

## What steps did Irish Governments take to consolidate democracy, 1923-1945

- Civil war – C na nG – Administration
  - Law & order – Garda
  - Army Mutiny
  - Asserting independence
  - Handed over power
  - Dev – Dismantled Treaty
  - Defeated IRA & Blueshirts
  - Anglo-Irish Agreement – Neutrality
- 

(Following the truce called to end the Civil War, the Cumann na nGael government came to power, following a win for the pro-Treaty sides in the vote on it. They still had to contend with widespread violence in the country, as the extremists rejected the treaty. William T. Cosgrave and Kevin O'Higgins were two of the governments main players in consolidating democracy over the next six years. They kept the same administration who had worked for the British government, to allow continuity, and they adopted British common law. ) 6

(Law and order was the most pressing issue for the new government if they were to succeed in running the country. It was feared that if violence was widespread, the people would be unhappy with the government and begin to look past democracy towards communism or fascism to solve their problems, much like several other countries in Europe. Kevin O'Higgins, Minister for Home Affairs, set up the Garda Síochána. They were an unarmed, respected force, and their main duties were to deal with local issues such as drunken violence and poteen making. They succeeded in curtailing much of the violence which marred the democratic governments reputation. ) 7

(One of the major issues to threaten the democratic governments position was the Army Mutiny. Cosgrave began to decommission the Army, as there was no need for so many soldiers and generals now that the War of Independence and the Civil War had ended. However, the army officials and leaders were unhappy with this, as it meant that many of them would be unemployed, and as there was not much work available due to the poor economy, they retaliated. They signed a letter to Cosgrave telling him that they would rise up if he did not discontinue the decommissioning. Cosgrave acted decisively and had the signatories of the letter arrested. Those who fled were deemed to have resigned. This ensured that people knew that the Army was under the control of the government, and this helped to consolidate the position of democracy.) 8

(The Cumann na nGael government also helped to consolidate democracy by asserting their independence over British rule. They joined the League of Nations under their own name, and registered the Anglo-Irish Treaty with them. This saw it as an agreement between two sovereign states. They also sent ambassadors to foreign countries under the name of the Irish Free State. By asserting their independence in this manner, it helped to show the Irish people that the government was successful, and prevented any sort of extremist rebellion against them. ) 6

(In 1929, the Wall Street Crash occurred. Over the next few years, the economy declined and the Cumann na nGael government lost support. At the same time, Fianna Fáil, with de Valera as their leader, were gaining support with the promise of gaining a republic and improving the economy. Fianna Fáil won the general election of 1932 with an overall majority. Cosgrave agreed to step aside and peacefully hand over power to de Valera. Some see this as his greatest political achievement, as it showed their faith in democracy and ensured it would last in the country. ) 7

(De Valera faced many problems after coming to power in 1932. At first he supported the IRA, by releasing their prisoners and giving state pensions to their members. The IRA were a violent organisation and they broke up many Cumann na nGael meetings. De Valera finally realised that he would have to do something about the violence, and he banned the IRA. As the people blamed them for the widespread violence, they lost support and began to disappear. De Valera had successfully defended the threat from the extreme IRA and helped to consolidate democracy. ) 7

(He also faced a threat from the fascists in Ireland. Kevin Duffy who had been sacked as commissioner of the Gardaí, joined the ACA and became their leader. He admired European leaders such as Mussolini and their group adopted such fascist regimes as the salute and the uniform. When Duffy planned a march to Dublin with his Blueshirts, De Valera feared he was planning a military coup such as the March on Rome. He banned the march and set up the Broy Harriers to defend Ireland against the fascists. Soon after, Duffy left Ireland and went to Spain to help Franco in the civil war, and the Irish fascists fell apart. De Valera had once again successfully defended democracy in Ireland. ) 8

(In 1938, de Valera signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement with Britain. It had two aspects to it; it ended the economic war, and it handed back to Ireland the three Treaty ports; Cobh, Berehaven and Lough Swilly. This was de Valera's most important step in consolidating democracy, as it allowed Ireland to remain neutral in WWII. This meant that the Irish were now a separate entity from Britain and showed that democracy in Ireland worked. ) 5

(The Cumann na nGael governments took many steps to consolidate democracy in Ireland, and Cosgrave was very successful with this. De Valera and Fianna Fáil also had a successful run in democratic government, and ensured that Ireland became and remains today, a democratic country. ) 3

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CM = 57

OE = 35 - stops at 1939.

----- Question is 1923 to 1945

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Overall comment: 'Excellent in its treatment of the set Question particularly if it shows detailed learning, wide reading, analysis or extensive coverage.'