

Consolidating democracy and establishing sovereignty

Headings	Notes
1932-1935: THE 'ECONOMIC WAR' WITH BRITAIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The British retaliated by imposing a tax on Irish cattle equal to the £5 million. Their aim was to make Fianna Fáil unpopular.• This policy gave Fianna Fáil an excuse to impose more tariffs (1000 by 1933). This hit farmers and consumers but de Valera was able to present it as standing up to Britain and so avoided blame.• These policies combined into the 'economic war' with Britain. It damaged the economy severely until it was eased by the Coal-Cattle Pact in 1935.
REPUBLICAN VIOLENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1932 the IRA had 30,000 members and backed Fianna Fáil in the 1932 election. After the election, triumphant IRA men attacked Cumann na nGaedheal meetings.• Cumann na nGaedheal leaders asked a group of former Free State army men, the Army Comrades Association (ACA), to act as bodyguards.• In January 1933 de Valera called a sudden election. During the campaign, there were riots between the IRA and the ACA.
THE 'BLUESHIRTS' EPISODE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When Fianna Fáil won an overall majority, de Valera demanded the resignation of the Garda Commissioner Eoin O'Duffy.• O'Duffy then became head of the ACA, renamed them the National Guard, dressed them in blue shirts, and adopted a programme based on Mussolini's Corporate State. In August, he announced a rally in front of Leinster House.• Fearing a coup (like Mussolini's 'march on Rome'), de Valera banned it. He also used Article 2A to outlaw the National Guard and set up a special police unit (the 'Broy Harriers') to deal with it.• Cosgrave and others, knowing how Mussolini and Hitler took power and distrusting de Valera, feared a dictatorship.• In September 1933, Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Guard and a newly formed Centre Party, joined together to stop him. They called themselves Fine Geal and elected O'Duffy leader.
Keywords	Summary

State Building – The Free State

Cumann nGaedheal in Power 1923-1932

April 1923 General Election

Cumann na Gaedheal (pro-treaty) – 63 seats
 Sinn Fein (anti-treaty) – 44 seats (did not take seats)
 Farmers Party – 15 seats
 Labour Party – 14 seats
 Independents – 17 seats

Leading members of the Government

President of Executive Council - William T. Cosgrave
 V. President & Minister for Home Affairs – Kevin O’Higgins
 Minister for Finance – Earnest Blythe
 Minister for Defence – Richard Mulcahy
 Minister for Education – Eoin MacNeill

The ‘New’ Civil Service

1. Government adopted a conservative policy in all areas of administration that differed little from British rule.
 2. 98% of the British Civil Service in Ireland transferred to the new Free State Civil Service.

The Civic Guard

1. A new unarmed police force was established
 2. Made up mostly of former pro-treaty IRA men
 3. Renamed ‘Garda Síochána’ in 1924
 4. Presence of some former RIC men caused the resignation of the first Garda commissioner, Michael Staines.
 5. Public Safety Act 1923 gave ministers the power to order the internment of anyone they felt was a risk to the security of the state.

The Courts

Similar system to the British court system

1. District Court
2. Circuit Court
3. Central Criminal Court
4. High Court
5. Supreme Court

Local Government

1. Significant changes from British system
2. Each county responsible for public health, elections, road maintenance, poor relief and registration of births, deaths and marriages.
3. Funding raised from a local council tax.
4. Elections based on P.R. system
5. Local Council Act 1925 gave the Minister for Local Government the power to dissolve a County Council if it was unable to pass legislation or was involved in corruption

Cumann nGaedheal Foreign Policy

Constitution of 1922

1. Established the Irish Free State granting Dominion status:
2. The King to be represented by a Governor-General (Irish government insisted on an ordinary Irishman).
3. Oath of Allegiance - made it clear that the King was Head of State but that his authority came from the people.
4. Ireland was in a different position to many of the other Dominions because she was an ancient nation that had struggled to gain independence and was aware that close geographical position made her vulnerable to a curtailment of her powers.

Foreign Affairs

1. Main objective was to push for a greater degree of independence:
2. Applied to join the League of Nations - admitted 1923 - Britain objected.
3. Anglo-Irish Treaty registered as an international agreement (Britain protested that it was an internal affair).
4. Established a foreign Diplomatic Service. Passports issued.
5. Ireland's growing separateness was shown by membership of the Council of Ministers in 1930.

Commonwealth Conferences & Statute of Westminster

1. In 1926 the concept of full equality between Britain and the Dominions was established.
3. It was symbolised by the use of the word “Commonwealth” instead of British Empire.
4. **Statute of Westminster** ended the claim that British laws were binding on the Dominions and allowed the Parliament of a Dominion to repeal any existing law.

Impact of Foreign Policy

1. Cumann na nGaedheal established the Free State as an independent nation through membership of League of Nations and role in Commonwealth Conferences.
2. The successful introduction of the **Statute of Westminster** allowed Dominion Parliaments to repeal any existing British law. After 1932 the new Fianna Fail government used the Statute to begin dismantling the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

Threats to the new Free State

The Army Mutiny 1924

Background

1. June 1923 - Government wanted to reduce the size of the army from 49,000 to about 20,000
2. Nov. 1923 - commanding officers didn't trust the Minister Richard Mulcahy feeling he would force many IRA men to retire.
3. They also complained about being forced to take a pay cut.
4. They didn't want British officers training Irish soldiers
5. They felt the government had done little to push for a 32 country republic.

Crisis

6. Jan. 1924 – Mulcahy receives reports that IRA members in the army were about to seize barracks around the country.
7. On 6 March three officers, March, Dalton and Tobin, send a letter to Cosgrave demanding (a) an end to demobilisation (b) removal of the Army Council (c) a guarantee that the government would push for a 32 country republic.
8. On 10 March about 100 soldiers and officers take weapons from their barracks.

Government's Response

9. Government appoints Eoin O'Duffy as General Officer of the army over the head of the Minister Richard Mulcahy.
10. Cosgrave favours negotiations and promises to set up an inquiry into the complaints of the mutineers.
11. Mulcahy orders the arrest of the leading mutineers meeting in a Dublin hotel.
12. Vice President Kevin O'Higgins orders Mulcahy to resign as Defence Minister.

Compromise

13. Agreement (a) inquiry into the running of the army (b) review of who would be forced to retire (c) return of all officers to their previous positions (d) introduction of army pension.

Consequences

14. Up to crisis the army was semi-independent. After crisis the government was firmly in control of the army. Army reduced to 15,000.

Boundary Commission 1925

1. The Anglo-Irish Treaty provided for the establishment of the Boundary Commission to re-examine the border between North and South. The Boundary Commission was set up in Nov. 1924.
2. The Boundary Commission had three members – Feetham, MacNeill, Fisher.
3. Work of the Boundary Commission was kept secret.
4. Nov. 1925 – findings of the Boundary Commission leaked to *Morning Post* newspaper.
5. The leaks proved a major embarrassment for Irish Government.
6. The Boundary Commission recommended only minor changes in the border.
7. Government decided to leave the border as fixed by the Anglo-Irish Treaty.
8. Became a major political crisis for the government. Minister Eoin McNeill forced to resign.

Industrial and Social Unrest

1. Major Post office Strike in September 1922
2. In 1924 Government cuts the old age pension by 10% and restricts unemployment payments.
3. Government cuts wages for Civil Servants, Teachers and Gardai.
3. Major strike against wage cuts in Limerick during the construction of Ardnacrusha Power station in 1925-26.
4. The IRA got involved in strikes – notably the Irish Omnibus Company strike in 1930.

The 'Red Scare' 1929-1932

1. In 1929 left-wing IRA members (Peadar O'Donnell, Sean MacBride) began organising radical left-wing groups.
2. By 1931 Saor Eire became the most prominent left-wing group.
3. Sporadic violence breaks out between members of Saor Eire and Cumann na nGaedheal. In March 1931 Saor Eire are accused of murdering a Garda in Tipperary.
4. The Government fear that Saor Eire want to launch a 'Communist' takeover.
5. Cosgrave convinces the Catholic bishops that a Communist takeover is on the cards. Priests condemn Saor Eire from the pulpit.
6. The government arrests the leaders of Saor Eire and ten other socialist groups and closes down their newspapers.
7. Within weeks most of those arrested are released.
8. The actions of the government against left-wing activists proves unpopular and contributes to the government's defeat in the 1932 election.

1927 - The Assassination of Kevin O'Higgins

1. On 10 July 1927, Minister for Home Affairs, Kevin O'Higgins was assassinated by two IRA men on his way to mass in Booterstown, Co. Dublin.
2. The attack was not planned – the men spotted O'Higgins while on their way to a football match and decided to shoot him.
3. The assassination brought back memories of the civil war.
4. The government responded by introducing three new Bills in the Dail
5. The **Public Safety Bill** made the IRA illegal.
6. The **Constitutional Amendment Bill** removed the provision for referendum. A petition signed by 75,000 people could force a referendum on a constitutional amendment.
7. The **Electoral Amendment Bill** stated that all elected TD's must take their seats in the Dail or resign. A by-election would then be called to fill the vacancy.

Fianna Fail in Power – Foreign Policies 1932-39

1932 General Election

1. During the 1932 election campaign Fianna Fail made two main promises
2. First – the abolition of land annuities
3. Second – dismantling the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

League of Nations

1. In 1932 Ireland took over chairmanship of the General Assembly.
2. De Valera appointed President of the Council and acting President of the General Assembly.
3. Opportunity to promote himself and the newly emerging Ireland.
4. De Valera was critical of the weaknesses of the League of Nations.

Dismantling the Treaty

1. De Valera appoints himself as Minister for External Affairs.
2. Realises dismantling the Treaty will cause tension with Britain.
3. De Valera was active in the League of Nations to build support for when he dismantled the Treaty.

Removing the Oath

1. On 22 March 1932 de Valera informed the British of his intention to remove the Oath of Allegiance using the Statute of Westminster.
2. In April the **Constitution (Removal of the Oath) Bill** was passed by the Dail but delayed by the Senate – something which annoyed de Valera.
3. British opposed the removal of the Oath claiming it was an essential part of the Treaty. De Valera ignored them.

Abolish the Senate

1. The Senate was dominated by Cumann na nGaedheal (and then Fine Gael) and often delayed Bills passed by the Fianna Fail government.
2. The Senate was a major obstacle to his efforts to dismantle the Treaty.
3. In 1934 he introduced a Bill to abolish the Senate which came into Law in 1936.
4. A reformed Senate was established in the 1937 Constitution.

The Economic War

1. In 1932 De Valera refused to pay land annuities to Britain.
2. The British retaliated by imposing 20% customs duty on Irish imports.
3. The Dail then placed customs duties on many British imports into Ireland.
4. These measures caused severe economic hardship in Ireland.
5. In **1935** the **Coal-Cattle Pact** was agreed allowing for Irish cattle to be exported to Britain and British coal to be imported into Ireland.

Governor General

1. De Valera wanted to reduce the importance of the office of Governor General
2. He asked the Governor General, James MacNeill, not to attend public function, MacNeill declined.
3. De Valera and the cabinet refused to attend any functions attended by MacNeill.
4. De Valera advised King to dismiss MacNeill on the basis that the King was supposed to act on the advice of the cabinet.
5. De Valera replaced MacNeill with a Fianna Fail loyalist who took no part in public affairs.
6. The office was abolished in 1937.

External Relations Act 1936

1. In 1936 the abdication of King Edward VIII to marry a divorced woman, Mrs. Wallis Simpson, caused a constitutional crisis in Britain.
2. De Valera seized the opportunity to introduce new legislation into the Dail.
3. The **Constitutional Amendment Act** removed all mention of the King and Governor General from the Constitution.
4. The **External Relations Act** greatly reduced the role of the King in Irish Affairs. Ireland was now 'associated' with the Commonwealth rather than being a full member.

1937 Constitution

1. In 1937 the Fianna Fail Government introduced a new constitution entitled Bunreacht na hÉireann
2. The Constitution copper-fastened the changes already made to the Anglo-Irish Treaty
3. Ireland was now a republic in all but name.
4. It is possible that De Valera felt the British would have reacted if he had declared a republic at this time.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

1. In 1938 the Irish Government agreed to a one-off payment of £10million in final settlement of the land annuities
2. All tariffs on goods were lifted by both countries.
3. Britain handed back the 'treaty ports' to Ireland.
4. This facilitated Ireland remaining neutral during World War Two.

Fianna Fail in Power – Political Developments

Background

1. Fianna Fail established in 1926 when Sinn Fein split.
2. Fianna Fail take their seats in the Dail after 1927 election. Propose referendum to abolish oath.
3. General Election Feb. 1932 – Fianna Fail in power with the support of the Labour Party. De Valera called a second election in Jan. 1933 and won an overall majority.
4. The transition to power was regarded as a major test of democracy in Ireland – would Cumann na nGaedheal hand over power to their enemies of the civil war?
5. Cosgrave played an important role in ensuring a smooth transition of power.
6. Fianna Fail were to rule for the next 16 years

Dismantling the Treaty

1. Treaty not sacrosanct. Collins had seen potential for development. “Stepping stone” etc.
2. Required mechanisms & political will and imagination to make changes.
3. Circumstances that facilitated amending the Treaty - international forum (League of Nations), British politics distracted by rise of dictators, British domestic problems and the Statute of Westminster.
4. Fianna Fail coming to power in 1932 saw the beginning of the dismantling of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

Changing the Constitution

1. De Valera was able to use the Statute of Westminster to take apart the Anglo-Irish Treaty – between 1932 and 1937 he passed a series of laws that gave greater independence to Ireland and by 1937 Ireland was a republic in all but name.
2. Removal of Oath Act introduced Spring 1932, passed May 1933 using Statute of Westminster.
3. Fianna Fail withheld the land annuities (payments to the British government for the purchase of land from landlords) – leads to beginning of Economic War.
4. Fianna Fail removed the Governor-General and abolished the office totally in the 1937 Constitution, replacing him with a President.
5. De Valera introduced the 1937 Constitution which made “Ireland a republic in all but name”.
6. However, Ireland did not leave the Commonwealth, probably to avoid antagonising the British.

The New Constitution 1937

1. Bunreacht na hEireann was introduced in 1937 and included several important new provisions.
2. The name of the country was changed from the Irish Free State to Eire.
3. Articles 2 and 3 claimed the right to rule over the north of Ireland.
4. The head of state was to be a President – the first President was Douglas Hyde.
5. The head of the government was called the Taoiseach.
6. The state recognised the special position of the Catholic Church and also the importance of the family unit.

De Valera and the IRA

1. On assuming power Fianna Fail released imprisoned IRA prisoners.
2. Men who had served on the anti-treaty side were given pensions etc. and republicans who had lost property were compensated.
3. Dismantling the treaty won many IRA men over.
4. However others in the IRA was disappointed with the slow pace of change towards the formation of a republic.
5. De Valera recruited IRA men into the Broy Harriers and a Volunteer Force set up as a branch of the army.
6. IRA lost support as its reputation was damaged by its clashes with the Blueshirts and by the fact that it was a secret, violent and armed organisation in a democracy.
7. Fianna Fail now viewed the IRA as a threat. They used the machinery of repression - in 1935 and 1936 the same laws that had been used against the Blueshirts were used against the IRA. In 1936 the IRA was proclaimed an illegal body and its Chief of Staff was imprisoned.

De Valera and the Blueshirts

1. When de Valera took over the government he released members of the IRA from prison – they soon became involved in clashes with Cumann na nGaedhael supporters.
 2. The Army Comrades Association (ACA) composed of ex-soldiers from the Free State Army protected Cumann na nGaedhael meetings from attack.
 3. They began to wear blue shirts and because of this were called the Blueshirts – they used a fascist salute.
 4. They elected a new leader, Eoin O’Duffy, who had been sacked by de Valera as Garda Commissioner, and he planned a march in Dublin to commemorate the deaths of Collins and Griffith.
- De Valera regarded them as fascists and, fearing a Mussolini-style “March on Rome”, banned the march. The Blueshirts merged with Cumann na nGaedhael to form a new political party, Fine Gael – O’Duffy became its leader but was soon dropped as he was so poor and W.T. Cosgrave took over.

Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail in Power: Domestic Policies - Comparison

Cumann na nGaedheal	Fianna Fail
<i>Domestic Focus</i>	<i>Domestic Focus</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating Democracy • Continuity and Conservatism • Stability • Creation of Civil service • Creation of Legal System • Law and Order – sets up Garda Siochana • Reforms local government • 1925 – Minister has power to dissolve a county council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dismantling the Treaty • Socially and Politically Conservative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ role of women ○ role of Catholic Church ○ Irish language • Statute of Westminster allows for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Abolition of the Oath ○ Downgrading of Governor-General • Creation of new Constitution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bunreacht na hEireann – Irish Constitution 1937 ○ Special position of Catholic Church • Releases IRA Prisoners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishes the Broy Harriers for ex-IRA men
<i>Dealing with crises</i>	<i>Dealing with crises</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government deals firmly with Army Mutiny in 1924 • Boundary Commission causes crisis and leads to MacNeill's resignation. • Assassination of Kevin O'Higgins by IRA – government responds with • Detention without trial to deal with increased IRA violence • Electoral Amendment Act 1927 • Constitution Amendment act • Military tribunal set up to try political offences – power to declare organisations illegal – IRA declared illegal • Planning of the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. • Peaceful transition of power to Fianna Fail. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deal with threat from O Duffy and Blueshirts – march banned – ACA declared illegal • 1936 – Increased IRA violence leads to Fianna Fail declaring the IRA illegal with key members arrested. • Declares Ireland a neutral country during World War Two.

Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fail in Power: Foreign Policies - Comparison

Cumann na nGaedheal	Fianna Fail
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitution of 1922 • Based on Anglo-Irish Treaty • Pushed for greater Independence • Applied to join League of Nations – Britain objected – admitted in 1923 • Anglo-Irish Treaty registered as an international agreement (Britain protested that it was an internal affair). • Established a foreign Diplomatic Service. Passports and stamps issued. • Membership of the Council of Ministers in 1930 • In 1926 the concept of full equality between Britain and the Dominions was established. • It was symbolised by the use of the word “Commonwealth” instead of British Empire. • Statute of Westminster ended the claim that British laws were binding on the Dominions and allowed the Parliament of a Dominion to repeal any existing law. • Established the Free State as an independent nation through membership of League of Nations and role in Commonwealth Conferences. • The successful introduction of the Statute of Westminster allowed Dominion Parliaments to repeal any existing British law. After 1932 the new Fianna Fail government used the Statute to begin dismantling the Anglo-Irish Treaty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De Valera appoints himself as Minister for External Affairs. • Realises dismantling the Treaty will cause tension with Britain. • Removes Oath of Allegiance • Abolishes Governor-General • De Valera was active in the League of Nations to build support for when he dismantled the Treaty. • Economic War with Britain: In 1932 De Valera refused to pay land annuities to Britain. • The British retaliated by imposing 20% customs duty on Irish imports. • The Dail then placed customs duties on many British imports into Ireland. • These measures caused severe economic hardship in Ireland. • In 1935 the Coal-Cattle Pact was agreed allowing for Irish cattle to be exported to Britain and British coal to be imported into Ireland. • Anglo-Irish Agreement 1938 and Economic War • The Constitutional Amendment Act 1936 removed all mention of the King and Governor General from the Constitution. • The External Relations Act 1936 greatly reduced the role of the King in Irish Affairs. Ireland was now ‘associated’ with the Commonwealth rather than being a full member. • 1937 Constitution: Ireland a republic in all but name