of freedom and equality that the Free-

# ■ 1916 Proclamation of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic

**Date:** April 24, 1916

**Authors:** Patrick Pearse et al.

**Genre:** Declarative speech

## Summary Review

On the Monday after Easter, April 24, 1916, a ragtag body of civilian soldiers, led by members of the Catholic paramilitary Irish Volunteers, seized the General Post Office in Dublin as the headquarters of what was supposed to be a rebellion against the British Empire. The leaders of what came to be called the 1916 Rising were romantics—poets, politicians and professors, as opposed to professionally-trained soldiers. When they took the Post Office in the morning, one of their leaders, Patrick Pearse, strode out the front door of the building at noon to proclaim Ireland's independence from the British Empire.

The Republic of Ireland today dates its beginnings to this moment, similar to the way the United States dates its independence to its own declaration in 1776. The similarities do not end there. Just as in the colonies in 1776, there was a viable alternative of home rule available under the British crown. There was also a very similar division of sentiment amongst the people whose independence was being declared. There was a similar sense that the signatories to each declaration of independence were taking their own lives in their hands. In Ireland, however, the writers and signatories to the 1916 Easter Proclamation expected to fail, to give themselves as a “blood sacrifice” to the cause of their nation's independence. In that respect, they were very different from the Americans in 1776. Moreover, despite their correct assumption that they would all fail and die—or perhaps because of it—they launched Ireland on the path of rebellion against the British Empire that would finally end in the island's freedom.

## Defining Moment

The rebels of Easter 1916 were the product of the long-term enmity between Britain and Ireland. The British never seemed able to appropriately define what Ireland was in their empire and what it meant to them. The Irish always knew—both Catholics and Protestants—that they were considered inferiors by the Brit-

ish, and thus they never accommodated themselves to British rule.

In the early twentieth century, several historical events came together to establish a real breaking point for this contentious relationship. In a climate of European nationalism, the Irish people rediscovered their Gaelic cultural roots, and intellectuals wanted to define themselves as separate from their English overlords. For a century, Ireland had been one of the four nations in the United Kingdom, but the combination of English arrogance and neglect meant that there was a strong political demand for what was called Home Rule, the establishment of a subordinate national government separate from the British Parliament but still under the English crown. For even longer, the predominantly Catholic Irish people had developed a strong and educated Protestant minority in their midst that clung to its connection to Protestant England, and were therefore determined that Home Rule would never happen, on pain of civil war. Only the beginning of the Great War in 1914 had kept Irishmen from killing one another, and most of the paramilitary soldiers who had sworn to fight each other over Ireland's state status had instead marched off to fight in France. All of these events were central to understanding the authors and the intentions of the 1916 Proclamation.

Most Irish seemed content with the concept of Home Rule in the prewar era; those who were not wanted to stay connected to the British Empire and its protection one way or another. So when war broke out, both groups were willing to fight for the British Empire under the assumption that their differences would be hammered out once the war was over. Not everyone wanted to wait, however. Amongst them were a small number of members of the Irish Volunteers, the Catholic paramilitary in Dublin, most of who had only just learned to carry a gun and fight. They included Eoin Mac Neill, founder of the Gaelic League, an organization promoting traditional Irish culture; Patrick Pearse, promoter of the Gaelic language at his school, St. Enda's, in Dublin;

Thomas MacDonagh, another poet and teacher at St. Enda's and founder of the Irish Theater; and Joseph Mary Plunkett, also a poet and playwright, and editor of the *Irish Review*, an important literary magazine that connected the Irish nationalist community.

They formed a Central Executive in Dublin, and combined forces with a socialist paramilitary group, the Irish Citizens Army, led by one James Connolly and the future playwright Sean O'Casey. Through contacts in America, they contacted the German government to get a boatload of weapons shipped to the Irish coast. Idealists all, the rebels hoped that an organized uprising with German support would excite the wider Irish populace into general revolt. Ireland would force its independence in the middle of the war, and the new republic would even secure for itself a place at the peace conference when the war ended.

All of this proved illusory, as was usual in Irish history. The German government agreed to ship the guns, but lost interest in fomenting rebellion, since it seemed clear the Irish population was uninterested, if not hostile. The ship carrying the guns never met its contact on the Irish shore and was scuttled before the British navy captured it. Yet the romantics in Dublin were determined to go forward with the rising anyway, because only "blood sacrifice" could rid Ireland of its servitude to the British crown and dependence on English culture. The Easter rebels determined that the blood sacrifice would be their own, for their nation's good.

### Author Biography

While Thomas MacDonagh is thought to have contributed to the wording, Patrick Pearse was the acknowledged author of the 1916 Proclamation and perhaps the most romantic of any of the rebels. Born in Dublin in 1879, he was an early exponent of Irish cultural nationalism. He was considered an extremist by many of his colleagues; the nominal leader of the Gaelic League and the Irish Volunteers, Eoin Mac Neill, even pulled his children out of St. Enda's because he feared the violent rhetoric of revolt to which Pearse exposed them. Fifteen of Pearse's teenaged pupils actually joined the Easter Rising, inspired by their teacher.

Pearse had few illusions about the success of the Rising. Yet his poetic nature and that of his colleagues allowed them to believe that a rebellion would have an almost mystical effect on the Irish people. "Bloodshed is a cleansing and sanctifying thing, and the nation which regards it as the final horror has lost its manhood," wrote Pearse. His death and that of the other people occupying the General Post Office would be a victory because it would galvanize the Irish people into fighting for their freedom. It was certainly no mistake, then, that the 1916 Rising and its proclamation of a new Irish Republic was to take place over the Easter week—Pearse and the other rebels thought of themselves as almost Christ-like in their willingness to sacrifice themselves in service to the greater good of the Irish people.

## HISTORICAL DOCUMENT

The Provisional Government of the Irish Republic to the People of Ireland

Irishmen and Irishwomen: In the name of God and of the dead generations from whom she receives her old traditions of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organized and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organization the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organizations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in

America and her gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby

proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby

constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonor it by cowardice, inhumanity or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valor and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

*Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government.*

*Thomas J. Clarke,  
Seán Mac Diarmada,  
Thomas MacDonagh,  
P. H. Pearse,  
Éamonn Ceannt,  
James Connolly, and  
Joseph Plunkett.*

### Document Analysis

Upon seizing the Post Office, a flag with the brand-new Irish tricolor was raised over the building, and Pearse walked outside to read his proclamation to a confused group of passersby. It was titled “Poblacht na hEireann,” or Republic of Ireland; most Irishmen did not know Gaelic, and thus had no idea what the title meant. Pearse opened by calling on the Irish public, its “children,” to take up arms in the name of the “dead generations” that had established Ireland as a nation. He then named all of the revolt’s supporters and actors—the IRB, the Irish Volunteers, the Irish Citizens’ Army, American supporters and “gallant allies in Europe,” the Germans, who by that time had already failed the rising.

Pearse then asserted the right of Irishmen to “ownership” of their island and their destinies, declaring that the Irish people would sooner disappear than submit that right to the British occupiers. He hearkened back to previous rebellions as proof, and declared Ireland’s independence, to which he pledged the lives of all the rebels. Considering his expectation that the rebellion would fail, this was brave indeed. Still, he called on all Irishmen and Irishwomen—showing a striking equality and lack of chauvinism for the time—to join the rebellion, and promised that everyone would be treated

equally, meaning Protestants. Pearse chalked up the hatreds between Protestants and Catholics to the deliberate policies of the British government, which was an exceptionally biased reading of the history of the same six rebellions he had appealed to in Ireland’s past—in all of them, Protestants had been slaughtered by Catholics.

Pearse reaffirmed the provisional nature of the republic as constituted in the officers of the Rising, and then called upon God to protect the cause and keep it from devolving into the usual horrors of war, “cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine.” He noted that the Irish nation had to be “worthy of the august destiny to which it is called,” and read off the names of the signatories. Then he turned and walked back into the building, and the Rising began.

### Essential Themes

Despite being outnumbered three to one, the rebels held out for nearly a week. From the beginning the Irish populace rejected them, considering the insurgents to be traitors in leading a rebellion against the British Empire in the midst of the deadliest war in history. When they surrendered, they were spat upon and jeered at by surrounding crowds as British soldiers escorted them to jail. British forces under Sir John Maxwell arrested 3400 people and held them without trial, some for more

than a year. Under the rules of martial law, Maxwell convened military courts martial as if they took place on the battlefield in France. This meant there would be no jury and no defense witnesses. Almost two hundred civilians were tried and ninety of them received death sentences. The leaders of the Rising, as expected, received the opportunity to give their “blood sacrifice,” all of them being executed by firing squad over ten days in May. The methods and reasons behind the executions circulated widely soon after they took place. Patrick Pearse’s little brother Willie was executed for no more reason than for worshipping his brother. Joseph Mary Plunkett was ill after having had an operation on the glands in his neck; just before his execution, he married the sister of Thomas MacDonagh’s wife and thus both sisters were left widows. James Connolly was so gravely wounded that the firing squad had to prop him up in a chair to shoot him. They received no funerals; their bodies were covered in quicklime as if they were corpses left to rot after a battle.

During his court martial, Pearse spoke, saying “You cannot conquer Ireland. You cannot extinguish the Irish passion for freedom. If our deed has not been sufficient to win freedom, then our children will win it by a better deed.” He was right. If the insurgents had been considered fools and traitors during the 1916 Rising, they became martyrs immediately after they had died. It was one thing for the British government and army to put down a rebellion run by a group of addled patriots in the middle of a war; it was a worse thing entirely for them to simply throw away Britain’s own legal rules and execute the lot in an act of vengeance. Wasn’t Ireland supposed to be on the verge of governing itself after the war? Couldn’t these rebels have been held until then to allow the Irish people to show the loyalty of a Home Rule government to the English crown by putting them on trial themselves? The summary nature of the executions made it clear that the British did not trust the Irish to manage themselves, and that the British still believed the Irish needed to be punished to understand the gravity of their own actions. The conduct of the executions turned Irish public opinion decidedly in favor of the Rising. Masses were said in the names of the rebels, and numerous public demonstrations followed throughout the war. In early 1918, the British government tried to introduce conscription in Ireland; this was the last straw for many, who had not gone to war earlier to die for their colonial overlords and certainly would not now after the Rising. In the end, nationwide

resistance to the draft meant it was never implemented, and furthermore, Catholic southern Ireland was virtually united for independence—just as Pearse and the other rebels had hoped.

In December 1918, the British government held a general election. After it ended, seventy-three of the 108 winning candidates representing Ireland refused to accept their seats in London. All of them were members of Sinn Féin, a political party bent on the independence of Ireland. Instead, they stayed home in Dublin to form their own Dáil Éireann, an Irish parliament. The Irish War of Independence began in January 1919, the Irish Volunteers having renamed themselves the Irish Republican Army. Two years later, a truce was signed and the Irish nation was divided in peace negotiations between north and south. By the end of 1922, most of the promises of the 1916 Proclamation were achieved. It would take another year of civil war to force acceptance of the geographic and religiously-based split on the Irish population; the 1916 rebels’ prediction of “blood sacrifice” came true with a vengeance.

—David Simonelli

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