

SUNDAY INDEPENDENT LETTERS 21ST SEPTEMBER 2025

Dev's barring order a national disgrace

● Madam — Micheál O'Cathail rightfully points to some of Éamon de Valera's achievements, especially on the issue of neutrality during the Emergency ('One-sided story of Dev's life was mean', Letters September 14). However, he avoids mentioning De Valera's harsh treatment of blacklisted Defence Forces personnel who were barred from working in

state companies for seven years.

In post-war Ireland, republican Nazi collaborators (and others) got a free pass gaining access to state employment. In contrast, blacklisted Defence Forces personnel were treated differently. As many were married with young children, and others had elderly dependants to support, it was foreseeable that the imposition of a barring order on working in any state company would have a detrimental effect on innocent families. In this regard, the De Valera government was in breach of Article 41.

De Valera's barring order also deprived blacklisted Defence Forces personnel of their right to challenge allegations of desertion within the framework of a military court, thereby breaching Article 34.1 of the Constitution, which entitles citizens a right of access to the courts.

Politicians may construct the law, but they are not empowered to act as judge, jury or executioner. Significantly, the Irish Constitution was not suspended during the Emergency as some have suggested.

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