

Northern Ireland 1921-2016

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General Terms

- **Unionist** – someone who supports the Union of Northern Ireland with Great Britain
- Or - belonging to political mainstream of those who support the Union – traditionally represented by the Ulster Unionist Party
- **Loyalist** – more hard-line element of unionism. Often seen as more working class, inward looking and more prepared to use violence.
- PUL community – Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist

- **Nationalist** – someone who supports the creation of an all-Ireland state
- Constitutional nationalism the mainstream – not prepared to use violence to achieve that objective. Largely represented by the Social Democratic and Labour Party during The Troubles
- **Republican** – wants an all-Ireland Republic. Often viewed as more working-class. Can be prepared to use violence to achieve objectives.
- CNR community – Catholic, Nationalist, Republican.

The Situation at Partition

- Government of Ireland Act 1920
- Creates new regional parliament and government in the Northern six counties (the only devolved govt in UK) based at **Stormont** from 1932
- Unionist leaders distrust British govt - But need British financial and military support (IRA attacks continue until 1922)
- Build up their own security forces: the Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Special Constabulary
- 1925 Boundary Commission recommends only minor changes to the border
- Ulster Unionist Party the dominant political party for 50 years



Challenges to the Unionist Government

- Ulster Unionist Party government:
- Prioritised security and unionist unity
- Made easier by British desire to forget about Ireland –
- House of Commons Speaker's Ruling 1923 – UK Parliament does not intervene in devolved matters
- NI PM **James Craig's** failure on Catholics -
- February 1921: 'The rights of the minority must be sacred to the majority.'
- But 12 July 1932: 'Ours is a Protestant Parliament and I am an Orangeman'
- Inflated sense of self-importance? –
- Parliament Buildings opened 1932



Sir James Craig
NI PM 1921-40



Nationalist Opposition

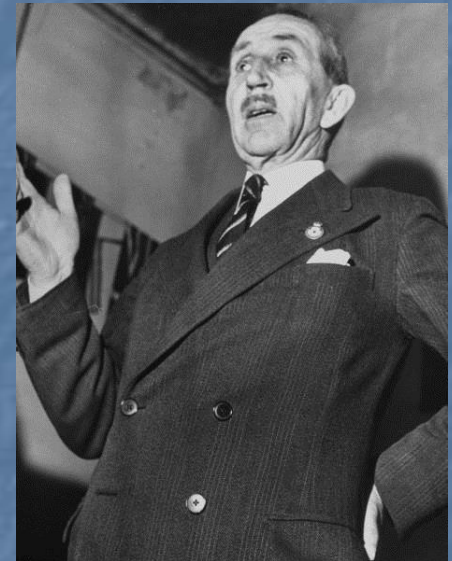
- Distrust, fear and resentment
- Impact of the expulsions and sectarian murders of Catholics 1920-22
- Initially **refused to recognise the state**
- Looked to Dublin for leadership
- Hoped the Boundary Commission would make North unviable – it recommended only minor changes
- But Nationalist opposition in Northern Ireland ineffective and often withdrew from NI Parliament
- Intermittent violence from the IRA



Joe Devlin
Nationalist leader

Post-War NI – Threats to Unionist Dominance

- Devolution intended to be self-financing but:
- Decline in heavy industry and textiles
- Shortfall in taxes raised locally compared to cost of running services made up by '**subvention**' from UK treasury.
- Increasing scale of government due to (UK-wide) Welfare State, etc after 1945
- Increase in Northern Ireland Labour Party vote worries Ulster Unionist Party
- Nationalist Anti-Partition campaign of late 1940s and early 1950s unsuccessful
- Unionists unsettled by **Irish Republican Army's** Border Campaign of 1956-62 – made them less likely to support reform



Sir Basil Brooke
NI PM 1943-63

Discrimination

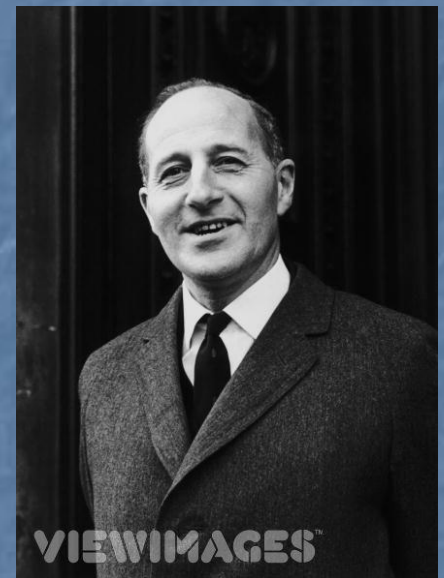
- Areas of discrimination against Catholics/Nationalists:
- Electoral practices – gerrymandering (and associated loss of resources)
- Public employment – Catholics under-represented in civil service
- Policing – Catholics under-represented in RUC, B Specials wholly Protestant, Special Powers Act – used mainly against nationalists and republicans (eg marches, display of flags)
- Private employment – Unionist government ignored or supported discrimination against Catholics
- Public housing – discrimination in allocation by some councils
- Regional policy – more Catholic west did not get fair share of resources (e.g. University of Ulster located in Coleraine - not in Derry)

What Motivated Discrimination?

- Fear of incorporation into a Gaelic, Catholic Irish state
- Decline of Protestant population in South: Church of Ireland population dropped 34% 1911-1926 and a further 36% by 1961
- Southern Irish continuing claim on NI – eg Articles 2 and 3 of Irish Constitution
- Continuing IRA violence (including 1956-62 Border campaign - 6 police officers and 11 IRA men killed)
- Catholic/nationalist rejection of state within NI
- Internal Unionist pressure – more government resources for unionist supporters, security fears of border Protestants
- Fear of Unionist political splits by UUP
- Sectarianism

The O'Neill Years: 1963-69

- Terence O'Neill NI PM in 1963. Objectives:
- **Economic reform**
- Win back votes from the NI Labour Party
- Improve Protestant/Catholic relations
- Improve North/South relations
- Appease Labour government at Westminster
- BUT -
- Opposition from within the Unionist Party
- 1966 anniversaries heighten tension
- 1966 emergence of **Ulster Volunteer Force**
- 1966 Gerry Fitt (Republican Labour) wins West Belfast seat
- Growing demands for end to discrimination
- Greater interest from UK Labour govt after 1966



Terence O'Neill
NI PM 1963-69

NICRA formed 1967

- Growing demand for end to discrimination from (mostly Catholic) groups from early 1960s
- 1967 **NI Civil Rights Association** demands:
 - One man, one vote for council elections
 - The ending of gerrymandered electoral boundaries
 - The creation of official offices to prevent discrimination by public authorities and to deal with complaints
 - Fair allocation of public housing
 - The repeal of the Special Powers Act
 - The disbanding of the B Specials
- Many unionists viewed NICRA as a communist/republican front aimed at destroying Northern Ireland



24 August 1968
Coalisland to Dungannon
March by NICRA

Increasing NICRA activity

- June 1968 Caledon, Co.Tyrone sit-in protest against allocation of a house to a single Protestant woman employed by a unionist councillor ahead of Catholic families
- 24 August 1968 First civil rights march – Coalisland-Dungannon Co.Tyrone – but had nationalist undertones. Meets counter-demonstration of **Ian Paisley** supporters in Dungannon
- 5 October 1968 RTE television coverage of **NICRA march** in Derry brings NI to the attention of the world and conveys the impression of a repressive, brutal regime.



Derry 5 October 1968

Unionist Reform Package

- November 1968 the NI government issues reform plan:
- A new system for the allocation of houses by local authorities
- Ombudsman to be appointed to investigate complaints against govt departments
- A Development Commission to take over the powers of Londonderry Corporation
- Special Powers Act to be repealed as soon as it is safe to do so
- Company vote abolished for local govt elections
- BUT Universal franchise for local govt elections NOT conceded due to internal unionist disputes
- April 1969 NI government accepts universal vote for local govt
- October 1969 NI govt accepts abolition of the B Specials
- Well received by nationalists but overtaken by events within months

People's Democracy March

- **People's Democracy** – a radical left wing students' group emerges late 1968 aiming to undermine the state
- Organises protest march January 1969
- Intended to be based on the Montgomery-Selma Civil Rights march in the USA. Unionists saw it as a coat-trailing exercise by republicans and Marxists.
- Attacked by loyalists - including off-duty B Specials at **Burntollet** outside Derry
- Burntollet led to a massive deterioration in relations between nationalists and unionists
- February 1969 O'Neill calls NI General Election but fails to win overwhelming majority – resigns as Prime Minister



Burntollet

August 1969

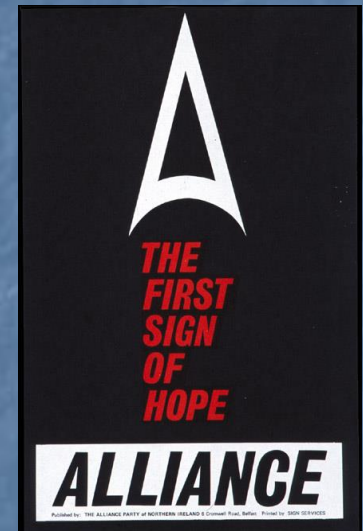
- Trouble around Orange 12 July parades contained by police
- 12 August 1969 '**Battle of the Bogside**' follows Apprentice Boys of Derry march
- Rioting in Derry spreads to Belfast and leads to sectarian conflict
- Irish Taoiseach Jack Lynch calls for United Nations soldiers to be used as peacekeepers - sends Irish Army field hospitals to the border
- **British Troops** called in to patrol streets - Derry 14 August and Belfast 15 August
- 'No-go areas' set up in republican areas



Battle of the Bogside

New Political Parties and Paramilitary Groups

- Political Parties:
- Middle ground Alliance Party - April 1970
- Constitutional nationalist party the Social Democratic and Labour Party - August 1970
- Democratic Unionist Party led by Ian Paisley - September 1971
- Paramilitary Groups:
- Provisional IRA / Official IRA split August 1969
- Ulster Defence Association – local loyalist vigilante groups coalesce in September 1971



Internment

- March 1971 O'Neill's replacement James Chichester-Clark resigns after failing to get British government to agree tougher security policy. Succeeded by Brian Faulkner
- August Faulkner convinces the British government to support **internment** without trial - with disastrous consequences
- 9 August 1971 - army arrests 342
- No loyalists interned
- 11 men subject to 'interrogation in depth'
- Violence escalates to highest levels of the Troubles.



Bloody Sunday: 30 January 1972

- **Bloody Sunday** 14 men killed by British soldiers in Derry following an anti-internment march
- British government receives international criticism and considers direct rule
- Increases support for the IRA within the Catholic community
- IRA bombing campaign continues:
- July 1972 IRA leader Martin McGuinness says: 'We are prepared to bomb any building that will cause economic devastation and put pressure on the [UK] Government.' The IRA will bomb businesses, 'whenever we feel like it.' The bombing of the commercial centre of Derry was part of a programme which was now 'practically complete.' (News Letter 18 July 1972).



Direct Rule

- March 1972 **Direct Rule** of NI by British government ministers introduced.
- The **Northern Ireland Office** is created as a Department of UK Government headed by a Secretary of State – a member of the UK Cabinet.
- British Government aims to create a '**Power-sharing Executive**' involving unionists and nationalists. BUT little support for this in Northern Ireland or the Republic.
- British also mention the '**Irish Dimension**' – some type of formalised political relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic.
- Irish Dimension supported by nationalists but strongly opposed by unionists



William Whitelaw
First NI SoS

Annual Deaths due to the Troubles

	Police	PoliceRes	Army	UDR	Civilian	TOTAL
■ 1969	1	0	0	0	13	14
■ 1970	2	0	0	0	23	25
■ 1971	11	0	43	5	115	174
■ 1972	14	3	105	26	322	470
■ 1973	10	3	58	8	173	252
■ 1974	12	3	30	7	168	220
■ 1975	7	4	14	6	216	247
■ 1976	13	10	14	15	245	297
■ 1977	8	6	15	14	69	112
■ 1978	4	6	14	7	50	81
■ 1979	9	5	38	10	51	113
■ 1980	3	6	8	9	50	76
■ 1981	13	8	10	13	57	101
■ 1982	8	4	21	7	57	97
■ 1983	9	9	5	10	44	77
■ 1984	7	2	9	10	36	64
■ 1985	14	9	2	4	26	55

Power-Sharing MK1: Sunningdale

- November 1973 Whitelaw chairs talks between the UUP, Alliance and SDLP aimed at forming a Power-sharing Executive for NI
- November Executive (led by Brian Faulkner) agreed in principle – to consist of 6 unionist, 4 SDLP, 1 Alliance
- **Sunningdale Conference** 6-9 December 1973 on Irish Dimension. British Govt, Irish Govt, NI Executive parties discuss Constitutional status of NI, extradition from the republic, a **Council of Ireland**
- Anti-Sunningdale unionists (reflecting the majority of unionist opinion) coalesce round opposition to Council of Ireland
- May 1974 loyalist politicians, paramilitaries and workers call the **Ulster Workers' Council Strike**. Brings NI economy to a halt and exposes lack of unionist support for Sunningdale. Unionists resign from the executive.



Prisoners

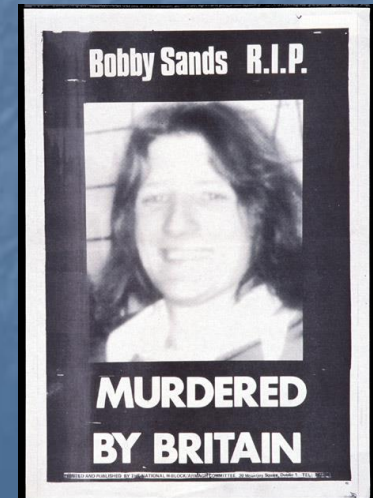
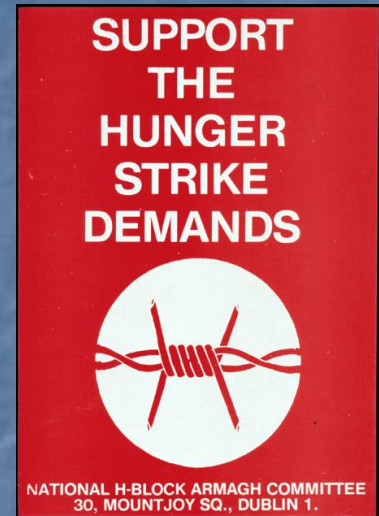
- British policy - '**criminalisation**' of paramilitary campaigns and remove **special category status**
- Republican campaign for **political status** gradually growing in the late 1970s as government seeks to phase out special category status
- Republicans reply with blanket protest, dirty/no wash protest and then **hunger strike**
- Republican prisoners' campaign centres round winning demands which would see them given status along lines of prisoners of war



Maze/Long Kesh H Blocks

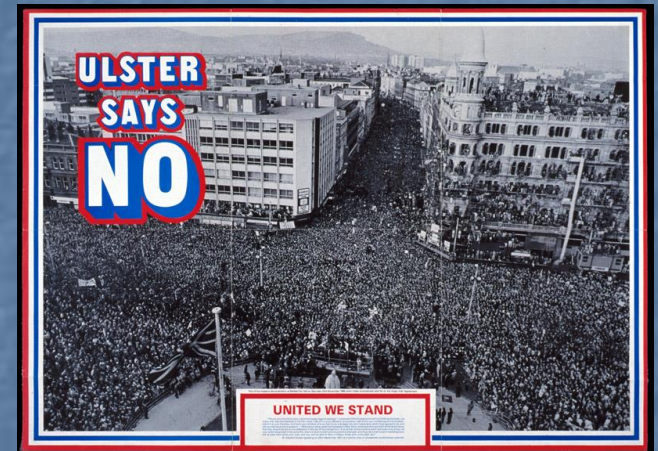
Hunger Strikes 1980-81

- 1980 a hunger strike called off because republicans (wrongly) believed they had achieved their goals
- Another hunger strike begins 1 March 1981
- April 1981 IRA prisoner **Bobby Sands** wins Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election
- Raises profile of Hunger strike on which 10 prisoners, including Sands, die
- Ends in October with some concessions by Govt.
- Throughout this period nearly 80 people killed
- South Belfast MP Robert Bradford killed by the IRA in November
- **Sinn Fein/republican movement** consider contesting more elections (although not taking seats) BUT IRA campaign continues 'Ballot Box and Armalite' strategy



The Anglo-Irish Agreement: 15 November 1985

- 15 November 1985 the British and Irish Governments sign the **Anglo-Irish Agreement**
- Gives Irish government a right to be **consulted** on certain NI affairs.
- Nationalists see it as approaching joint British-Irish authority over NI
- British government expects improved security co-operation from the Republic but increasingly disillusioned over this
- Unionists not consulted and completely opposed to AIA



The Enniskillen Bomb: 8 November 1987

- In 1986 **Libya** again begin supplying the IRA with weapons
- 1 November 1987 150 tons of Libyan weapons for the IRA intercepted but an estimated 240 tons (including Semtex explosives) already smuggled into Ireland
- Gave the IRA the ability to continue their campaign for years
- 8 November 1987 an IRA bomb at **Poppy Day** ceremony killed 11 and injured 63
- The attack loses republicans support both in Ireland and around the world



The Peace Process

- Republican leaders moving to a more political approach
- **John Hume-Gerry Adams talks** intermittently from 1988
- Under Hume-Adams proposals of September 1993 British to be '**persuaders**' for a united Ireland
- November 1990 NI SoS Peter Brooke says Britain has no selfish, strategic or economic interest in NI and would not stand in way of a united Ireland if it was achieved by peaceful means.
- **Brooke-Mayhew Talks:** April 1991-November 1992
- Three Strand Approach
- Strand 1 Northern Ireland structures
- Strand 2 North-South relations
- Strand 3 East-West British-Irish relations
- Brooke-Mayhew talks bring NI parties, British and Irish governments close to agreement on political structures.
- Rejected by Hume who believes IRA ceasefire needed first.



The Downing Street Declaration

- 15 December 1993 British and Irish Governments sign the **Downing Street Declaration**
- **British government:** 'It is for the people of Ireland alone, by agreement between the two parts, to exercise their right of self-determination on the basis of consent, freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland, if that is their wish.'
- **Irish government:** 'the democratic right of self-determination by the people of Ireland as a whole must be achieved and exercised with and subject to the agreement and consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland.'

PM John Major and Taoiseach Albert Reynolds announce the Downing Street Declaration



Ceasefires

- IRA announces cessation of military operations on 31 August and loyalist CLMC on 13 October
- Doubts remain as to the limits of the ceasefires
- IRA ceasefire partly based on a policy of – **Tactical Use of the Armed Struggle**
- Aim to form a broad pro-republican front with the Irish Government, the SDLP and Irish-American lobby to pressurise the British government to withdraw from NI
- Loyalist CLMC ceasefire based on the belief no secret deal done by British or Irish Govts with republicans and that 'the Union is safe'



Celebrations in Andersonstown, Belfast, after the announcement of the IRA ceasefire, 31 August 1994. (Pacemaker)

Deaths due to the Troubles

	Police	PoliceRes	Army	UDR/RIR	Civilian	TOTAL
■ 1986	10	2	4	8	37	61
■ 1987	9	7	3	8	68	95
■ 1988	4	2	21	12	55	94
■ 1989	7	2	12	2	39	62
■ 1990	7	5	7	8	49	76
■ 1991	5	1	5	8	75	94
■ 1992	2	1	4	2	76	85
■ 1993	3	3	6	2	70	84
■ 1994	3	0	1	2	56	62
■ 1995	1	0	0	0	8	9
■ 1996	0	0	1	0	14	15
■ 1997	3	1	1	0	17	22
■ 1998	1	0	1	0	53	55
■ 1999	0	0	0	0	7	7
■ 2000	0	0	0	0	18	18

Ongoing problems

- Disputes surrounding Orange parades culminate in standoff at **Drumcree** Co. Armagh in July 1995.
- **President Clinton** visits NI November 1995 boosts the peace process - but the IRA is already planning another attack.
- Republicans demand immediate talks - rejected by unionists and British govt as no IRA movement on weapons
- Senator George Mitchell produces report - decommissioning of paramilitary weapons during talks
- British government supports idea for an elected body to run alongside negotiations - nationalists and republicans see this as stalling
- February 1996 IRA ends ceasefire hoping to use violence to put talks along lines that it wants
- IRA bombs kill two in London. 200 injured in Manchester



Talks

- After **Labour victory** in UK General Election in May 1997 the government reduces demands for immediate handing over of arms.
- July 1997 IRA declares a new ceasefire
- Republicans brought into the talks but at the cost of a substantial minority of unionist representation (including DUP) leaving



The Good Friday Agreement

- Prolonged talks lead to the **Good Friday Agreement** in April 1998. Includes:
- Power-sharing executive in NI
- North-South Ministerial Council
- Council of the Isles (all British Isles elected bodies represented)
- UK and Ireland govts make constitutional changes – most importantly Articles 2 and 3 to be aspirational
- Paramilitary prisoners released within two years
- Political parties to use best efforts to see decommissioning of weapons within two years
- Referenda in NI and the republic produce votes in favour of the Agreement but only about 55 per cent of Protestants vote in favour.
- In 1998 Assembly nearly half unionists elected oppose the Agreement



Changing Political Support

- 2001 SF overtake SDLP as largest nationalist party
- 2003 DUP overtakes UUP as biggest unionist party
- Narrowing in practical approach of SF/SDLP as well as UUP/DUP to the GFA – all working within the general parameters of the Agreement
- Issue becomes one of 'ethnic outbidding' – which party can get the best deal for their ethno-political bloc
- After 2003 British (and Irish) govt place emphasis on getting a deal between DUP and SF
- Move away from the inclusive approach of the GFA



Continuing Instability – Slow Progress

- August 1998 republican dissident bomb in Omagh kills 28 injures 360
- Unionist-nationalist disputes over decommissioning lead to political instability
- October 2001 IRA begins to put weapons 'beyond use' after pressure from USA post 9/11
- July 2005 IRA announces end to armed campaign
- October 2006 St Andrews Agreement –DUP would join SF in NI Executive if SF supports the police
- May 2007 NI Executive formed with DUP and SF as largest parties
- July 2007 Army operation in NI officially ends
- April 2010 Justice and Policing powers devolved to NI the Assembly

MURDER
Omagh-Saturday 15th August 1998



Were you in Omagh on
Saturday 15th August 1998?

Did you see this vehicle?

Have you any information?

Please contact Police
at the Incident Room
Omagh on:
01662 246979
01662 256676
01662 246177
or the Confidential Telephone
0800 666999



The End of the Troubles?

- Political settlement relatively stable (if inefficient?)
- But:
- Elements of society still alienated – Republican dissident groups and working class Protestant communities
- General public not enthusiastic about the Assembly
- Outstanding areas of contention – interpreting and dealing with the past - victims
- Issues involving symbolism – parades and flags
- Economic problems continue
- 'Peace Dividend' largely failed to appear
- Economic austerity after 2008 due to world recession

