

Subject : Junior Cycle History
Teacher : Niall Lenehan

LESSON 15

**The GAA and The Rise of
Nationalism and Unionism
in Ireland**

Learning Intentions

1. Explore and examine the impact of the GAA on Irish life.
2. Examine the rise and impact of Nationalism in Ireland.
3. Examine the rise and impact of Unionist in Ireland.

2.10 examine how one sporting, cultural or social movement impacted on Irish life

2.4 examine the rise and impact of nationalism and unionism in Ireland, including key events between 1911 and 1923.

Key words – define these

Nationalism

Unionism

Home Rule

John Redmond

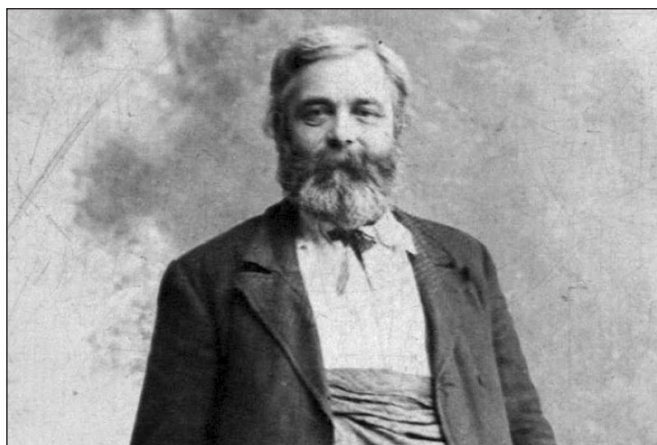
Michael Cusack

Cultural revival

Edward Carson

The Foundation of the GAA

- In 1877, Clare native **Michael Cusack** opened an academy for students in which sport was a central part of.
- At the time, sport was unavailable for the working classes in Ireland.
- Cusack decided that a **national organization was needed**, particularly for hurling. Using the national media, he promoted this idea throughout Ireland.
- With the help of **Maurice Davin**, the GAA was officially set up in the Hayes Hotel, Thurles on 1 November 1884. Davin was also elected as the first GAA president.
- GAA clubs were setup in many counties. Hurling and football quickly became the main sports. Matches between clubs attracted large crowds.



Michael Cusack

The development of the GAA

- The GAA became part of the **cultural revival**. Organizations such as the GAA and the **Gaelic League** attempted to reduce the English influence on Irish society.
- The **Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB)** used GAA clubs as recruiting grounds.
- The involvement of the IRB caused a **split within the GAA** and caused the organization to decline.
- In the early 20th century, the GAA began a **revival**. There were more clubs, more matches and All Ireland finals.
- **Croke Park** was purchased in 1913 which was the first official playing field.
- Croke Park would be improved and ungraded over the next century.

The impact of the GAA in Ireland

1. **Revival of Irish sport:** Hurling and football clubs made the sport far more accessible and attractive for Irish people.
2. **Link between GAA and Nationalism:** Many GAA members would be recruited by the IRB and fight in revolts against the British.
3. **Gender Equality:** The LGFA and Camogie association provides an equal outlet for all genders in Irish society.
4. **The impact on communities:** GAA clubs created a sense of togetherness and cohesion among communities. It also helped to promote democracy in Ireland as committees elected people to various roles within GAA clubs.
5. **The impact on Irish culture:** GAA clubs helped to reduce the influence of English culture. The GAA's *Scór* division promoted Cultural activities such as *Céilí* Dancing, Solo Singing and Ballad playing.

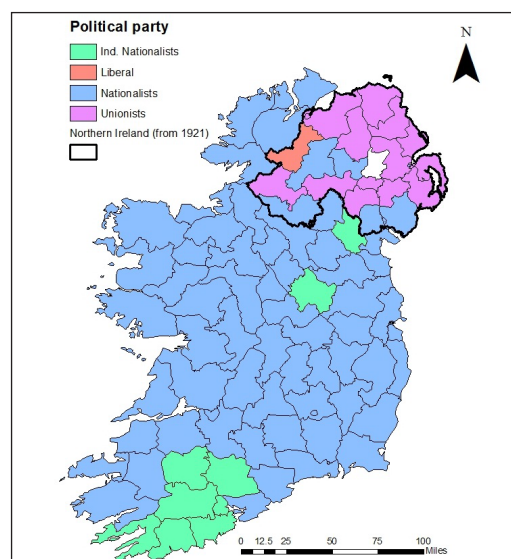
Nationalism and Unionism

- **Nationalists** wanted a form of **self-government** that ruled Ireland from Dublin. Most of Ireland's population were Nationalist. Nationalist groups included:

The Home Rule party, The Fenians/IRB, Sinn Fein.

- **Unionists** wanted Ireland to be ruled by **Westminster in London**. They wanted Ireland to remain in the United Kingdom. Their leaders were Edward Carson and James Craig.

The majority of Unionists lived in the **North-East of Ireland**.



Nationalists and Unions in Ireland (1921)

The Home Rule Crisis, 1912-14

- The **Conservative Party** had been in government from 1895 to 1906.
- It and the Unionists had always supported each other to ensure a majority – This meant that Home Rule would not be passed.
- In 1906, The Liberal party got into power – They **supported Home Rule**.

Recap exercise 15.1

Q1. Who founded the GAA and why did he set up the organization?

Q2. Give three impacts of the GAA on Irish society.

Q3. What did Nationalists want?

Q4. What did Unionists want?

Q5. Which British political party were supporters of Home Rule?

The Parliament Act, 1911

- In 1910 the Liberals needed the help of the Irish Home Rule party to stay in government.
- Until this point, the House of Lords could block (**veto**) any laws or bills passed by the House of Commons.
- In 1911, the Liberals passed a law that changed this: **the Parliament Act**.
- The Parliament Act stated that the **House of Lords** could not fully veto **any bill and could only delay laws from passing for two years**.
- This meant that Home Rule was a possibility as the liberal party were dependent on the Home rule party for support.



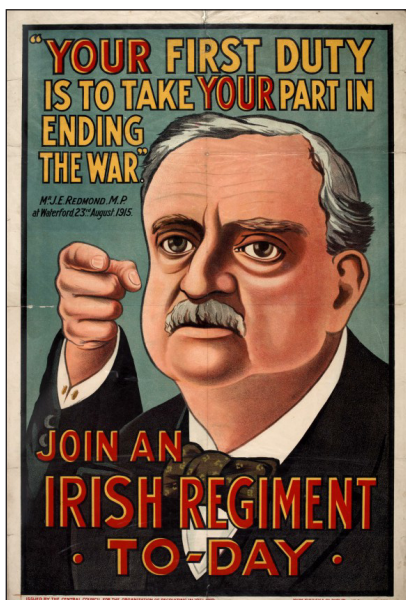
Ireland demands Home Rule

The Third Home Rule Bill, 1912

- The Liberals had tried to pass a Home Rule Bill in **1886 and 1893**.
- Both times it had been vetoed by the House of Lords.
- In 1912 Liberal leader **Herbert Asquith** put forward the **Third Home Rule Bill** to the House of Commons and House of Lords. This bill stated that:
- Ireland would have its own parliament in Dublin to deal with internal affairs.
- The parliament in Westminster would deal with external affairs such as foreign policy.

Ireland and World War 1

- Carson and the Unionists supported the British war effort and encouraged people to join the British army in hope it would help maintain their union with Britain.
- Thousands of Ulster Unionists joined the British army.
- Among the IVF, opinions were divided.
- **John Redmond** of the Home Rule Party urged IVF members to join the British army, **hoping it would benefit Ireland** when it came to the Home Rule negotiations after the war.



John Redmond urging Irishmen to join the British army in the hope that it will help the cause of Home Rule

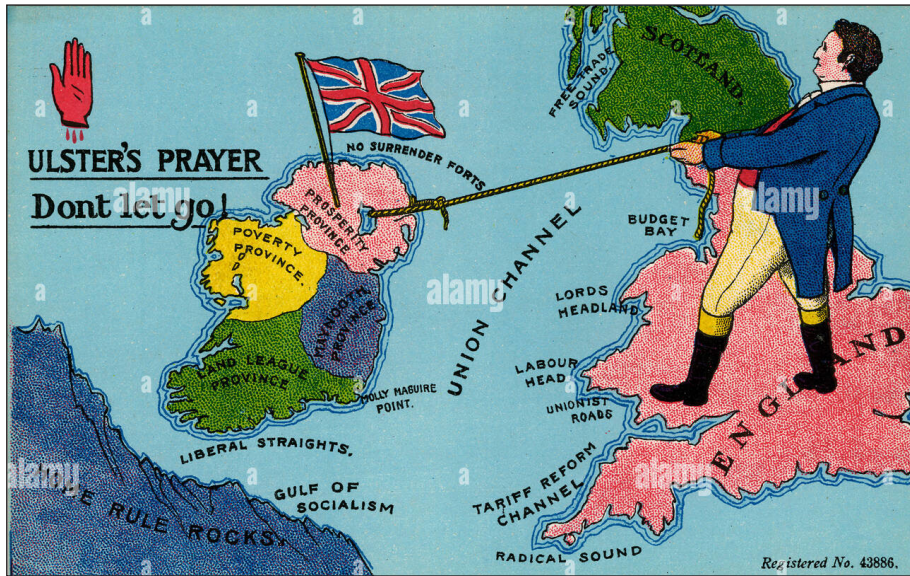
15.2 Exam Questions

Q1. From your study of Junior Cycle History, give two reasons why Unionists opposed Home Rule and independence for Ireland?

Q2. Explain two methods Unionists used to oppose Home Rule.

Q3. Give two reasons why Nationalists wanted Home Rule.

Source 2



Q4. According to Source 2, what is Ulster's prayer?

Q5. Is this source from the Nationalist or Unionist side? Explain your answer.
