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EUROsimA

# STUDY GUIDE

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## Historical Crisis Committee: The Troubles 1982-1998

2021  
EDITION



# Historical Crisis Committee: The Troubles Study Guide

European Union Simulation in Ankara (EUROsimA) 2021  
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## Letter from the Secretary-General

Most Distinguished Participants,

My name is Selin Kumbaracı and I am a fourth-year student of Political Science and Public Administration at Middle East Technical University. It is my honor to serve as the Secretary-General of the European Union Simulation in Ankara 2021 and to welcome you to the 17<sup>th</sup> edition of EUROsimA—the premier European Union simulation in Turkey—on behalf of our esteemed Director-General, Ms. Yasemin Dallı, and the entirety of our Academic and Organization Teams.

The focus of EUROsimA 2021 will be centered on the theme, *'The Past, Present, and Future of Europe'* in order to discuss the tumultuous changes taking place in the Union today and the impact current changes will have on the future of the bloc, as well as on the future of the broader region and world. This theme also alludes to how the root of various issues that have a notable impact contemporarily can be traced back to historical developments. Indeed, one cannot hope to understand the present, let alone look toward the future of the EU, without having an understanding of its past.

As such, I would like to thank the brilliant members of the Academic Team responsible for the Historical Crisis Committee: The Troubles, namely Mr. Bera Karagüzel, Ms. Şebnem Yaren, and Mr. Toprak Sezgin, for the way in which they have provided a thorough historical understanding of the Northern Ireland conflict, as well as the necessary background to understand how this issue plays out currently, in this document.

As the Under-Secretaries-General of the HCC: The Troubles, Mr. Bera Karagüzel and Ms. Şebnem Yaren have far exceeded my expectations of them both in terms of how well they have explained such a complex historical issue as well as their motivation throughout these incredibly difficult times that we are living through. I extend my most heartfelt gratitude to them, both as friends and as colleagues. The Academic Assistant of this committee, Mr. Toprak Sezgin, must also be recognized for the high quality of his work and his tenacity; he has truly raised the bar for future Academic Assistants.

I highly recommend the participants of the HCC: The Troubles to read this document thoroughly and conduct further research on the matter so as to be well prepared for the high-paced debates and complex issues that will be discussed.

Kind Regards,

Selin Kumbaracı

Secretary-General of EUROsimA 2021

## Letter from the Under-Secretaries-General

Honourable participants,

Our names are Şebnem Yaren and Batuhan Bera Karagüzel, and we are, respectively, a second-year Management student at Boğaziçi University and a fourth-year International Relations student at Middle East Technical University. It is our utmost pleasure to be serving as the Under-Secretaries-General responsible for the HCC: The Troubles committee in the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Union Simulation in Ankara.

The Historical Crisis Committee: The Troubles, referring to the Northern Ireland Troubles, will be a historical crisis simulation, discussing specifically the political circumstance that Northern Ireland experienced, starting from 1982. Party members, who are all respected politicians, will address the current political, social, and economic state in Northern Ireland while also trying to keep up with the changing developments across the region. They will evaluate the relationship between the Ulster Unionist Party and the Nationalists, their own constituents the Unionists, and the British government and discuss ways to establish productive ties with all of them while sticking to their party's core values and agenda. The years-long conflict between the Unionists and the Nationalists and the never-ending negotiations with the various British governments for more than fifty years, has caused immense obstacles in the way of reaching a certain level of prosperity and peace in Northern Ireland, but the party members are dedicated to work towards an ideal Northern Ireland, that their people desperately and definitely need.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our infinite appreciation and respect to Ms. Selin Kumbaracı and Mr. Toprak Sezgin for their incredible understanding, guidance, and inspiration throughout the process of completing this study guide, as well as generally throughout the formation of this committee; it is difficult to express with words the depth and extent of knowledge and foresight provided by these two incredible members of EUROsimA 2021 Academic Team. It has been an honour to work alongside such dedicated and professional individuals and as a part of such a supportive and talented team of EUROsimA as a whole, especially during these trying times and extraordinary circumstances that the world is in.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact either of us at [sebnem.yaren@bogazicimun.org](mailto:sebnem.yaren@bogazicimun.org) and/or [berakaraguzel@gmail.com](mailto:berakaraguzel@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Şebnem Yaren and Batuhan Bera Karagüzel

Under-Secretaries-General responsible for HCC: The Troubles

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## I. Glossary

**Abstentionism:** A policy which revolves around willing abstention in certain procedures as a means of protest. Within the context of Ireland, this term represents a long-standing tradition of Irish nationalists refusing to partake in British-enforced politics, especially parliamentary structures set up by the Great Britain.

**Apprentice Boys of Derry:** A Protestant fraternal organization.

**Blackshirts:** The Italian Fascist Party's paramilitary force, who took their name from their clothing and were imitated by other far-right organizations such as the Nazi Party and the Silver Legion of America.

**Dail éireann (Assembly of Ireland):** Lower house and the principal chamber of the Republic of Ireland's Legislature. On a typical day the Dail may debate a proposed law and decide whether or not to pass it, as well as ask questions of the Taoiseach.

**Devolution:** The opposite of revolution, the process of going back to a less-developed stage. Within Irish and British history, devolution implies the subordination of Northern Ireland to the UK by the dissolution of its political structures.

**Downing Street:** A street in Westminster, England that houses the official residence of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

**Gaelicization:** "Involving greater emphasis on Irish nationalism", per Robert C. Cottrell.

**Gerrymandering:** The manipulation of electoral districts so as to ensure that a particular candidate and/or party is elected easily in subsequent elections.

**Irish Government:** The government of the Republic of Ireland, separate from Northern Ireland, with its capital Dublin.

**Irish National Army (IRA):** Irish republican paramilitary organizations that sought to end British rule in Northern Ireland and form a republic encompassing all of the island of Ireland.

**Irish Republican Army (IRA):** A paramilitary organization seeking the end of British rule in Northern Ireland, and the reunification with the republic of Ireland.

**Nationalists:** Predominantly Irish and Catholic citizens of Northern Ireland, who believe that Northern Ireland should be a part of the Republic of Ireland.

**"No-go" areas:** Areas which are off-limits for certain groups.

**Orange March:** Series of parades by members of the **Orange Order**, held on a regular basis during the summer in Ulster, Northern Ireland.

**Orange Order:** a conservative unionist organisation, with links to Ulster loyalism.

**Particularist:** Someone or something that solely adheres to one interest, usually used to talk about nationalist and/or regionalist tendencies.

**Republic of Ireland:** A sovereign state that declared its independence in 1922.

**Reverend:** A title given to member of the clergy in the Christian faith.

**Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC):** RUC is the state police organization located in Northern Ireland and was first established in 1922.

**Taoiseach:** Prime minister of the Republic of Ireland and head of government. Appointed by the President of Ireland upon the nominations of the Dail éireann.

**Tory:** Another way of referencing to the British Conservative Party and its members.

**Ulster Special Constabulary: (USC;** commonly called the "**B-Specials**" or "**B Men**") was a quasi-military reserve special constable police force in Northern Ireland.

**Unionists:** Predominantly Protestant Christians of Northern Ireland, who believes that Northern Ireland should remain as a part of the United Kingdom.

**White Paper:** A United Kingdom Government report giving information or proposals about an issue.

## II. Introduction: What is “The Troubles”

“The Troubles” refers to the conflict over the political status of Northern Ireland and is also known as the Northern Ireland conflict.<sup>i</sup> The conflict was essentially over the division of political views over Northern Ireland’s future, however, divisions also contained identity and sectarian elements.<sup>ii</sup> Unionists (also known as loyalists), consisting of people with a Protestant identity, wanted Northern Ireland to remain under the control of the United Kingdom.<sup>iii</sup> Nationalists (also known as the Republicans) on the other hand, overwhelmingly belonged to a Roman Catholic identity and wanted Northern Ireland to become part of the Republic of Ireland.<sup>iv</sup>

There were other important parties to the conflicts that will be regularly mentioned throughout this guide, therefore they will be briefly discussed in this section. Naturally, the British Army

was involved in the conflict, since Northern Ireland was, in that period—and is now still—part of the United Kingdom.<sup>v</sup>

The Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) is the state police located in Northern Ireland and was first established in 1922.<sup>vi</sup> RUC initially had paramilitaristic characteristics, which means that it was designed to reflect the organizational patterns of an army or a militaristic institution but it did not have the legal status of a military organization.<sup>vii</sup> During the 1970s, RUC had undergone a series of reforms and was modelled similarly to the British Police establishment; it played a crucial role in the Northern Ireland Conflict.<sup>viii</sup>

The British Army and the Royal Ulster Constabulary, alongside the Ulster Defence Regiment, can be understood as peacekeeping forces during the conflict between nationalist and unionist groups.<sup>ix</sup> However, as it will be examined in detail during this guide, it should be noted that such forces were established and directed by the British Government which was not entirely neutral during the Northern Ireland Conflict.

The conflict was mainly between the nationalist Ireland Republican Army (infamously known as the IRA) and unionist paramilitary groups.<sup>x</sup> While the IRA considered the conflict one of legitimate guerrilla warfare with the aim of national independence, the unionist side viewed the IRA's activities as separatist terrorism.<sup>xi</sup>

The Troubles is usually characterized as a low-intensity conflict; it often consisted of unlawful detentions, significant bombings, street fights, and had civil war-like characteristics that did not always resemble traditional patterns of warfare.<sup>xii</sup>

### **III. Historical Overview of the Roots of the Troubles until the Early 20th Century and the Formation of Northern Ireland**

The origins of the Northern Ireland conflict can be traced back to the 17th century when English and Scottish Protestants colonized the northern province of Ulster. This town was previously controlled by Catholics and native Irish. Old and new inhabitants of Ulster developed very different visions for the political future of the province.<sup>xiii</sup>

By the 19th century, a concrete political divide had emerged between nationalists who advocated for an independent Ireland (Ireland was part of Great Britain at the time; the Republic of Ireland declared independence in 1921) and unionists who wanted to remain under the control of Great Britain. A crucial point to note here is that nationalists predominantly consisted of the old inhabitants of the Ulster province (Catholic, Irish) and unionists

predominantly consisted of the Protestant Scottish and English who had settled in Ulster after the 17th century.<sup>xiv</sup>

Although the fundamental divide between nationalists and unionists is rooted in the colonization of Ulster, the tensions that eventually led to the Northern Ireland conflict can be found in uprisings that took place between 1912-1914 that are known as the Home Rule crisis, in addition to developments during the First World War. In 1886 and 1893, two Home Rule Bills were proposed in the Imperial Parliament of London and were designed to establish an Irish parliament within the general jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. Both propositions of Home Rule were rejected in the Imperial Parliament.<sup>xv</sup>

Discussions about Home Rule were virtually stopped until 1910 when the Irish Party became an important ally for Herbert Asquith's Liberal Government following the British General elections in the same year and secured significant influence in the House of Commons.<sup>xvi</sup> Moreover, in 1911, the "Parliament Act" constrained the House of Lords' power to overrule legislation passed by the House of Commons, which created the necessary conditions for Home Rule.<sup>xvii</sup>

However, there were two important and problematic issues: the character of nationalist and Catholic Ireland's relationships with the United Kingdom and the protestant Ulster.<sup>xviii</sup>

Nationalists strongly rejected the possibility of creating another nation within Ireland by Irish Protestants and considered Ireland as a distinct and unified political entity. Unionists, on the other hand—particularly those in Ulster—were opposed to Home Rule from the start and feared the possibility of living under a Catholic state. This was because the unionists also viewed Home Rule as a threat to their British identity and argued that Irish self-rule posed the danger of becoming an independent Irish state.<sup>xix</sup>

Despite these radical differences, the Third Home Rule Bill was passed through the Parliament in 1911. The Unionists in Ulster formed an armed militia in the same year (named the Ulster Volunteer Force) and its membership exceeded 100,000 people by 1912. The Ulster Unionist Council prepared plans of action in the possible formation of an Irish Government.<sup>xx</sup>

Tensions were growing between the unionists and the nationalists, but the conditions of the First World War changed the development of the so-called Irish Question. The Third Home Rule was never implemented despite being passed in Parliament because the Great War altered the British government's position on domestic issues.<sup>xxi</sup> The Irish Convention that was held

during the First World War to settle the Irish issue was not successful and in the 1918 British elections, the Irish Party lost its influence in the Parliament.<sup>xxii</sup>

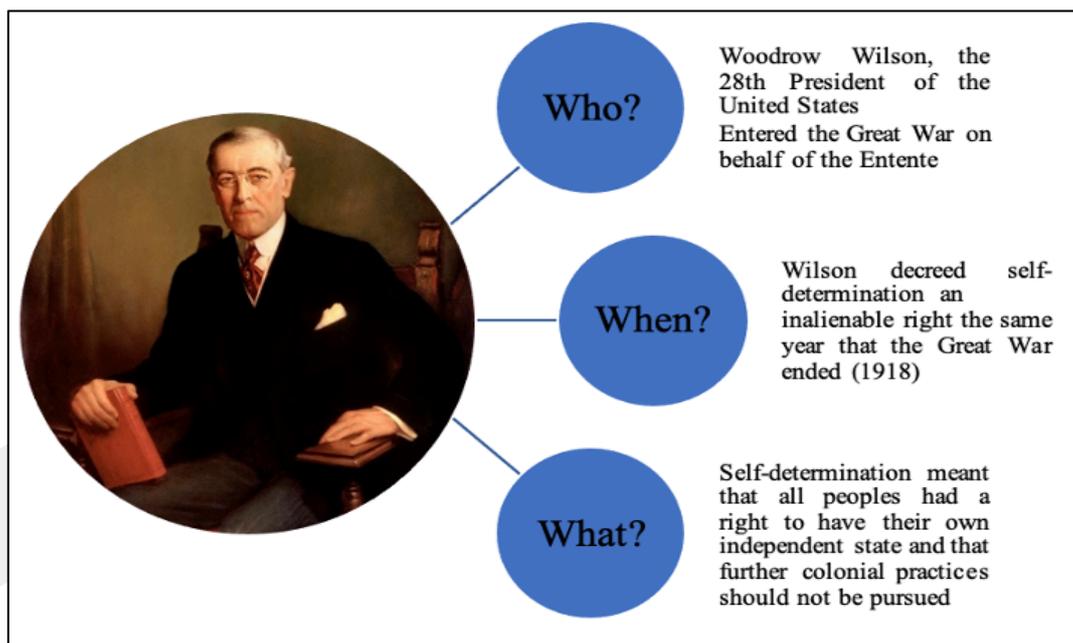
#### IV. 1920-1963: Ireland and the UK as Equals & the Calm before the Troubles

##### A. Birthing Pains: From the Anglo-Irish Treaty to Civil War

As late as 1920, the Irish Independence War was not showing any signs of stopping—quite the contrary. Throughout the year, the British tried to break the chain of failures of the Home Rule Bills by introducing and debating on yet another (this time, the fourth) Home Rule Bill, officially titled the Government of Ireland Act, which oversaw the creation of Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland with **provisional borders** as separate political entities within the British Empire.<sup>xxiii</sup> The fourth iteration of the Home Rule Bills would face parliamentary objections regarding its applicability in Southern counties,<sup>xxiv</sup> foreshadowing its eventual failure there. In August 1920, the British government sought to implement further control over the chaotic situation in Ireland by approving the “Restoration of Order in Ireland Act,” which enabled the British to utilize military courts to indict **particularist** rebels and IRA militants.<sup>xxv</sup> In the month of December that year,

martial law was declared in four counties and in January of 1921, it was expanded to two more counties.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The Irish rebels were not deterred. In the March of 1921, the Dáil Éireann’s President Éamon de Valera of the Sinn Féin party claimed responsibility for the IRA’s actions.<sup>xxvii</sup> Up until this point, the IRA and the Dáil Éireann were not formally connected as such a declaration was neither present in the Dáil Constitution (constitution drafted by the rebels) that was approved in 1919, nor the subsequent amendments.<sup>xxviii</sup> Casualties and destruction continued mounting until July 1921, when the British government, which had already ruled out military occupation due to **Wilsonian self-determination** forming the diplomatic backdrop of the era, set a new course in policy to diplomatically re-establish Ireland as a dominion<sup>xxix</sup> and delay the Northern Irish question from being resolved.



*Figure 1a (right): Woodrow Wilson's presidential portrait<sup>xxx</sup>*

*Figure 1b (left): An overview of Woodrow Wilson and the concept of self-determination*

The plan was to maintain the status quo of partition that was set by the Fourth Home Rule Bill, all the while telling the Republican Irish government that partition was not ultimate and assuring Northern Ireland that its existence would not be placed under threat.<sup>xxxii</sup> This policy of dualism was an overall success as the British were able to placate the Northerners and persuade the Southern rebels into joining the negotiations, and a truce between the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic was struck on July 11, 1921<sup>xxxiii</sup>, laying the groundwork for a future peace treaty.

Treaty negotiations began in Autumn and were concluded on 6 December 1921 when it was signed by both the British and the southern Irish delegations. In the sidebar, an abridged and annotated version of the treaty can be found.

The negotiations process was contentious, with British Prime Minister David Lloyd George threatening the continuation of war if the Irish delegation refused to sign the treaty.<sup>xxxiii</sup> However, the splits inside the Irish government would later prove to be a harder conundrum to handle.

Back home, the Irish delegation that had negotiated the treaty faced stiff opposition because of their failure to adequately consult their government during the negotiations.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Eventually, the treaty was introduced to the Irish Parliament and was narrowly accepted on 7 January 1922, forming the backbone of the British-recognized Provisional Government with a new government headed by chairman Michael Collins and his supporters in the Sinn Féin party.<sup>xxxv</sup>

## Politics of Northern Ireland

In 1920-1972, the Ulster Unionist Party dominated Belfast's politics, ruling in almost a one-party fashion. Nationalist parties such as Sinn Féin would be the main opposition, although they never obtained the support that they needed to form a government by themselves due to predatory election practices.

## Relevant Clauses of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921

Ireland, now named the Irish Free State, will become a dominion within the British sphere, just like the countries of Canada, Newfoundland, South Africa, New Zealand, and Australia

Irish parliamentarians will pledge allegiance to His Majesty George V when being sworn in

A new Irish government and parliament will be constituted of incumbent parliamentarians who will commence a "provisional government"

**The Government of Ireland Bill/Fourth Home Rule Act remains in place for Northern Ireland, which has its own borders and institutions within the Irish Free State**

**If desired, Northern Ireland can seek to secede from the Irish Free State. In such case, a commission with Irish and English participation will be established to determine the borders of the new Northern Irish state**

Three Irish ports (Queenstown, Lough Swilly, Berehaven) will be placed under British control

*Figure 2: Relevant Clauses of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921<sup>xxxvi</sup>*



**Figure 3: Michael Collins**<sup>xxxvii</sup>

**Provisional Government**

(pro-treaty Sinn Féin, led by Michael Collins)

-support from the UK



**Figure 4: Éamon de Valera**<sup>xxxviii</sup>

**IRA Army Council**

-support from the anti-treaty faction of Sinn Féin led by Éamon de Valera

The distant relations between the pragmatic civilian government and the radical-minded IRA would cause the latter to stand against the Anglo Irish-Treaty. Drawing support from an anti-treaty faction within the Sinn Féin, a civil war was sparked by the IRA between itself and Collins' government on 29 June 1922, eventually ending in favour of the British-backed Provisional Government on 23 May 1923. Throughout the conflict, Northern Ireland would stand in solidarity with the Collins,<sup>xxxix</sup> adverse to the threats posed by a radically anti-British, pro-independence, and nationalistic IRA.

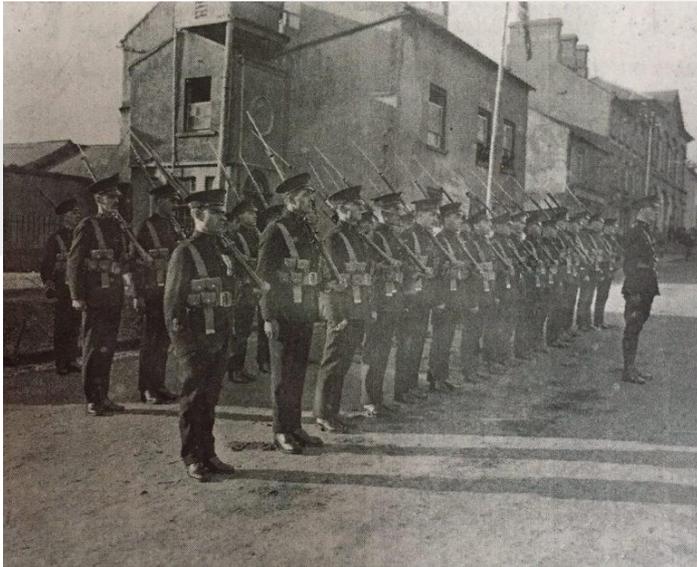
In totality, the civil war forced the Irish Free State to turn inward, temporarily restricting its ability to actively demand diplomatic independence and the unification of the island, while the Northern Irish government established in Belfast could more steadfastly assert its unionist characteristics.

**B. The Political Status of Ireland Post-Conflict**

As the civil conflict was raging in the Irish Free State, Northern Ireland was watching it from the sidelines, eager to exercise its right to formally secede from the Free State. On December 7, 1922, the prime minister of Northern Ireland, James Craig, appealed to King George V to formally utilize his government's right to leave the Irish Free State and formally seceded.<sup>xli7</sup> In accordance with the 12<sup>th</sup> article of the Anglo-Irish Treaty (refer to Figure 2 above), a boundary commission to finalize the provisional Irish borders set by the Government of Ireland Act would have been formed as soon as possible, however, it was delayed due to the ongoing Irish Civil War at this time.<sup>xli8</sup> In addition to the instability in the Irish Free State, the attitude of the Craig government also acted as a hindrance to the commission's establishment because of Belfast's concern that the British would consider transferring Unionist lands with important



figurehead Éamon de Valera, who left prison in August 1923.<sup>1</sup> Continuing his opposition to the Collins-brokered Anglo-Irish Treaty, especially regarding the recognition of the United Kingdom's presence in Ireland, de Valera and several of his like-minded compatriots established the legendary Fianna Fáil party on the policies of **abstentionism** and republicanism.<sup>li</sup> Pragmatically maybe, de Valera swallowed his pride and ran for the general elections in 1927, almost defeating W. T. Cosgrave's pro-treaty party, the Cumann na nGaedheal.<sup>lii</sup>

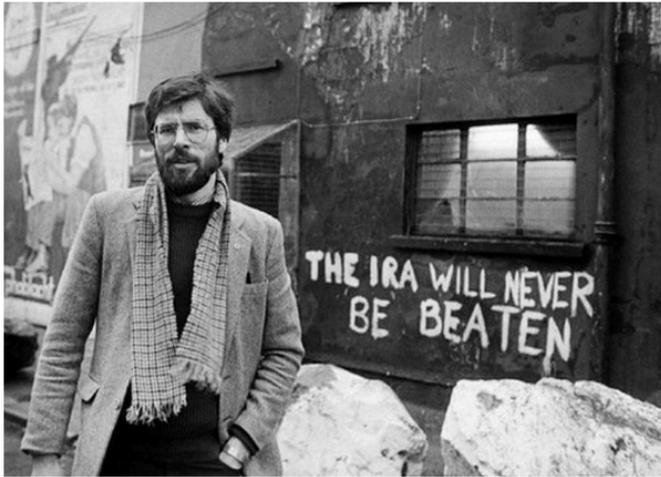


*Figure 6: Ulster Constables in 1922. The RUC was also referred to as the Ulster Special Constabulary or the Special Constabulary for short.<sup>25</sup>*

### **THE ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY (RUC) and the SPECIAL POWERS ACT OF 1922**

This police force began its service in 1922, under the Constabulary Act, passed by Northern Ireland.<sup>(i)</sup> They dealt mostly with political crimes like assassinations and Catholic-induced unrest within Northern Ireland. Within its ranks, the “B Specials” were especially predominant and quite heavy-handed in their attempts to quell instability.<sup>(ii)</sup> Catholics were either barred or highly discouraged from enrolling in the RUC, further inflaming tensions.<sup>(iii)</sup>

Complementing the despotic leanings of the RUC, the Special Powers Act of 1922, passed once again by the Northern Irish Parliament, empowered the RUC to employ police brutality. This act also empowered Belfast to practice irregular and unfair legal procedures (like internment) and censorship.<sup>(iv)</sup>



### Further Research

On the left, you can see a photograph of Gerry Adams, former Sinn Féin politician, from 1984. Adams was and is an adamant advocate of abstentionism, as many Irish republican leaders are. However, abstentionism is not popular for merely the republicans, and instead it is profoundly important for Ireland as a whole. By doing further research, you can shed more light on and learn more about this ideology and the crucial role it plays in negotiations.

*Figure 7 (left): Photograph of Gerry Adams<sup>liii</sup>*

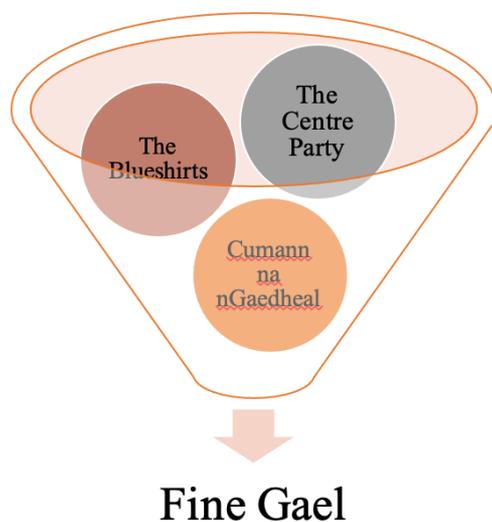
## C. The “Psychological Gap” Widens: Years of the Great Depression and the Second World War

With the advent of the 1929 stock market crash and the subsequent economic depression, much of the Western world was engulfed in a socioeconomic regression unlike any other, and this applied in spades for the two Irish states and the United Kingdom. The social and diplomatic hostilities caused in part due to the Great Depression were exacerbated further with the outbreak of the Second World War, which reshaped the island’s relationship to England and amongst each other. The separate identities of the north and the south were greatly consolidated, leading Thomas Hennessey, a historian and professor of modern British and Irish History to claim that “the psychological gap between Ulster unionism and Irish nationalism”<sup>liv</sup> was emboldened.

Much like their English overlords, the two budding Irish governments had to deal with the fallout of the Great Depression not just in an economic sense, but also with its crippling socio-political implications. Overall, the Irish Free State went through a period of reinvigoration of Irish nationalism with de Valera and Fianna Fáil’s rise to power, a trade war with England, and the beginning of the re-evaluation of Dublin’s relations to the UK, while Northern Ireland was crushed under the weight of the Depression and faced challenges to leadership both at home and abroad.<sup>lv</sup>

De Valera and Fianna Fáil’s radical tendencies had been no secret by the time they rose to power in 1932 by displacing Cumann na nGaedheal in the elections. Owing to their political

failure, pro-treaty and rightist elements of the Irish political scene would later regroup and form the Fine Gael in order to challenge the rise of the radical Fianna Fáil. While the rightists reorganized, de Valera was busy nurturing a protectionist economy model,<sup>lvi</sup> being duly against the free trade policies of W. T. Cosgrave which had been globally discredited by the Depression. This sudden bout of economic nationalism angered London, which was Dublin's largest trading partner back then, and the UK thus followed a tit-for-tat strategy by implementing tariffs on Irish goods.<sup>lvii</sup> These hostilities were later known as the “Anglo-Irish Trade War” (also known as the Economic War) and they damaged the Free State's economy considerably.<sup>lviii</sup> On the political front, the rise of vigilantism in politics, partly influenced by Mussolini's Blackshirts, galvanized the IRA and gave rise to Ireland's very own strain of colour-shirted fascism purveyors, the Blueshirts.<sup>lix</sup> Some guilt might even be placed on de Valera, whose leadership granted amnesty to several IRA prisoners and utilized paramilitaries to intimidate political opponents.<sup>lx</sup> This environment of political violence and prevalence of “**Gaelicization**”<sup>lxi</sup> would be further enshrined in the 1937 constitution of the Irish Free State in which Ireland/Eire (the new names it received with the constitution) obtained its nominal independence by replacing its dominion status with a presidency, and enshrined Catholicism as an institution that was protected by the state.<sup>lxii</sup>

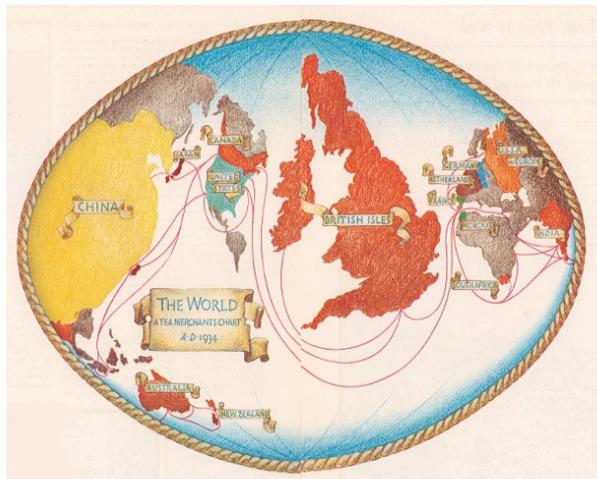


In the diagram on the left, a simplistic history of the Fine Gael, established on 8 September 1933, can be seen. These three organizations were all rightists, and their eventual merger gave rise to a party that was and still is located in the centre-right of the political spectrum. The Fine Gael is seen as a continuation of the Collins government from the years of the civil war, whereas Fianna Fail is seen as the successor of de Valera's anti-treaty Sinn Fein, although such assumptions are quite superficial and may not always reflect reality.

*Figure 8: A concoction to create Fine Gael*

In the meanwhile, the Unionist state up north was battling with harsh economic conditions and social unrest resulting from the Great Depression. There were even claims that famine could have broken out in Belfast in 1932,<sup>lxiii</sup> and this reduction in quality of life greatly angered and rallied large swathes of the population, including both Protestants and Catholics.<sup>lxiv</sup> Continuing the great British tradition of austerity, Belfast's cuts to welfare led to protests against the

government on its refusal to aid the economically-downtrodden.<sup>lxv</sup> Additionally, with the ascendance of de Valera in 1932, Unionists in the North were unnerved, believing that Dublin would become diplomatically aggressive, whereas the Nationalists harboured hope that the Irish Free State would guide the Northern nationalists on whether they should practice abstentionism or not in the Stormont parliament.<sup>lxvi</sup> However, this dream remained as one when de Valera refused to issue a statement on the matter. As such, the previously formed Protestant-Catholic alliance in Northern Ireland quickly dissolved as Catholics would not give up their allegiance to the state in the south and Unionists were wary of Fianna Fáil's diplomatic manoeuvres, while the RUC employed by Belfast continued its discriminatory and violent tactics against the Catholic minority. Much like its brother in the south, the Unionist state was stricken with political woes during the period that led to the Second World War.



### Further Research

By 1939, the formidable colonial force of the British could no longer exercise the amount of control they once exerted over their overseas territories. All of their dominions had developed their own governments and sovereignties, so the British could no longer involve them into foreign conflicts as they wished, and this fact applied in spades for Ireland. To get a better understanding of the British Empire at the start of WWII, one may research the **Statute of Westminster** from 1931.

*Figure 9: Colonial Force of British Empire<sup>lxvii</sup>*

The “psychological gap”—with respect to this section’s title—widened the most with the advent of the Second World War in 1939, when Nazi Germany attacked Poland, provoking the UK and France to intervene. During the war, Ireland managed to maintain its neutrality without provoking London’s ire, while Northern Ireland had to contribute and become part of the British war effort. Ireland’s, and de Valera’s, oftentimes controversial and wholly undesirable politics (for the British and their Allies) towards alignment were however instrumental in establishing the North and the South as two diametrical opposites, hence the “psychological gap” that divides the two Irish states.

Eamon de Valera's cunning policies during WWII enabled him to not only keep Ireland out of the war but also to obtain several concessions out of England and to dominate Irish politics for years

to come. To understand his policies and the status of the island during the WWII years, it must be mentioned that the IRA had a sudden re-emergence in this period.<sup>lxviii</sup> Capitalizing off of the outbreak of war, IRA was quick to start staging protests, bombings, and other such activities in order to sabotage the English effort against Nazi Germany, and it would even go so far as to informally ally with the Nazis.<sup>lxix</sup> This insubordination and violence perpetrated by the IRA alarmed both Irish states and the English, though the most notable attempts to crush the disgraced militia came from de Valera's government, which took advantage of the chaotic situation to start ruling Ireland by decree. This period would later be known as the Emergency,<sup>lxx</sup> owing its name to a piece of legislation passed by Dublin's parliament, the Oireachtas, entitled Emergency Powers Act 1939. With accompanying legislation like the Prevention of Violence Bill from a year earlier and the Offences Against the State Act 1939, de Valera's government was able to practice extrajudicial methods like censorship and internment to stamp out the IRA and strengthen the state by gutting the opposition.<sup>lxxi</sup>



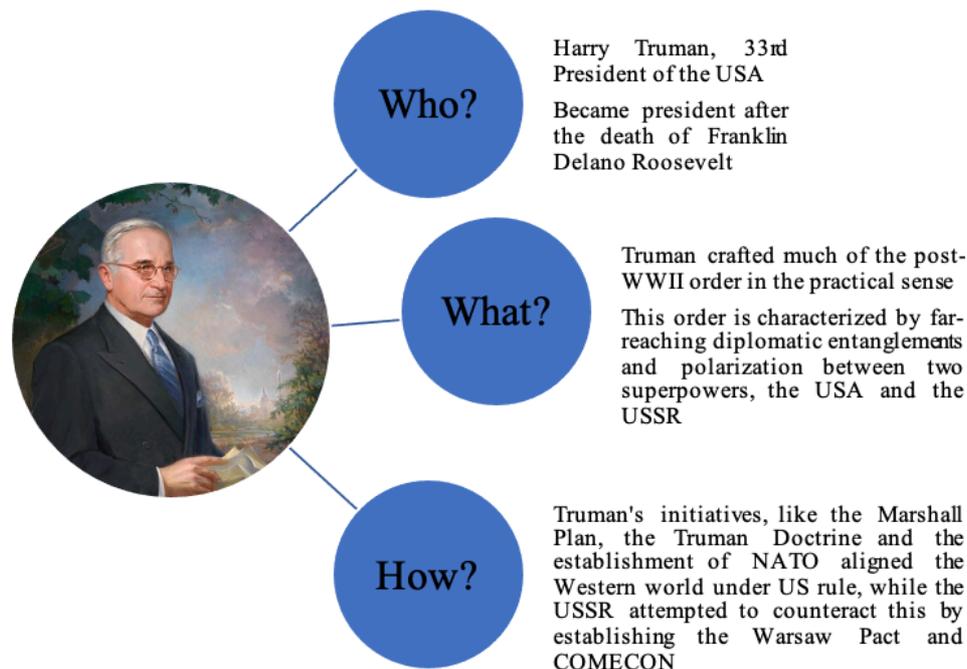
**Figure 10:** Eamon de Valera and his cabinet stand among the soldiers of the Irish Army at the onset of the Second World War (1938)<sup>lxxii</sup>

Though de Valera's hardliner-stance towards the IRA would be favourable to the British as well as the Unionists and the period leading to WWII was a positive one for the Anglo-Irish relations, seeing that the Economic War was amicably concluded and the ports acquired with the treaty of 1921 were handed back to Dublin,<sup>lxxiii</sup> relations between the two countries would sour again with the beginning of the 1940s, thanks to the aggressive diplomacies of the Northern Irish government and the newly-ascendant British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill.

Belfast spent much of this same period as they did the years preceding it: by trying to consolidate Unionist dominance up north. The re-emergence of IRA was therefore met with a harsh crackdown, carried out mostly by the RUC and the B Specials.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Additionally, Belfast would be drawn into the Second World War unlike its neighbour in the south, being subjected to German bombings and subsequent damages to its economy, infrastructure, and population.<sup>lxxv</sup> The Northern Unionists were displeased with the strict neutrality policy of the south and James Craig, before passed away that same year, wrote to the British government in 1940, proposing a plan to invade de Valera's Ireland and install a Governor-General to administer the entire island.<sup>lxxvi</sup> Rumours abounded that de Valera himself harboured sympathies towards the Nazis,<sup>lxxvii</sup> and even though the British government rejected Craig's plan, PM Churchill ordered famed British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery to plan ahead for a possible seizure of Queenstown and Cork.<sup>lxxviii</sup> This strain of British insecurity likely was the final nail in the coffin of the island's unification for the time being, and things certainly did not get better when de Valera offered his condolences upon the suicide of Adolf Hitler, causing an uproar mainly headed by Churchill, in 1945.<sup>lxxix</sup>

#### **D. Labour's Ireland Policy: Setting Precedents**

Even during the period before UK's WWII victory, the harsh line that British Conservatives adopted towards Ireland would be counteracted by the decidedly friendlier outlook of the Labour Party, which was characterized by a trusting attitude towards de Valera and his policies, as well as sympathies towards a unified Ireland. Indeed, Labour was and still is a lot more apologetic about the British Empire and the hard-headed nationalism of Conservatives and Liberals alike. In 1945, Churchill, who had led the country for the majority of the war, was voted out of office in favour of Clement Atlee, the leader of the Labour Party. As per the party's previously-mentioned affinity towards a unified Ireland and the south's government, it was expected that the left-leaning Labour would more readily cooperate with de Valera's government, although this ended up being not the course of action of the newly-ascendant Labour: instead, Atlee's government, under the influence of pro-Unionist diplomats and politicians,<sup>lxxx</sup> would continue the status quo established prior to their rule and even entrench it in certain ways in the wake of the post-WWII order.



*Figure 12a (left): Harry Truman's portrait<sup>lxxxix</sup>*

*Figure 12b (right): An overview of the post-WWII order as crafted by Harry Truman*

Atlee's policy was in part helped along by the Irish state down south, which in no uncertain times asserted its sovereignty again in 1948 when a broad anti-Fianna Fail coalition dominated by Fine Gael came to power and swiftly declared independence from the UK, proclaimed a republic and abandoned the community of the British Empire and its dominions, the Commonwealth.<sup>lxxxii</sup> Seeing the south's insubordination but powerless to stop it due to pressures from the governments of other dominions,<sup>lxxxiii</sup> the UK and Labour which was leading it were emboldened to throw their weight behind Northern Ireland, a country that was perceived as being significantly more loyal to the British when compared to the Republic of Ireland.<sup>lxxxiv</sup> Nevertheless, the Labour cabinet, especially Atlee, was keen on maintaining good relations with Dublin and it must be noted that the government's decision throw its support behind Belfast was not premediated, in fact, the British government considered it "awkward" to fully embrace a British-nationalist, Tory position by guaranteeing Partition.<sup>65</sup> Be that as it may, Atlee's government drafted the Ireland Act in 1949, which explicitly endorsed Partition and ruled that Northern Ireland shall remain a part of the United Kingdom unless its parliament opts to leave the kingdom.<sup>66</sup> While the Act was approved without much opposition, Lord Pakenham, the Minister for Civil Aviation, criticized the bill on the grounds that it failed to account for northern counties which had Catholic majorities.<sup>67</sup> According to Pakenham, if the Republic of Ireland had appealed to an international court, the counties in question could be

asked to be transferred to the south.<sup>68</sup> Despite Pakenham's objections, however, the bill moved on—this time to another challenge: the question of Stormont's neutrality and the extent to which it could claim to represent the people of Northern Ireland. Several members of parliament (MPs) believed that Stormont's affinity towards gerrymandering and the rarely contested Unionist majority in politics would be problematic points for Labour to lend its support to.<sup>69</sup> The cabinet believed that London's intervention into the north's electoral system would be disastrous and dropped the idea, giving rise to a phenomenon known as the “**Unionist veto**”,<sup>70</sup> which implies the north's power to veto any sort of British jurisdiction over Ulster. Despite their harsh criticisms of the so-called Unionist veto, the MPs could not amount to a unified opposition and the bill finally received royal assent on 2 June 1949, signalling the start of a course in British policy towards Ireland that would remain unchanged for decades until renewed hostilities in the 1960s.

#### **E. Section Conclusion**

Ireland's troubled history after its legendary struggle against England was marked by decades of chaos, sectarian and political violence, and a decidedly neutral foreign policy. The south faced a civil war and political instability which divided the country in terms of its conduct against the north and the English; the north had to contend with a strong nationalist voter base which threatened its Unionist dominance. Overall, the four decades between 1920 and 1963 were crucial, as they established Partition as the dominant political regime in the island and oversaw the prevalence of Ulster Unionism, which was legitimized by the intervention of the United Kingdom during the premiership of Clement Atlee. The Republic of Ireland, having obtained its full independence in the meantime, would continue to exercise its traditionally neutral foreign policy, whereas Northern Ireland would remain bound to the British. Until Labour would form government again in 1964, the Irish situation would lay relatively dormant, as the British political sphere would continue championing the status quo established by the Ireland Act 1949, and organizations such as the IRA would fail to be as active as they once were.

#### **V. 1963-1969: Period of Terrence O'Neill's Leadership**

Although religious perspectives played a big role in it, the base of the divisions between the Unionists and the Republicans was not entirely sectarian or because of theological differences, rather was rooted in political and cultural divergences.<sup>lxxxv</sup> After the Anglo-Irish treaty, major administrative changes started taking over the island that would not be in favour of the Catholic

minorities in Northern Ireland. The best jobs in the region started going to Protestants, The Irish language and the Irish National History were not involved in Northern Ireland's schools' curriculums, it became illegal to fly the flag of the Irish Republic, the party of the Irish Republic Sinn Féin was banned from Northern Ireland for more than 15 years (1956-74) and general gerrymandering that focused on Catholic pressure became very common as mentioned before.<sup>lxxxvi</sup> As a result, tensions rose and cooled down for many years because Catholics claimed that they were facing severe discrimination in their land.<sup>lxxxvii</sup>

Despite this unstable political environment over the island, the status of Northern Ireland still did not shake much for about 40 years following its partition. In 1963, amidst Northern Ireland's declining state in terms of economics, a new Prime Minister Terence O'Neill was appointed succeeding the relatively harsh Lord Brookeborough.<sup>lxxxviii</sup> The years that O'Neill was the prime minister (1963-69) are often noted as "The O'Neill Period", the reason being his never-before-seen approach to Northern Irish politics which caused major instability both within his own bloc and party (Ulster Unionist Party) and between Southern and Northern Ireland.<sup>lxxxix</sup>



**Figure 13:** Prime Minister Terrence O'Neill<sup>xc</sup>

"The O'Neill Period" was significant for Irish History for many reasons. Prime Minister O'Neill, unlike his predecessors, was a moderate unionist and wanted to follow a rather peaceful approach towards the Southerners and wanted to open the channels of dialogue between Northern and Southern Ireland.<sup>xcii</sup> However, his attempts to settle the disputes between the two ends remained very surface level and temporary since they lacked the ability to tackle the underlying problems that cause the disputes in the first place.<sup>xcii</sup>

While his attempts to regenerate economic stability in the region were met with uncontroversial support, his approach to strengthening community relations was what caused trouble for him, eventually leading him to resign in 1969.<sup>xciii</sup>

Alongside his political agenda, Prime Minister Terence O'Neill had a major economic mission on his hands as well. Unemployment was at an all-time high in Northern Ireland, the industrial economy was rapidly declining and there were no incentives for foreign investors. O'Neill knew that with the British Prime Minister Harold Wilson being from the Labour Party and the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP) acquiring seats in the state, the economic image of Northern Ireland had to be desirable for both its neighbours and foreign investors. Thus, he tried new methods such as introducing a housing program and creating another university in town to reduce unemployment and form financial incentives for external investors by strengthening infrastructure.<sup>xciv</sup>



*Figure 14: From left to right: Jack Lynch, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Frank Aiken, Minister of External Affairs, and Taoiseach Séan Lemass at one of their meetings.<sup>xcv</sup>*

As stated before, one of O'Neill's primary policies that differentiated him from his predecessors was his approach to forming a bridge between the North and the South. Before O'Neill, these two regions' officials had not met since Northern Ireland's partition phase.<sup>xcvi</sup> Both O'Neill's warm attitude and the Taoiseach of the time Séan Lemass and O'Neill's common economic goals led them to consider improving relations in the 1960s.<sup>xcvii</sup> With this soft climate, O'Neill made his remarkable move of inviting Lemass to Belfast in 1965. Lemass was the first-ever Taoiseach to ever be invited to meet with the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, so this decision was revolutionary for both men's governments.<sup>xcviii</sup> Although most unionists and nationalists supported O'Neill's decision to meet with Lemass and even visit Dublin a few times after, some radical unionists that huddled up around Ian Paisley did raise their voices in objection. O'Neill's rhetoric that could be summed up as "convincing more

people that the government is working for the good of all and not only unionists” combined with his innovative policies, posed great risks to the longevity of his political career, which would show its effects in the years to come.<sup>xcix</sup>

Although O’Neill was the start of a new era for Irish politics, he as a person was not very appreciated in his own party. In fact, one newspaper wrote in 1965 that “He was better liked outside his party than in it.”<sup>c</sup> He was described as being socially insufficient to form both close and distant political relations with different officials and he lacked the strategic skill of being a strong leader, which is why he was seen as vulnerable within his party, always being compared to and sometimes even trying to be replaced by a rival Brian Faulkner.<sup>ci</sup> He could not connect with people and he could not secure his stance in his own party, which was one of the cumulative factors leading to his resignation. In addition to all this antipathy that he was receiving from his regular unionist colleagues, **Reverend** Ian Paisley was growing his political power with his demonstrations in the streets of Northern Ireland and was also shaking O’Neill’s seat with the support of radicals.<sup>cii</sup> The radicals that followed Ian Paisley believed that the steps O’Neill took towards the Southerners and Catholics were too much too soon and were distant from the core Unionism approach of preserving Protestantism. Ian Paisley even went as far as to say that “A traitor and a bridge are very much alike, for they both go to the other side.” The rhetoric of Ian Paisley enabled him to use the media in his favour to get as much publicity as possible to make his voice heard enough that O’Neill’s job would become harder.<sup>ciii</sup>

By 1996, sectarian violence grew in Belfast with the pointless attacks of a group of radical men who called themselves the Ulster Volunteer Force, that killed 3 innocent Catholic people.<sup>civ</sup> A year after, some parts of the Orange Order openly started protesting against Prime Minister O’Neill, going as far as passing out brochures harshly criticizing his administration. Again, a year after, O’Neill received probably one of the most humiliating attacks on a government official, he was attacked with stones and eggs by Paisley’s stuntmen only for visiting a school.<sup>cv</sup> All of the reasons explained above shook O’Neill’s leadership to the core and eventually led to arguably the biggest event of his term, the civil rights movement.

Although O’Neill was dealing with criticism from his own party and other unionists about his new rhetoric, he was also dealing with pressure from overseas Britain. Newly elected Prime Minister Harold Wilson was from the Labour Party, as mentioned previously. Taking advantage of the instability among unionists, left-leaning groups in Northern Ireland, with the confidence they gained from the British administration, were becoming more visible and unionizing in the pursuit of criticizing O’Neill. As a result, the Wilson government pressured

O'Neill for reformatory actions and in a way threatened him to take over if he did not act quickly.<sup>cvi</sup> While the O'Neill administration was dealing with both in-party problems and the British push, the Catholics and nationalists came out with the newest political tool of protest, the civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement was not a party or a radicalized group, on the contrary, it served as an umbrella for every anti-Unionist person and organization.<sup>cvi</sup> The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) was the official name that the movement was organized under and it had a polyphonic structure rather than having a vertical hierarchy, that is why it was able to embrace every Catholic in the land who did not identify with any specific party that practiced identity politics.<sup>cvi</sup> The movement emerged because anti-Unionists realized that all of O'Neill's rhetoric lacked anything beyond being just rhetoric. Catholics realized that the reforms for the economy were still being done old-fashioned, such as new companies or cities were being established close to or in Protestant areas. Thus, they acknowledged the fact that O'Neill's reforms were still feeding the old discrimination system under a new title and that the Prime Minister was still realizing the ideal of Unionists, pressing on minorities and prospering the Unionists.<sup>cix</sup> The movement had a composition of demands from the government, the most important one being the one-man-one-vote article. This was important because, in the regions where Catholics were the majority, there were discriminatory laws that prohibited many of them from voting, giving the region's administration power to the protestants. There were many other important demands that typically carried a theme of distrust in O'Neill's government. The civil rights movement harboured supporters from all kinds of backgrounds from extremist students to members of the newly reformed somewhat anti-violence IRA, and their primary way of making their voices heard was organizing marches and getting media coverage, very much inspired by the namesake movement in the United States.<sup>cx</sup> This movement paved the way for the term "marching"—which would be used for many years to come—and was the only political demonstration that had everlasting effects in Northern Irish politics at the time.<sup>cx</sup>



*Figure 15: The Derry civil rights march of 1968, heading towards Duke Street<sup>cxii</sup>*

Some historians regard the civil rights movement as the official start of the troubles or at least as “the spark that ignited the bonfire”.<sup>cxiii</sup>

After the few first notable marches, the protests became daily practices. It received immense support from the extensive Catholics and the media coverage that the demonstrations received combined with the fact that many important public figures getting involved and included in the records such as Gerry Fitt, took a toll on O'Neill's government so much that it swung its route to an inevitable decline.<sup>cxiv</sup> As O'Neill searched for ways to respond to the uprisings, he received strict, old-fashioned, and unrealistic methods of suppression from his colleagues and could not form a consensus with them to take quick actions. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who instinctively supported the movement, summoned O'Neill to Downing Street, essentially calling his government out, especially on the one-man-one-vote issue.<sup>cxv</sup> O'Neill, along with colleague William Craig, conducted probably the tensest meeting with the British government Northern Ireland officials had ever had. Weeks after the meeting, O'Neill's government came up with a five-article reform bundle, but it still did not include the acceptance of one man-one vote.<sup>cxvi</sup> This reform bundle convinced some members of the movement to come to a halt to see if the government keeps its promises, but O'Neill had already accepted defeat in his mind, cave into the ones asking for his resignation, including William Craig.<sup>cxvii</sup>

In conclusion, O'Neill was not completely delusional in giving up mentally, since even after the reform package one of the most violent acts of the civil rights era took place on the first days of 1969 at Burntollet Bridge between radical movement members and Paislayens.<sup>cxviii</sup> After one of the messiest and divisive general elections in February, a lot of bombings that were the responsibility of the anti-O'Neill UVF, on electricity lines and water storehouses shook the region and metaphorically “bombed” O'Neill out of office.<sup>cxix</sup> In the civil rights

movement's favour, O'Neill was able to pass one man-one vote through his cabinet just before his anticipated and long overdue resignation on April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1969.<sup>cxx</sup>

## VI. Escalation of Violence:1969-72

O'Neill was succeeded by James Chichester-Clark, who was a distant relative of O'Neill and a landowning aristocrat.<sup>cxxi</sup> Historians note that Chichester-Clark had a decent personality on all counts but lacked the necessary political skills. While sympathetic Protestants described him as a reliable and sensible politician, some Catholic politicians mentioned Chichester-Clark with implicit insults to his intelligence. One thing was certain though, he did not possess the ambition that is almost conventional for a politician. He expressed relief as he resigned from his post in just two years.<sup>cxxii</sup>

One of the most important events that sparked violence in Northern Ireland occurred in the early months of Chichester-Clark's leadership. In August 1969, a Protestant fraternal group called **The Apprentice Boys of Derry** organized a parade in Londonderry. The Northern Ireland and Great Britain governments debated among each other before reluctantly allowing the parade to take place.<sup>cxxiii</sup>

However, as government officials feared, the parade led to armed clashes between Protestants (loyalists to Britain) and Catholics (Irish nationalists). Police intervened but they were unable to prevent the violence because the armed quarrels took place in so many streets that it was impossible to control. Several people died on both sides; some people were killed by the police. Police brutality created an atmosphere of civil revolt against authorities, while the violence between Protestants and Catholics spread outside of Londonderry to Belfast.<sup>cxxiv</sup>

Once it became apparent that local police were unable to restore order in the streets of Belfast and Londonderry, Chichester-Clark requested military deployment from the London government. The London government was reluctant to send troops to Northern Ireland as such a deployment would create political complications. Troops could not be under the control of the Northern Ireland administration, after all, they were part of the British army, and the presence of the British army in Northern Ireland without any local authority over them would certainly create unease among nationalists and Northern Ireland government officials. Nevertheless, the situation was dire leaving the London Government with no other choice but to deploy troops in Londonderry and Belfast to stop violence and restore order.<sup>cxxv</sup>

British soldiers managed to achieve their purpose: ending the violence in a relatively short period of time. Once law and order were re-established, damages that violent events caused became apparent. The unrest claimed the lives of 8 people and caused hundreds to suffer injuries. Nearly two hundred homes were ruined, and the estimated material cost was more than £2 million. More than 1,800 families fled their homes in fear of their security.<sup>cxxvi</sup>

However, the total damage of the violence in August 1969 was not limited to such problems. Violence created lasting political consequences for Northern Ireland. Divisions and mutual distaste between unionists Protestants and nationalist Catholics increased dramatically. Many Catholics lost their trust in the local police forces, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), and the quasi-military security forces like the **Ulster Special Constabulary** (USC; commonly called the "B-Specials"). On several occasions, B Specials and the RUC were seen as acting together with armed unionists.<sup>cxxvii</sup>

The London government's approach to Northern Ireland was also changed, with London starting to exercise closer control over the region. Officials from the central government were permanently placed in Northern Ireland to oversee the local administration at the ministerial level. Furthermore, an English senior policeman was appointed to reform and modernize the RUC as the B Specials were abolished.<sup>cxxviii</sup>

Unionists rioted against the decision to reform the RUC and during the protests, ironically, an RUC official was killed by the unionists.<sup>cxxix</sup>

In addition, the **Republic of Ireland**, which was quite passive until 1969, started to become more involved with the Northern Ireland issue. Prime minister of the Republic of Ireland, Jack Lynch, announced during a radio broadcast that the Irish government could no longer stand by while innocent people were getting hurt in Northern Ireland. During this period many important political figures in the Catholic Northern Ireland community visited Lynch and asked for help and several members of Lynch's government believed that the Irish government should send troops to assist the Catholics. However, Lynch took a more subtle approach and announced that the Irish government would establish hospitals near the border to treat injured people, which was interpreted as a potential troop deployment facility by many people in London. British government official James Callaghan later wrote in his memoirs that they never believed that the Irish government would start an invasion, nevertheless, the London government seriously considered deploying troops on the Irish border, "just in case."<sup>cxxx</sup>

Lynch also provided assistance to Catholics in other forms, some Catholic men received military training from the Irish Army and the Irish government sent some guns and ammunition through the border. In addition, there was a significant amount of financial assistance.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

In 1970, the violence reached higher levels as British Home Secretary Callaghan continued his high-pressure approach towards Northern Ireland. In June, violence once again sparked during Protestant's traditional **Orange March**. Three protestant men were killed by the IRA (Irish Republican Army). Moreover, three more people were also killed during clashes between Protestants and Catholics. The British army intervened; during the house searches for illegal arms by soldiers, many Catholics' houses were damaged by soldiers as the Catholic community felt targeted and alienated. A month later a Catholic teenager was shot and killed by the army, further increasing the general distaste the Catholic community felt towards the central government.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

Meanwhile, during the British general elections in June, the Labour Party lost its position in government. New conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath and Home Secretary Reginald Maudling had a different and more relaxed approach towards Northern Ireland. As the central government stopped being directly involved in the region, British troops used discretionary capacity to act against civil unrest in concert with Chichester-Clark's government.<sup>cxxxix</sup>

From this point onwards the army started to use even more aggressive tactics. However, this firm approach did not contribute to maintaining peace and security in the region. On the contrary, the situation grew more dire.<sup>cxxxix</sup> In August 1970, two RUC policemen were killed by the IRA; this was the first incident in which the IRA killed local police officers. In February 1971, in Belfast; during yet another armed confrontation between Protestants and Catholics, the army intervened as the IRA killed a British soldier for the first time. Only three days later, the bomb that was set out by the IRA, which was intended to kill local police officials, accidentally killed five civilians. Two more police officers were killed during the same month. In March, the situation reached another level when three young Scottish soldiers were killed off-duty by the IRA. This was seen as a "cold-blooded" execution of soldiers for purely political reasons and caused broad public outrage. Tens of thousands of people attend the soldier's funerals. Chichester-Clark requested additional troops from Prime Minister Heath, once the Prime Minister's answer was not to the satisfaction of Chichester-Clark; he resigned his post as the leader of the local Northern Ireland government (reportedly, with a sense of relief).

Chichester-Clark was replaced by an ambitious and talented politician named Brian Faulkner, who was quick to implement several additional security measures to tighten his control over Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, these measures were far away from being successful.<sup>cxxxv</sup> In August 1971, Faulkner authorized a comprehensive “arrest operation” and specifically targeted members of the Catholic population who were suspected to be in relation with the IRA. However, the arrests proved to be rather arbitrary, as relatives and neighbours of the suspects were often detained without justification. It is not clear whether or not this was according to the original plan, nevertheless, hundreds of Catholics were arrested. Catholics were outraged because of this targeted and politically motivated campaign. In a letter written to Faulkner, Prime Minister Heath even suggested making several Protestant arrests to make the appearance of a more balanced policy.<sup>cxxxvi</sup> Moreover, Catholics who were arrested during the campaign were subjected to brutal treatment by soldiers as the later investigations and court documents demonstrated. Many years later, the European Court of Human Rights noted such mistreatment by the soldiers as “inhuman and degrading.”<sup>cxxxvii</sup> This arrest campaign did nothing to decrease violence: nearly 200 more people died during civil clashes until the end of 1971.<sup>cxxxviii</sup>

## VII. 1972-1973: Bloody Sunday and the End of Stormont

Up until now, the outbreak of violence and political movements in Northern Ireland was more or less managed between the inhabitants of that island, but this status quo would soon change as the British government would decide to involve London more deeply in Irish matters. The main effort in this regard was the abolition of the Northern Irish parliament, the infamous Stormont, with its duties being replaced by Westminster more or less. Stormont had kept the British and the Unionists in a state of balance that was desirable to both: English politicians were more than happy to let the friendly Unionists deal with the matters of the island while they attended to other matters considered more pressing, whereas the Unionists more than willingly exercised power and asserted their independence against the Nationalists. Yet, with renewed hostilities, this merry existence was to be re-considered by Westminster.

And the government to do the re-consideration was Heath’s government. At this point, it might be prudent to issue a reminder that Heath was a Tory, the party that was previously thought to be the closest and most sympathetic to the Unionist cause in Ireland. Times had indeed changed: the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland and O’Neill’s and subsequent Northern Irish governments’ inability to cool down tensions had more or less demonstrated Stormont’s incompetence. Additionally, the British had established a military presence in the island with

the commencement of Operation Banner in 1969 so the prospects of London's direct rule were being more readily considered during the early years of Heath's premiership.

### A. The Break Between the Ulster Unionist Party and the Tories

As unusual as it may sound, Irish interests were and are being represented in Westminster throughout the crown lands. Especially during this period in question, a notable minority of MPs from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) was in the eye of the storm regarding the current debate on the future of Stormont and the stability of Northern Ireland. As the British government grew fonder of the idea of direct rule and the increase in British influence over Northern Ireland, the influence of UUP MPs in this course of policy gradually declined, at least for the time being.<sup>cxix</sup> This was not to say that London's policies were completely efficient and were carried out, however.

#### The Road to Devolution

First, the Heath government came up with three proposals (refer above) around which British policy on Northern Ireland would revolve. A referendum was held on March 1973 on the onset of devolution, which saw that more than 98 percent of the Northern Irish population wanted to stay part of the United Kingdom.<sup>(v)</sup>

These proposals would bring about the Temporary Provisions Bill, which suspended Stormont and created the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, a position that temporarily replaced the Northern Irish government;<sup>(vi)</sup> and the Assembly Bill, which created a Northern Irish parliament.

Finally, the Heath government passed the Constitution Bill which eliminated Stormont and inaugurated the first joint Northern Ireland executive with shared ministries. Moreover, this Bill also made it so that popular support was required to keep NI a part of the UK instead of the parliament's consent which was no longer applicable since Stormont was abolished.<sup>(vii)</sup>

#### *Figure 16: The road to devolution, as paved by the Heath government*

A case in point is Bloody Sunday, the unfortunate event in which British troops slaughtered 15 protesters and wounded more than that in late January 1972.<sup>cxl</sup> The protesters in question were rallying against the policy of internment that the Heath government had introduced in 1971's summer,<sup>cxli</sup> and the horrible hostilities brought about with this short-sighted policy forced the British government to soften its approach in the island, which led the British Cabinet to devise a three-pronged plan to replace the military solution with a so-called political solution: 1) slowly ending internment, 2) holding border plebiscites and 3) the devolution of Stormont to

pave way for Westminster's rule.<sup>cxlii</sup> Although these proposals were not immediately entertained, they constituted a theoretical base on which British policy on Ireland would be based upon in the coming years. Needless to say, Unionist interests in the British parliament were unhappy with this course of action<sup>cxliii</sup> and they lobbied extensively to turn the government off of its route,<sup>cxliv</sup> but their efforts did not pay off: in March 1972, the UK first suspended Stormont with the Northern Ireland (Temporary Provisions) Bill<sup>cxlv</sup> and in May 1973, the Northern Ireland Assembly Bill was passed, creating a Northern Ireland Assembly.<sup>cxlvi</sup> These two developments would pave the way for the approval of the Northern Ireland Constitution Bill in the July of that same year, which officially abolished the Stormont and achieved devolution while creating a joint government (known as the Northern Ireland Executive) between the political parties of NI.<sup>cxlvii</sup>

### **B. Heightening of British Military Presence and PIRA Provocations**

The slippery slope principle of foreign involvement in overseas territories applied in spades to British military missions in Northern Ireland, which began in 1969. This period in which London asserted greater control over its disputed holdings coincided with it strengthening its military presence there, exemplified by the likes of Operation Motorman and Bloody Sunday itself.

It would be dishonest to claim that the British involvement was not justified at all, however. The Provisional IRA was a formidable foe and carried out many attacks throughout Northern Ireland in order to wrest control away from the Unionists. One such example was the proclamation of Free Derry,<sup>cxlviii</sup> which, while initially successful,<sup>cxlix</sup> was short-lived following Operation Motorman, which took place in July 1972.<sup>cl</sup> This military initiative saw the British take control of Northern Irish “no-go areas”<sup>cli</sup> and marked the end of negotiations with PIRA for the time being.<sup>clii</sup>

## **VIII. 1973-1976: The Sunningdale Agreement and Immediate Aftermath**

After the collapse of the Stormont Parliament, the British government intervened in the chaotic environment and declared their approach by publishing a **white paper** of forming a Northern Ireland Assembly which would include members from both Unionist and Nationalist politicians and a Council of Ireland. The assembly was aimed to fill the blank spot of Stormont in a way that included both sides of the division of Unionism and Irish Nationalism.<sup>cliii</sup> In June of 1973, elections were held to elect members for the 78-seat new assembly, where the pro-

white paper candidates gained more seats than the opposing ones and the new assembly first met on 31<sup>st</sup> of July of the same year.<sup>cliv</sup>

The members of the assembly started talks of forming a “power-sharing executive” consisting of 11 members from the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland (APNI), the Nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP).<sup>clv</sup> As a result, in November of 1973, a “power-sharing executive” was formed after the Northern Ireland Assembly elections, which included ministers from APNI, the nationalist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and from the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) with Brian Faulkner (UUP) serving as chief executive and Gerry Fitt (SDLP) serving as deputy chief executive to administer and govern Northern Ireland.<sup>clvi</sup> This power-sharing executive consisted of members who were in favour of an agreement of both the Northern Ireland Assembly and of forming a Council of Ireland, which would later be called the Sunningdale Agreement.

|   |                |          |               |
|---|----------------|----------|---------------|
| Chief Executive                                     | Brian Faulkner | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Deputy Chief Executive                              | Gerry Fitt     | SDLP     | Nationalist   |
| Minister of Agriculture                             | Leslie Morrell | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Minister of Commerce                                | John Hume      | SDLP     | Nationalist   |
| Minister of Education                               | Basil McIvor   | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Minister of the Environment                         | Roy Bradford   | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Minister of Finance                                 | Herbert Kirk   | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Minister of Health and Social Services              | Paddy Devlin   | SDLP     | Nationalist   |
| Minister of Housing, Local Government and Planning  | Austin Currie  | SDLP     | Nationalist   |
| Minister of Information                             | John Baxter    | UUP      | Unionist      |
| Legal Minister and Head of the Office of Law Reform | Oliver Napier  | Alliance | Non-sectarian |

**Figure 17:** *The Power-Sharing Executive announced on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1973<sup>clvii</sup>*

It was clear from protests arising in Northern Ireland that a lot of radical Unionists and even almost half of the members of the UUP were not happy with the formation of this power-

sharing executive, along with the nationalist Irish National Army (IRA).<sup>clviii</sup> So, to address these divergences between parties and the public, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Edward Heath, Irish **Taoiseach** Liam Cosgrave, and the senior members of the power-sharing executive of Northern Ireland; met up in Sunningdale, England to finalize talks of a Council of Ireland and to formally declare the new assembly and administration of Northern Ireland. This was the first time that these 3 positions had met since 1925.<sup>clix</sup>

The main topic the officials debated on was the elephant in the room: the issue of where and how the pure Irish section of the government of Northern Ireland was to be included and represented.<sup>clx</sup> After days of deliberations, the participants agreed on the Council of Ireland. This council would consist of two branches: The Council of Ministers and the Consultative Assembly, both different from the general Northern Ireland Assembly and the power-sharing executive.<sup>clxi</sup> The Council of Ministers was to be constructed with seven members from the Northern Ireland Executive and seven members from the **Irish Government**, with an executive and unifying duty combined with a consultative power. The Consultative Assembly, on the other hand, had only an observant and advisory role with only the power to review functions, consisting of thirty members from the Northern Ireland Assembly and thirty members from **Dail éireann (Assembly of Ireland)**. On December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1973, a twenty-articled communiqué was signed and declared which included all the agreements made at Sunningdale those past three days, which was later named as the Sunningdale Agreement.<sup>clxii</sup>



*Figure 18: Signing of the Sunningdale Agreement* <sup>clxiii</sup>

Without missing a beat, the next day of the announcement of the Agreement, the Unionist radical groups such as Loyalists who were strongly opposed to the aim and concept of the Sunningdale Agreement formed the Ulster Army Council (UAC) the day after the announcement of the agreement. Other militaristic radical groups such as Ulster Defence

Association (UDA) and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) gathered around the UAC to protest the agreement and the foreseen Council of Ireland.<sup>clxiv</sup>

As pressure was already being built on the head of the power-sharing executive and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), the Ulster Unionist Council of the UUP which was responsible for the party's policies, gathered a vote on whether they were going to accept or reject the Council of Ireland clause of the Sunningdale agreement. The results of the vote were 427 against and 374 in favour of the Council of Ireland. As it became clear that the Unionist Party was also opposed to the Council, the radical extremist Unionist groups such as the Loyalists, found a legitimate occurrence to base their radicalness and protests. Brian Faulkner, squeezed under the pressure of his party not approving him, gave his resignation as the leader of the UUP on January 7<sup>th</sup>.<sup>clxv</sup>

As the air between the pro-Sunningdales and the opposers thickened and got tenser, the Northern Ireland Executive members and the Taoiseach and their team were holding constant meetings with one another to decide the functions of the Council of Ireland.<sup>clxvi</sup> Amongst this climate in Ireland, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, there was a general election held in the United Kingdom which was won by the head of the Labour Party, Harold Wilson, a pro-Sunningdale politician.<sup>clxvii</sup> The radical Unionists' reactions against the agreement and the Council of Ireland were so forceful and attention-grabbing that even the pro-Sunningdale Unionist in the power-sharing executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly stated that some of the articles of the agreement should be removed. The Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) of Ireland, with the explicitly undeclared (but implicitly felt support) of the governing Labour Party in Britain, were vocal that the agreement could not and should not be re-written or reconsidered.<sup>clxviii</sup>



**Figure 19:** Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) during the strike<sup>clxix</sup>

In late March 1974, a newly formed Loyalist group called the Ulster Workers' Council (UWC) declared a statement calling for a re-election of the Northern Ireland Assembly immediately, and also stated that there would be civil disobedience if the power-sharing executive was not adjourned.<sup>clxx</sup> In May, there was a motion brought up to the Assembly to condemn the power-sharing executive and the Council of Ireland. However, the motion was failed by 44 to 28 votes. The next day, on May 15<sup>th</sup>, 1974, the Ulster Workers' Council kept their promise of civil disobedience and a general strike broke out, called the UWC Strike.<sup>clxxi</sup>

The strike took place for two weeks, between May 15<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 1974. It was fundamentally rooted in the Unionists not wanting the Republic of Ireland down south to have a direct say in the administration of Northern Ireland through the tubes of the Sunningdale Agreement and the Council of Ireland. There were other attempts in motivation for this goal, but none were as remarkable as the UWC Strike. The strike was successful.<sup>clxxii</sup> On the last day of the strike, a great number of tractors blocked the entrances of the Stormont parliament buildings across town, and Brian Faulkner, along with some of his Unionist colleagues, gave his resignation for the Chief Executive position. This resignation practically made the dissolution of the Northern Ireland Executive official. Celebrations all across Protestant areas of Northern Ireland started taking place.<sup>clxxiii</sup>

The UWC Strike was remarkable and successful for various reasons. It was the largest uprising Northern Ireland has ever experienced since the wars of the 1920s. The reason for its both numerical and metaphorical magnitude was that the strike brought together many Protestants who were feeling alienated. The Protestant community came together for a joint purpose after about five years. The conquering of this alienation resulted in a great number of Protestants supporting the strike in one way or another, without differentiating or dividing within themselves. Another reason why the strike was successful was that a lot of key industries, such as gas and power line generators and petrol distributors, also supported the strike and made it what it was.<sup>clxxiv</sup>

The Sunningdale Agreement was a huge step in the path of joining the powers of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, but the process was not monitored in a way to advantage both sides and secure stability, and instead was managed by the stubbornness of both sides of the conflict. It reminded the people from all sides that the divergence between the people of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland was deeper than it was thought.

## IX. 1976-1979: Maze Prison and the Hunger Strikes

In the aftermath of Sunningdale, the nationalist side was frustrated with the aggressive approach against the Irish Republican Army that the London government, under the Labour Party leadership, displayed. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Roy Mason was keen to dismantle the Irish Republican Army by any means necessary and regularly (and reliably, unlike his predecessor, Merylyn Rees, who failed to gain confidence within the Northern Ireland population) expressed the London government's intention to maintain a military presence within Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, the unionist side was not entirely satisfied with the developments either. They demonstrated negative power in successfully rejecting the power-sharing mechanisms in Sunningdale, however, they lacked the required political capital to persuade the London government to re-establish majority rule in Northern Ireland.

The second half of the 1970s continued with widespread violence despite the limited progress that was made during the Sunningdale Agreement. Despite a relative decline compared to the previous year, in 1977 more than a hundred people had lost their lives, including over fifty civilians. Moreover, there were several high-profile killings during this period; including the bombed assassination of Lord Mountbatten in 1979, who was a naval commander and relative of the British Royal Family.



*Figure 20: Portrait of Lord Mountbatten<sup>clxxv</sup>*



*Figure 21: Protestors that support the Hunger Strikes in Maze Prison<sup>clxxvi</sup>*

Following the continuation of violence, the infamous Maze Prison was founded with a specific purpose: incarcerating members of the Irish Republican Army. The foundation of this prison

came with a legal modification that allowed the British government to treat the IRA prisoners as common criminals under domestic law, as opposed to the treatment of these prisoners as prisoners of law.

Inmates of the Maze Prison strongly opposed the harsh measures implemented by the British government and the new legal status they were given under the above-mentioned legal change. During the “blanket protests”, inmates wore nothing but blankets within the prison, and in “dirty protests” they covered the walls of their cells with faeces.

While the newly elected Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher refused the demands of IRA prisoners, the protests grew into hunger strikes in the Maze Prison. During the hunger strikes that lasted for several months, at least 10 prisoners lost their lives. Furthermore, many nationalists organized widespread protests and marches in solidarity with the inmates of the Maze Prison.

## **X. Conclusion**

Northern Ireland’s low intensity civil war that lasted for decades, was one of the most complicated political problems that challenged the United Kingdom in the second half of the 20th century. It reflected social tensions between two distinct communities of the Northern Ireland region (Catholic Irish nationalists and the Protestant Unionists), which had their roots in a centuries-long historical process. Over the course of the civil war, (which is infamously known as “The Troubles”) Northern Ireland faced complex political, ethical, legal challenges that included legal status and treatment of prisoners, police brutality against protesters, and problematic relationship between local and central governments.

Moreover, precarious policies of the United Kingdom government that resulted from consecutive shifts of power between Labour and Conservative Parties demonstrated deep flaws in the British political structure that are perhaps present even to this day.

Policymakers and community leaders of this difficult period made their decisions within the context of broad and layered problems, attempting to balance the demands of their constituents with the realities of the political environment. The civilian population in the region, on the other hand, had to endure circumstances which forced them to be involved with politics and did not allow them to pursue the kind of lives that can be considered as “normal” by today’s standards in the United Kingdom. Contemporary observers who take an interest in the Troubles, must consider these extraordinary conditions that the people of Northern Ireland lived through before making premature judgements.

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