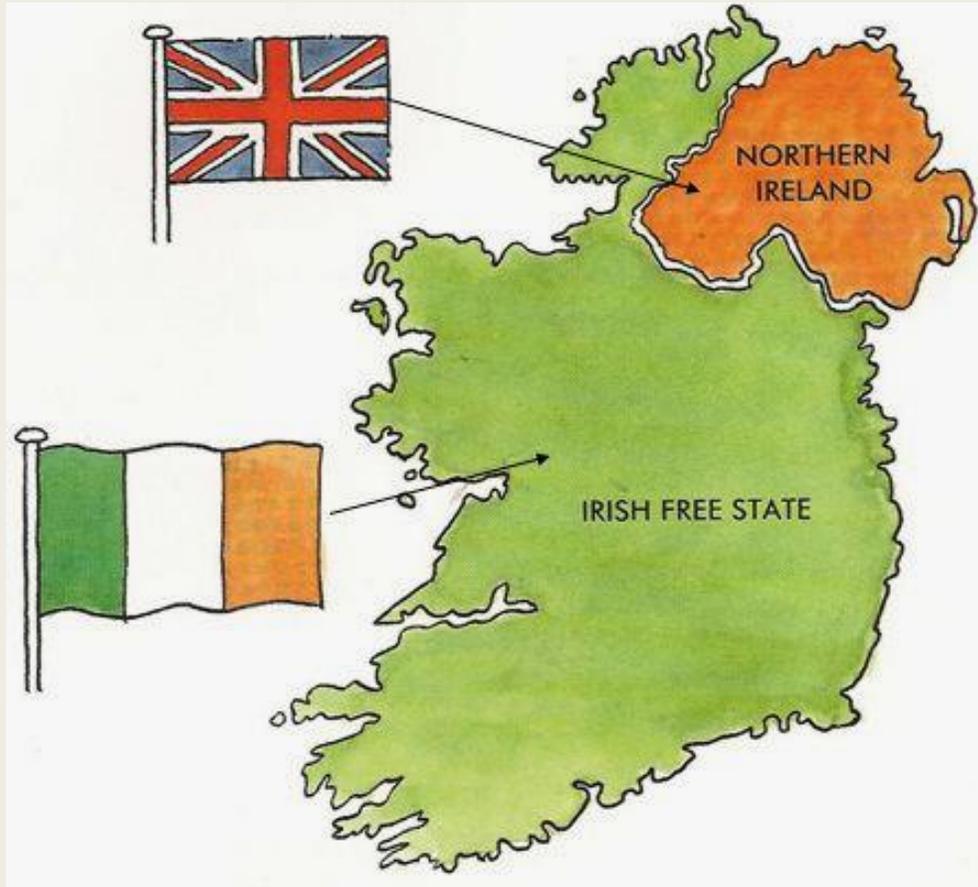


NORTHERN IRELAND: A HISTORY OF CONFLICT

Prof Peter Gray, Institute of Irish Studies, QUB



Ireland Partitioned, 1920



- 1801-1920 all of Ireland was part of the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (UK)**
- 1920 **Government of Ireland Act** partitions Ireland into two states
- Six north-eastern counties become **'Northern Ireland'** – a self-governing 'province' within the United Kingdom (UK) with capital at Belfast
- Twenty-six southern counties become in 1921 an independent state as the **'Irish Free State'** - renamed **'Republic of Ireland'** in 1949 - with capital at Dublin
- 'Irish Border' created – 310 miles / 499km separating the two Irelands

Lecture Outline

- **Why was Ireland partitioned?** Roots in colonialism, religious division, rise of rival nationalisms
- **How was Ireland partitioned?** Response to 'Irish Revolution' and Ulster Unionist mobilisation; British geopolitics; a contested boundary
- **What was 'Northern Ireland'?** Legacy of ethno-national division and violence; devolved powers and responsibilities; 'The **Orange State**'?
- **Could NI have been reformed?** The failure of 'Liberal Unionism' and the crisis of Civil Rights in the 1960s
- **Collapse into violence:** outbreak and intensification of 'The Troubles'; suspension of NI self-government 1972

Early Medieval Ireland



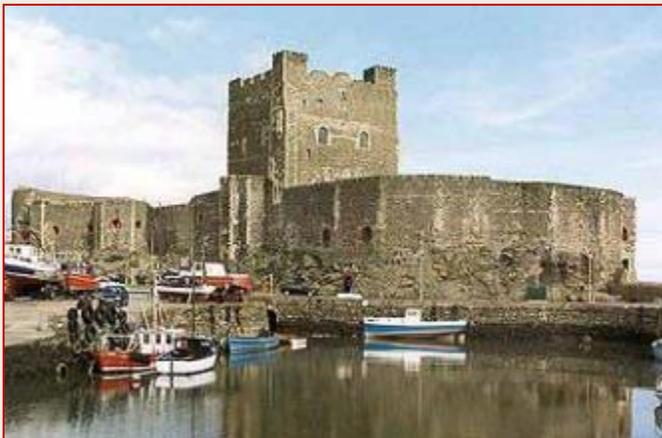
Ireland in early medieval period (c.650)

- Ireland converted to **Christianity** (5th Century, with allegiance to Roman church) – Saint Patrick its ‘apostle’ and patron saint – monastic system
- **Gaelic** (Irish) speaking island – high level of cultural unity; shared Gaelic culture with western Scottish isles / highlands
- Politically divided into small kingdoms (*túath*) / provinces but with a nominal ‘high king’ of Ireland by 10th century. Pastoral clan society; slavery; regulated by ‘Brehon laws’
- Some urban development around ports following Viking (Scandinavian) invasions from 9th century (Dublin, Limerick, Waterford etc)
- Legacies: ideal of ‘Irish Gaelic Civilisation’ – ‘Isle of Saints and Scholars’ appeals to later generations

The Medieval Colony of Ireland c.1170-1534



'The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife' by Daniel Maclise (1854)



Carrickfergus Castle, Co. Antrim (1177-1217). Seat of English power in east Ulster until 18th century.

- Invasion and partial colonisation of Ireland by **Kingdom of England** 1171 (following incursion 1170 by Baron Richard 'Strongbow' de Clare)
- Part of **Norman expansion** across Europe (Normandy, England, Scotland, Naples, Sicily)
- Settlement of eastern coastal districts by English/Welsh settlers brings feudalism and English language; west and north remains Gaelic and Irish-speaking
- **Dublin** emerges as political capital of Ireland; seat of English royal power at Dublin Castle
- Settlers become known as the '**Old English**' of '**The Pale**'; but some **Hibernicisation** of settlers beyond the Pale (De Burgo/Burkes, Fitzgeralds, Butlers)
- **Statutes of Kilkenny** (1366) seek to prevent intermarriage in English colony; subordinate Gaelic law/language; maintain cultural divide in 'Pale' – only partial success

English Tudor Conquest and Reformation



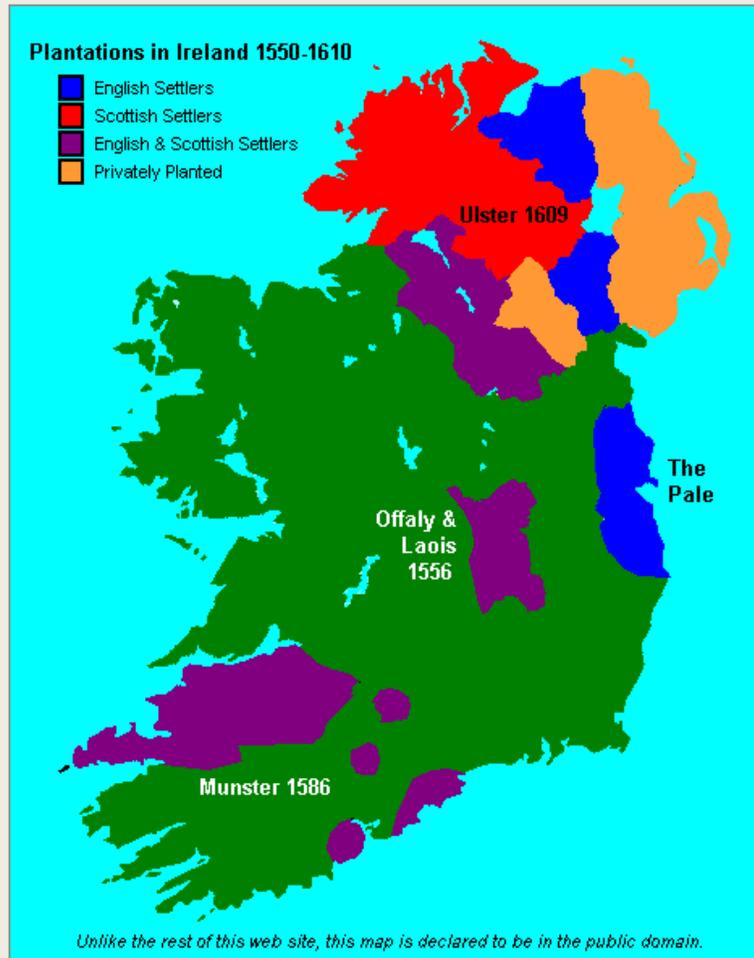
Ireland and England, from 1528 map



English army campaigning in Ireland (John Derrick, 1581)

- Full conquest and political subordination of Ireland by **Tudor English kingdom** in series of initiatives and wars from 1534 to 1603 (from Henry VIII to James I)
- King Henry VIII of England proclaimed 'King of Ireland' 1541
- Context of **Atlantic colonial expansion** of England/Britain
- English **Protestant Reformation** from 1530s exported to Ireland – mostly fails, but is made the Established Church of Ireland (Episcopalian) – to 1869
- **Protestantism** imposed on Ireland from 1560s; but strong resistance from both natives and 'old English' settlers who mostly adhere to Catholicism
- **'New English'** Protestant settlers hostile to both native and 'Old English' Catholics
- Ireland drawn into European **Wars of Religion** (Spanish Armada, 1588)

The Plantation of Ulster, 1609



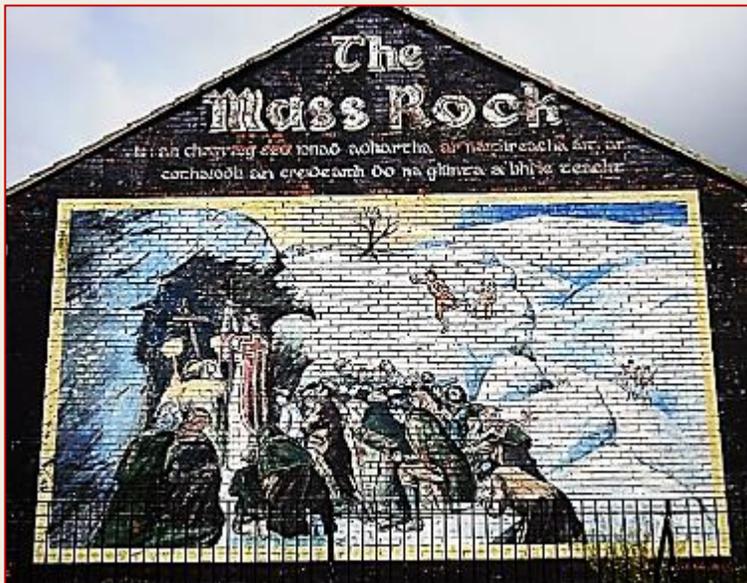
Plantations in 16th-17th Century Ireland. Those in the Midlands (1550s) and Munster (1580s) mostly failed in the face of rebellions.

- **Rebellion** of Gaelic Irish lords of Ulster under Hugh O'Neill 1594; supported by Spain as a Catholic crusade
- Defeated at Kinsale 1603 and their lands confiscated by crown after 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607; depopulation
- **Ulster Plantation** by English (Anglican) and Scottish (Presbyterian) settlers from 1609: land ownership allocated to British soldiers and 'adventurers' / London companies
- Mass migration of settlers from lowland Scotland/northern England. 'Informal' plantations of counties Antrim and Down by Scots. Continues to 1690s
- British settlers predominantly **Protestants** and speakers of English language/Scots dialects
- Most natives remain Catholic and Irish-speaking; pushed to west or on to poorer land in north
- Irish Catholic **rebellions** in **1641-49** and **1689-91** defeated: political power monopolised by landowning minority ('the Protestant Ascendancy') until late 19th Century
- **Memory of rebellions** and their suppression important for historical narratives of both Protestant and Catholic communities

The legacies of the Boyne (1690)



Left: Orange banner of King William (1990s); below: Belfast wall mural of penal 'mass rock' (1990s, based on 1900s print)



- **'War of the Three Kingdoms'** or **'Glorious Revolution'** (1688-91)
- Victory of Protestant **King William III 'of Orange'** at **Battle of the Boyne**, 1690 (part of wider European war)
- Further land confiscations: c.90% of Irish land Protestant-owned by 1700
- **'Penal Laws'** passed restricting Catholic (and some Presbyterian) economic, religious, educational and political rights
- Most penal laws lifted 1780s-90s, but political ones remain to 1829
- Parallel memories – **'penal era'** or **'golden age'** of 18th Century
- Failed attempt by **United Irish** movement to create a non-sectarian Irish identity in 1790s – abortive revolution of 1798

Nationalism and Unionism



Pro-'Home Rule' cartoon,
1890s



Orange Order band, Belfast, early 20thC

- 1800 **Act of Union** integrates Ireland politically into **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (UK)**; direct British rule of Ireland
- In 19th Century, most Irish Catholics support Irish self-government ('Repeal'/'Home Rule') but with some link to UK (**Nationalists**) – to be attained by constitutional agitation
- More radical nationalists /'**Fenians**' seek totally independent Republic through revolution (**Republicans**)
- Most Irish Protestants become **Unionists** (seeking to maintain political union with UK). Mobilise through **Orange Order** (est. 1795) named after King William III of Orange.

Uneven Economic Development



- North-east Ulster has industrial revolution
- Belfast centre of world-leading **linen** textiles and engineering industries
- Harland and Wolff **Shipyard** (est. 1861) – construction of 'Titanic' 1910-12
- Protestant middle and working classes associate economic prosperity with Union



- South and west of Ireland marked by slower economic growth or stagnation
- **Great Famine** 1845-50 sees 1/8 of population die
- Mass emigration (c.8m over 19th century)
- Post-famine economy remains dependent on agriculture and food processing
- Nationalists tend to blame Union for damaging Irish economy

War and Revolution in Ireland 1912-21



Loyalist Historical Mural of 1912-14 mobilisation under Edward Carson and First World War

Belfast Republican Mural of 'Easter Rising' in Dublin, 1916



- 1912 British Liberal Govt allied to Irish Nationalists proposes Home Rule Bill for Ireland
- **'Ulster Crisis'** 1912-14 sees Unionism mobilise in defence of UK link; paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)
- **First World War** (1914-18) sees radicalisation of Irish Nationalism: **1916 Rising** in Dublin led by revolutionary IRB
- Unionist 'Blood sacrifice' myth – Battle of the Somme 1916
- **1918 Election** sees Ireland split between Sinn Fein party (seeking total independence) and Ulster Unionists
- **Irish War of Independence** led by Sinn Fein party and IRA, 1919-21 forces British Govt to negotiate – Anglo-Irish Treaty 1921

Partition and Northern Ireland, 1920-22



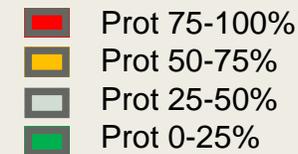
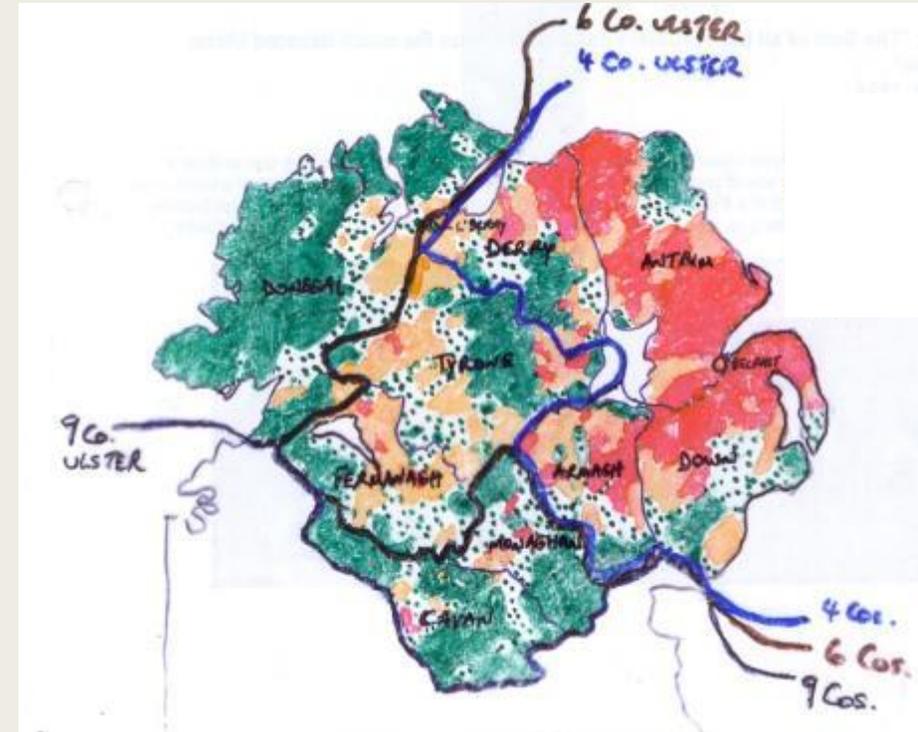
- Ireland partitioned by 1920 Government of Ireland Act
- 6 North-eastern counties become '**Northern Ireland**' with Protestant majority
- 26 southern counties known as 'Southern Ireland' (1920-1), **Irish Free State** (1921-37), **Éire** (1937-49), **Republic of Ireland** (1949-)
- **Northern Ireland** a self-governing 'province' within UK, with a devolved parliament and a regional government in Belfast
- Partition of Ireland an attempt by Britain to 'solve the Irish problem' by territorial division between ethno-national communities – could it succeed?
- Compare with other 'end of empire' partitions: India (1947); Palestine (1947-8); Cyprus (1974)



Some A-Specials, armed with rifles, on a training exercise in 1922.

Partitioning Ireland: Border drawing

- Complex religious demography of Ulster
- 4, 6 or 9 county area – debated from 1913/14?
- GOIA 1920 rejects local plebiscites / county option (c.f. Silesia, Schleswig-Holstein, Saarland)
- UK Government preferred 9 counties (c.54% Protestant); Unionist leader James Craig insisted on 6 (c.70% Protestant)
- 2 of 6 counties (Tyrone, Fermanagh) had Catholic/Nationalist majorities; border city of Londonderry also Catholic majority
- Large and hostile minority (c.30% Catholic) left inside Northern Ireland; smaller Protestant minority (c.10%) left in ‘Southern Ireland’/IFS
- Boundary Commission of 1925 recommends only very minor changes – abandoned
- No repartition since 1920



The Government of Northern Ireland (1921-72)



Flag of Northern Ireland ('Ulster Banner') 1924-72

- GOIA 1920 grants NI legislative and executive **devolution** as a 'Province' within UK
- Supported by Ulster Unionists as guarantee of partition – but meant acceptance of 'Home Rule' for NI – contradiction?
- **NI Parliament:** 52 MPs in Commons elected by Proportional Representation (STV); 24 Senators elected by Commons
- NI Parliament to have devolved control over internal affairs, including policing, education, economic development
- 'Imperial' or 'reserved' affairs reserved to Westminster (NI remains in UK) – including war/peace, currency and trade
- NI to have symbolic Governor General, but no federal relationship with Westminster
- Hope that NI and S Irish Parliaments would co-operate in '**Council of Ireland**' and possibly reunite voluntarily

State Building: Craig in Government

- **James Craig** PM of NI 1921-1940; created Viscount Craigavon 1927
- NI Parliament elections May 1921: 40 Ulster Unionist, 6 Nationalist Party, 6 Sinn Fein – **permanent Unionist control to 1972**
- NI Parliament opened at Belfast City Hall by King George V, June 1921 (boycotted by nationalist parties)
- Devolved powers transferred to NI Govt in course of 1921



Irish Weekly Independent,
Nov. 1921



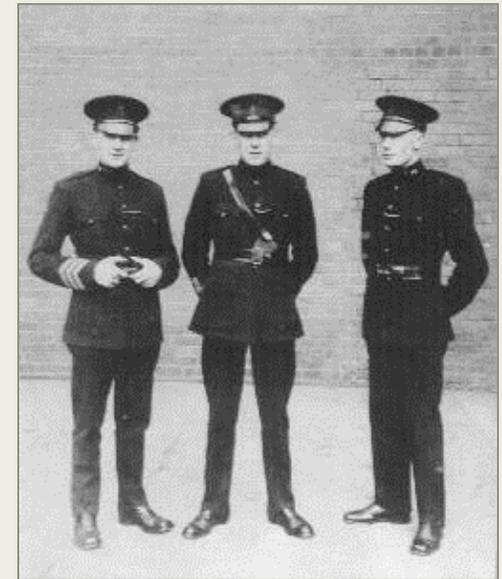
John Lavery: Opening of NI Parliament,
1921

The 'First Troubles' and Security Policy

- Northern Ireland born in violence – 'Troubles' of 1920-22
- **Irish War of Independence** (1919-21) and **Irish Civil War** (1922-3) affects north; also sectarian violence in Belfast and Derry and '**Border War**' (1920-22) – 455 killed in Belfast alone
- **Ulster Special Constabulary (B-Specials)** formed late 1920 as state security force for NI – exclusively Protestant armed part-time militia based on old UVF
- **Special Powers Act** (NI) introduced 1922 giving coercive powers to NI Govt (retained to 1970s)
- **Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)** introduced 1922– an armed regular police force (some Catholic members, but mostly ex-RIC members from south – little N. Catholic recruitment)
- New state stabilised by 1923; **IRA** marginalised; but NI retains security apparatus and distrust of Catholic minority



B-Specials c.1922



RUC Officers, mid-1920s

Local Government and Education

- Problem of 'disloyal' (i.e. Irish Nationalist) control of western local authorities – suspended by NI Govt 1922
- **NI Local Govt Act 1922** abolishes Proportional Representation (PR) in local govt and redraws electoral boundaries ('gerrymandering')
- Restores western County Fermanagh, Tyrone and Derry city councils to Ulster Unionist control
- British Govt fails to intervene to uphold GOIA 'safeguard' of PR - only restored in local government elections 1973
- **1923 Education Act** prepared by Liberal-Unionist Lord Londonderry: seeks equitable treatment of Catholic education in a non-denominational system
- Opposed by churches (Protestant and Catholic) and by Orange Order; Lord Londonderry resigns 1926
- Legislation amended to favour Protestant schools and guarantee interests of Protestant churches 1925, 1930

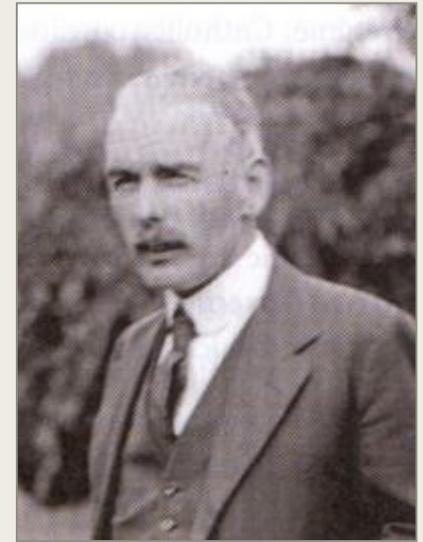


'Proportional Representation, laddie, means confusion to 'Ulster'. Cut out such new-fangled stuff. Every Orangeman knows how many beans make five!'

'"Ulster" Arithmetic' – Shemus, *Weekly Freeman*, 22 Sept. 1922

A discriminatory state

- Richard Dawson Bates at Home Affairs: had 'Such a prejudice against Catholics that he made it clear to his permanent Secretary that he did not want his most juvenile clerk or typist, if a Papist, assigned for duty to his ministry.'
- Bates lifts ban on RUC membership of Orange Order 1923
- Close relationship of **Orange Order** and the **Ulster Unionist Party** – a cross-class vertical alignment (OO has seats on Ulster Unionist Council)
- Unionist hegemony dependent on continuity of internal and external threats – religious and political
- PR abolished for Stormont elections 1928
- Continuing Catholic (Nationalist Party and SF) boycott of state institutions until 1925 and again after 1932



Richard Dawson Bates, NI Interior Minister, 1921-43



William Conor, 'The Twelfth' (1920)

Stormont

- Parliament Buildings, Stormont, opened as permanent home of NI Parliament, 1932
- Sir Arnold Thornley, architect
- Funded by UK Treasury
- Statue of Sir Edward Carson added, 1932
- Carson has state funeral in Belfast, 1935 (St Anne's Cathedral)
- Context: Severe economic recession and high unemployment (1932 Outdoor Relief Riots)
- Major sectarian rioting 1935



Opening of Stormont, 1932



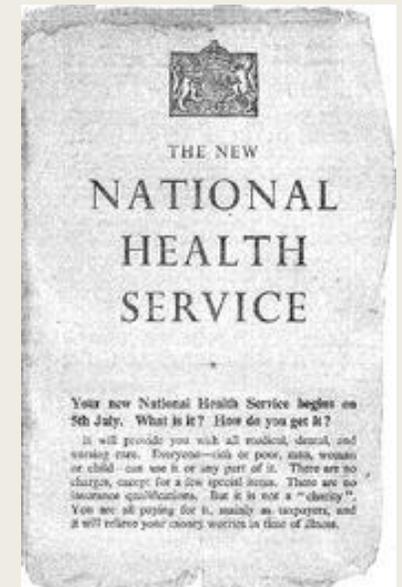
Carson statue, detail

Legacy of World War 2



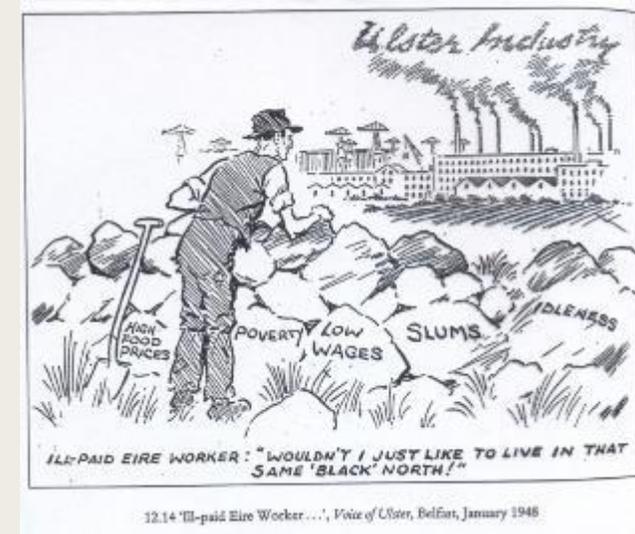
Belfast after 1941 Blitz

- Revival in heavy industry 1940s and economic restructuring
- Revived sense of common ‘Britishness’ with GB due to shared war experience (Belfast Blitz 1941) and NI war effort
- **1949 Ireland Act** guarantees NI’s constitutional status
- **Welfare State** come to NI after 1945 - Stormont follows UK Labour measures ‘Step by Step’ (paid for by UK Treasury)
- National Assistance, Family Allowances, Non-contributory Pensions; **National Health Service** introduced 1948
- NI Education Act 1947; NI Housing Trust established 1945



Consequences of welfarism for NI

- Welfare reforms popular with Protestant and Catholic working classes
- Raises social expectations
- Promotes development of Catholic professional middle class (access to secondary and higher education)
- Sharpens social differences between north and south of Ireland
- Slows emigration from NI – encourages growth in Catholic share of population (had risen to **37%** by 1971)
- Ties Stormont financially more firmly to Westminster
- BUT: not accompanied by political reform
- PM of NI **Lord Brookeborough** (1943-63) retains ban on Catholic members of UUP
- IRA campaigns 1939-40, 1956-62 keep tensions high
- Lost opportunity for reconciliation after WW2?



O'Neill's 'Liberal Unionism' 1963-9

- Response to economic decline late 50s-early 60s and growing Labour movement (NI Labour Party gets 26% of votes 1962)
- **Captain Terence O'Neill** appointed PM of NI 1963
- Technocratic approach to socio-economic development: 1964 Wilson Report on NI economy
- Seeks multinational investment (FDI) in new industries
- Rapprochement with **Sean Lemass** (PM of Republic of Ireland) 1965 – trade talks
- **Liberal Unionist** attitude towards Catholic institutions and symbols
- Sought working relationship with Harold Wilson's Labour govt in GB (1964-70)
- Was it possible to reform NI?



Sean Lemass and Terence O'Neill meet at Stormont, 1965

The rise of Rev. Ian Paisley

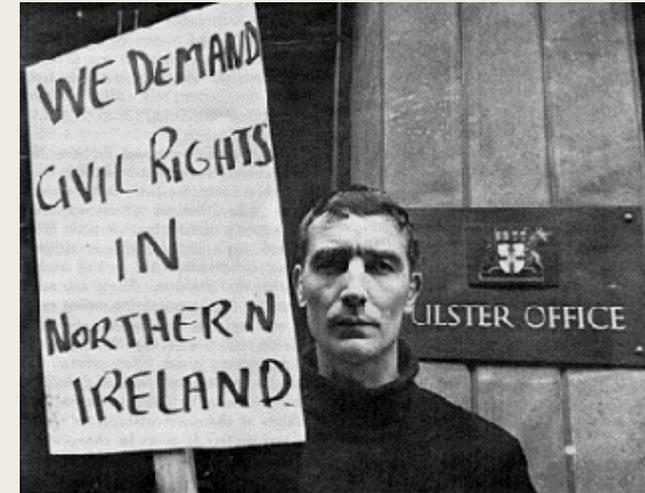
- Evangelical clergyman (Baptist background)
- Founds Free Presbyterian Church 1950s
- Opposed 'ecumenism' in religion and politics
- Member of 'Ulster Protestant Action' from late 1950s:
Published *Protestant Telegraph*
- Provokes riots over display of tricolour on Divis St, 1964; and demonstrates vs Presbyterian General Assembly, 1966
- Protests against Lemass visit 1965
- Imprisoned for public order offences 1966, 1969
- Leads 'O'Neill must go' campaign 1968-9
- Nearly defeats O'Neill in Bannside election 1969
- Founds **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** 1971



Paisley electioneering for the Protestant Unionist Party, 1970

The rise of the Civil Rights Movement

- Initial focus west of River Bann, 1963-4, On housing and local govt employment and franchise – discrimination against Catholics
- Initial focus on lobbying for change. Support from Campaign for Democracy in Ulster (British Labour Party group)
- Support from Gerry Fitt, Republican Labour/SDLP MP for W. Belfast 1966-83
- Fails to get NI issues debated at Westminster

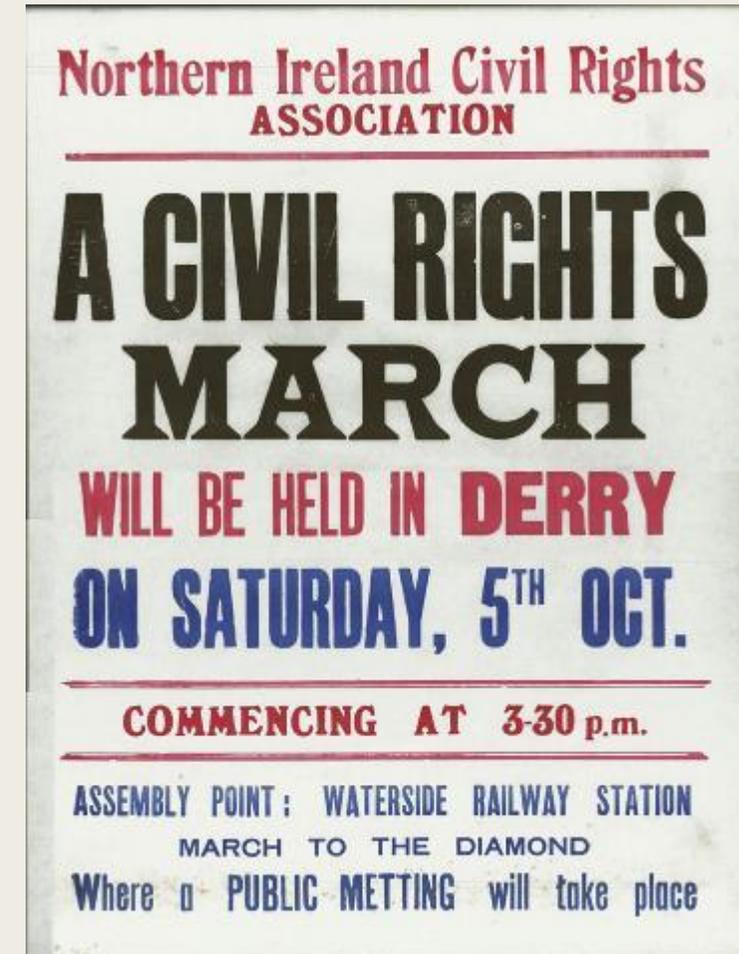


NICRA

- NI Civil Rights Association formed Feb. 1967
- Loose coalition of Lobby Groups, Liberals, Republicans, NILP, TUs, NI Communist Party, Nationalists
- Support from IRA under leftist leadership of Cathal Goulding

Aims:

- universal adult suffrage in local government elections ('one man one vote')
- the end to 'gerrymandered' electoral boundaries
- the allocation of public housing on the basis of need (points system)
- repeal of the Special Powers Act; the disbanding of the B-Specials (USC)
- the end to religious discrimination in employment
- a system to deal with complaints of discrimination.



NICRA activities

- Modelled on M.L. King's US Black Civil Rights movement
- Student activism – **'People's Democracy' 1968 (QUB):** look to European and US student radicalism
- Housing occupations – Caledon June 1968
- Demonstrations:
 - Coalisland-Dungannon march Aug. 1968
 - Provokes Loyalist counter-marches
 - **Derry March 5 Oct. 1968;** banned and Protestors batoned by RUC; followed by riots
 - Filmed and broadcast by RTE tv crew – 'first day of the Troubles'?



QUB students in Civil Rights protest, 1968



RUC attack 5 Oct march

Consequences

- 15,000 in demonstration in Derry Nov. 1968
- UK, Irish and World attention focused on NI
- O'Neill comes under external pressure to introduce reforms
- Growing tensions between moderates (John Hume) and radicals (PD/Republicans) in NICRA
- Nov 1968 O'Neill offers moderate reforms and NICRA calls truce
- Radical Peoples Democracy demands more – march to Derry Jan. 1969 attacked by Paisleyite mob at Burntollet
- PD leader Bernadette Devlin elected 'Unity' MP 1969
- Moderates form Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) 1970 – Gerry Fitt, Paddy Devlin, John Hume



Unionist fragmentation 1969

- Ian Paisley's 'O'Neill must go' campaign gains popularity among many Unionists
- Stormont elections Feb. 1969: 1/3 UUP 'Anti-O'Neill'
- **Ulster Volunteer Force** (UVF, founded 1966) bomb NI electricity and water installations March-April 1969 (later also Dublin) – escalate tensions
- 28 April 1969 O'Neill resigns and is replaced as PM by Major James Chichester-Clark



James Chichester-Clark,
5th PM of NI (1969-71)



PD Poster 1969

August 1969

- Extreme tensions and disturbances over 'marching season' in July-August: NI Govt mobilises B-Specials under Special Powers Act, 15 July
- Apprentice Boys march in Derry 12 August provokes rioting: 'Battle of the Bogside' 12-14 August
- Sectarian rioting spreads to Belfast 13 August (7 deaths in city 14-15 Aug): Bombay Street burnings
- Stormont requests military aid to RUC: 15 August Wilson govt deploys British Army in Belfast and Derry as peacekeepers
- Establishment of 'peace lines'
- Home Secretary James Callaghan visits Derry and promises reforms and official inquiry (Aug., Oct. 1969)
- Stormont shares control of security in NI with British army



Photographs of 'Battle of the Bogside', Aug. 1969



British troops deployed in Belfast 1969

Continuing security crisis 1969-71

- Loyalist paramilitary backlash vs reforms (UVF and Ulster Defence Association (UDA), est. 1971)
- IRA revival as self-declared 'defenders' of Catholic areas and imports arms
- Continuing sectarian rioting and attacks : 16 'Troubles' deaths 1969, 26 in 1970, 171 in 1971
- Start of bombing campaigns by paramilitaries
 - **Edward Heath's Conservative govt in GB** (June 1970-Feb 1974) more assertive on security policy in NI
 - UK military leadership saw NI in 'colonial' terms (experience in Kenya, Malaya, Cyprus, Aden 1950s-60s)
 - Stormont ministers lobbied for army to be given more aggressive role vs insurgency, especially **Brian Faulkner** (PM of NI 1971-2)
 - 'Falls Curfew' imposed by British Army July 1970



Aftermath of Shankill riot, 1969



Daily Express cartoon, Mar. 1971

IRA revival and split

- Marxist turn of IRA in 1960s under Dublin leadership of Cathal Goulding
- Opposed by conservative militants such as Sean MacStíofáin and Ruairí Ó Brádaigh
- IRA splits Dec 1969 into Marxist 'Officials' and militarist 'Provisionals'/PIRA (also Sinn Fein splits early 1970)
- Provisionals expand in NI 1970 – adopt terrorist techniques developed by PLO etc
- First British soldier killed by IRA Feb. 1971 – shift to offensive strategy ('armed struggle') in pursuit of British withdrawal and United Ireland



Official IRA
gunman, 1972



PIRA funeral 1971

Internment

- Previously used 1940s and 1956-62 (NI Special Powers Act but also in ROI)
- Used against Republican suspects from 9 August 1971 (not at first against Loyalists)
- Arrests by Army, using RUC lists: 342 detained (1971-75: 1,981 in total)
- Use of illegal interrogation techniques ('torture') on some suspects (cases in ECHR)
- Mass alienation and protests across Catholic community: campaign of civil disobedience including SDLP/NICRA
- Followed by massive escalation of IRA attacks in second half of 1971



Long Kesh internment camp



Derry after a riot, early 1970s

‘Bloody Sunday’

- NICRA march against Internment in Derry 30 Jan. 1972
- 13 Catholic civilians killed by Army
- Official inquiry by Lord Widgery claims most were involved in violence – subsequently discredited (Saville Inquiry report, 2010)
- Propaganda coup for PIRA
- Riots in Dublin – British Embassy burnt, upsurge of support for PIRA in USA and Europe
- Followed by boost to PIRA recruitment and further escalation of violence
- 1972 bloodiest year of ‘Troubles’ (479 deaths)



Bloody Sunday press photo



Irish Times 5.2.72

The fall of Stormont 1972

- British Govt blames Stormont for political crisis and demands surrender of all security powers – refused by PM Brian Faulkner
- 30 March 1972 NI Parliament and Government prorogued under NI (Temporary Provisions) Act
- Mass protests from Unionists and upsurge in Loyalist violence
- Direct Rule by UK introduced under Secretary of State for NI William Whitelaw (Con) at NI Office – with some short breaks lasts to 1998



Vanguard Unionist Party protest against suspension of Stormont, March 1972 (BT)



Ian Paisley protests against suspension of Stormont, 1972

Conclusion

By mid-1972 'The Troubles' at peak:

- NI in full-scale communal violence – daily atrocities
- Mobilisation of PIRA (and later INLA) campaign to end partition and British rule
- Mobilisation of Loyalist paramilitary groups (UVF, UDA) to resist this and restore Protestant majority rule in NI
- Compromise of British claim to be 'peacekeepers' and honest brokers in NI – counterproductive security policy
- Start of internationalisation of NI conflict
- External and internal political pressure for 'political settlement' in NI (1973-4; 1982-3; 1985; 1993-4, 1997-8))
- Mutual alienation of religious-national communities and parties in NI – political stalemate to 1990s
- Conditions set for 'long war' by IRA (to 1994/1997)
- Failure of NI Devolved State Experiment of 1920 – but what would replace it?
- A conflict with specific short-term causes, but rooted in deep historical structures



British Army in Belfast, 1971



Tarring and feathering an 'informer', 1971