



# Seán Lemass - The Enigmatic Patriot: The Definitive Biography of Ireland's Great Modernising Taoiseach

*John Horgan*

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**The definitive biography of Seán Lemass, the finest Taoiseach in the history of the Irish State**

*There are few facets of Irish life which do not owe something to the genius, effectiveness or determination of Lemass. Horgan's biography explores that contribution quite brilliantly.*

Bertie Ahern, *The Irish Times*

As a boy Seán Lemass fought in the 1916 rising. He was a member of de Valera's first cabinet, Minister for Industry and Commerce in every Fianna Fáil government between 1932 and 1959, and as Taoiseach from 1959 to 1966 was the pivotal figure in the modernisation of Ireland.

The Lemass that emerges from this fine book is an enigma and a passionate patriot; a protectionist who later became an apostle of free trade; a moderniser in what was often a party of traditionalists.

John Horgan's excellent biography is the work of a critical admirer who sees his subject as one of the most outstanding Irish political figures of the century. The only biographer to have had complete access to all the government papers for the full period of Lemass's political career, Horgan provides us with a rounded, sympathetic yet critical examination of the life of one of twentieth-century Ireland's most distinguished figures.

*... a comprehensive and thoughtful work worthy of the subject, [it] lives up to its billing as a major biography of the Fianna Fáil leader.*

Stephen Collins, *The Sunday Tribune*

*Seán Lemass was not only one of the most formidable, but, for all his apparently bluff straightforwardness, one of the most elusive personalities in the history of twentieth-century Ireland. John Horgan's study, skilfully crafted and elegantly expressed, is a major biography of a major figure, greatly enhancing our understanding of the making of modern Ireland.*

J.J. Lee, author of *The Modernisation of Irish Society, 1848–19*

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