

# IRE223: NATIONS IN CONFLICT

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Spring 2020

Session 9: The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland (Part I)

# On The Agenda for Today

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- **Northern Ireland**

- Facts & Figures
- Historical Background

- **Northern Irish Politics**

- Sinn Fein
- Unionists parties in NI
- 1921-1963
- NI during WWII
- 1963-1968

- **The 'Troubles'**

- The Civil Rights Movement
- Protests Turned Violent



# Facts & Figures

- **Northern Ireland (NI)** is a country, part of the **United Kingdom (UK)**
- **Smallest of the UK countries**
  - 5.7% (land) and 2.9% (population) of the UK
- Major spoken language is **English** (Irish, Scots). **Polish** most frequently spoken by immigrants
- **Christianity** is the **dominant religion**, other religions < 1% of population, 10% atheists
  - Largest **churches**: Roman Catholic, Presbyterian Church, Church of Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland



# Facts & Figures

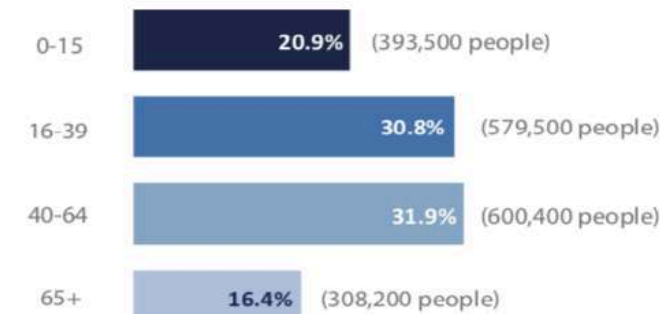
- **Ethnic Groups** => 98.3% Whites, 1.06% Asians, 0.2% blacks
- The **population** of NI is **twice denser** than of the Republic of Ireland
- Most of the **population** in the country resides in the **Belfast Metropolitan Region**
- 88% born in NI
- 2011 => 48% Protestant, 45% Catholic



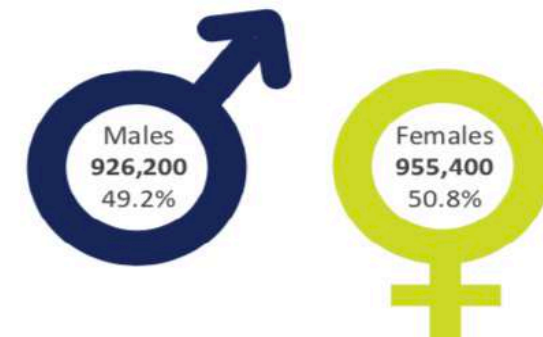
Population of Northern Ireland at 30 June 2018

**1,881,600**

Population by Age



Population by Gender



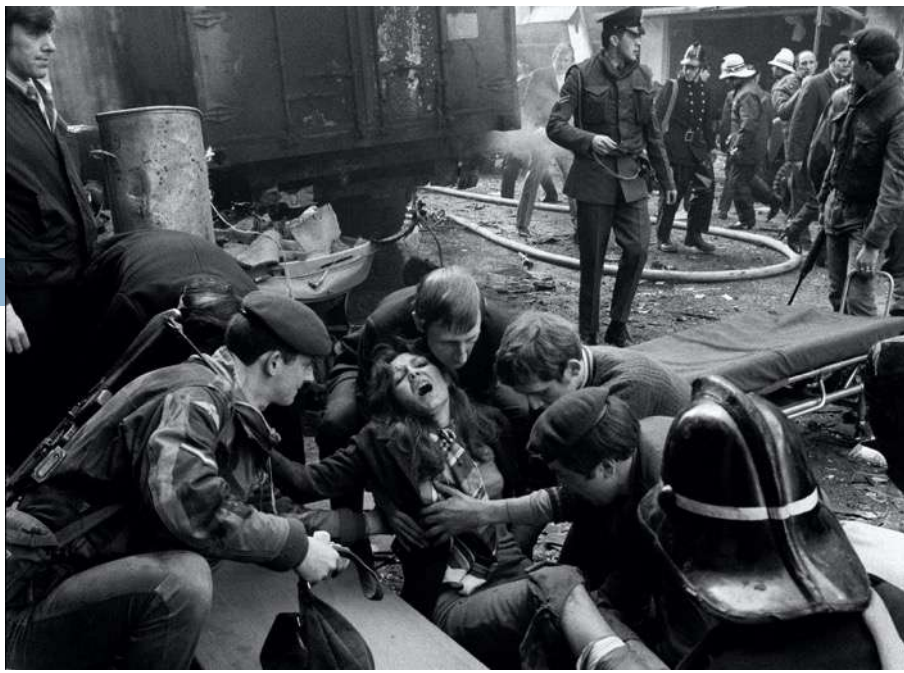
# Facts & Figures

- 1920s => The island of **Ireland** was **split** into Southern & Northern regions: different administrative centers
- **Indigenous** people in (the island of) Ireland are descendants of **Celtic people (Irish, Roman Catholic)**
- **English settlers** arrived (**Anglo-Saxons, Protestants**)
  - Were perceived as **unwelcome intruders, occupied Irish land** and **deprived Irish Catholics**



# Facts & Figures

- The Troubles, aka **Northern Ireland conflict** is a **violent sectarian ethnic conflict that** lasted for 30 years (1968-1998)
  
- The **conflict** had the characteristics of a **civil war**: Street fighting, bombings, sniper attacks, roadblocks, etc.



# Facts & Figures

- Main Parties:

- Unionists / Nationalists (aka Republicans); **Political affiliation**
- Protestants / Catholics; **Religious affiliation**

- **(Roman) Catholic Nationalists (Republicans):** Perceive NI to be **occupied** by the UK, seek a **union** with the **republic of Ireland**
- **Protestant Unionists (Loyalists):** Reject the idea of a historic Irish nation, believe they have a **right to the land**, want to **preserve** the **Union** with the UK, **united Ireland** is perceived as a **threat**



# Facts & Figures

- Thought categorized as “**low-intensity conflict**”, 30 years of civil fighting resulted in over 3,600 casualties, 30,000 wounded
- A **peaceful solution** was reached in 1998: The ‘**Good Friday**’/**Belfast** agreement between the UK and Ireland => **Power-sharing** arrangement in the **Northern Ireland Assembly** at **Stormont**

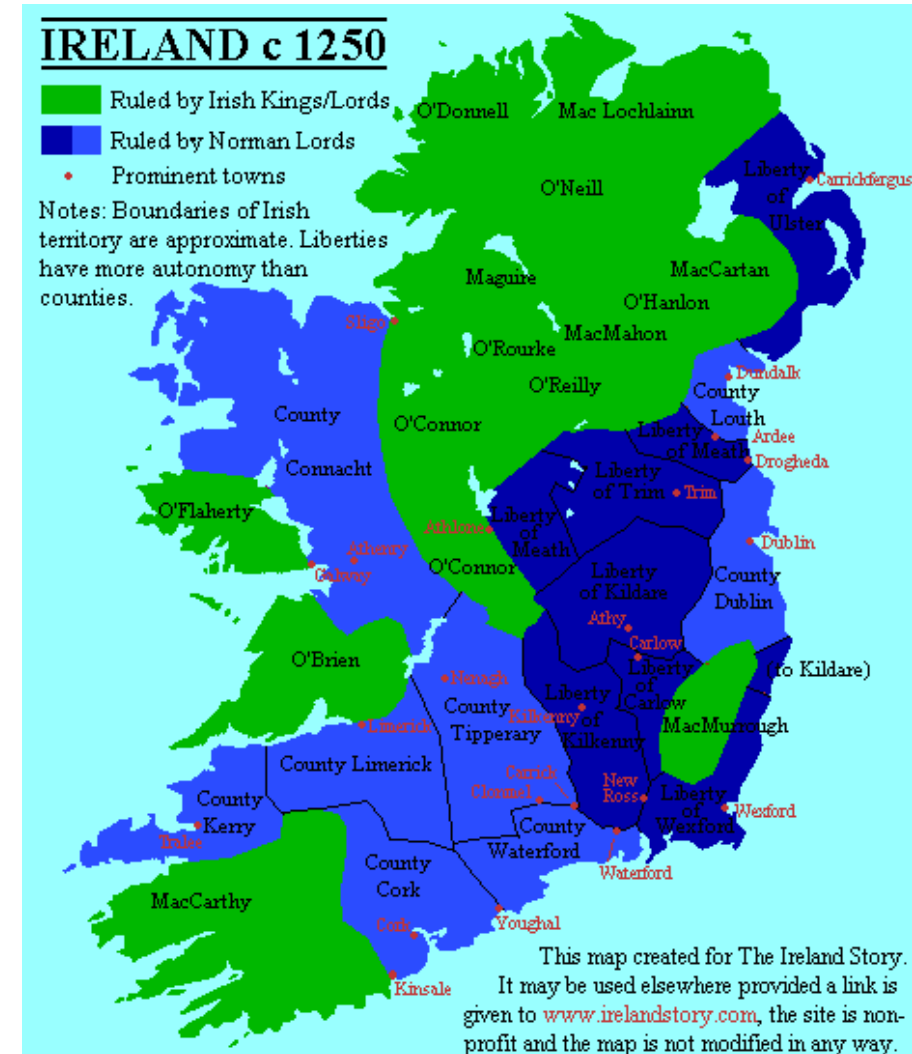


Northern Ireland  
Assembly



# Historical Background

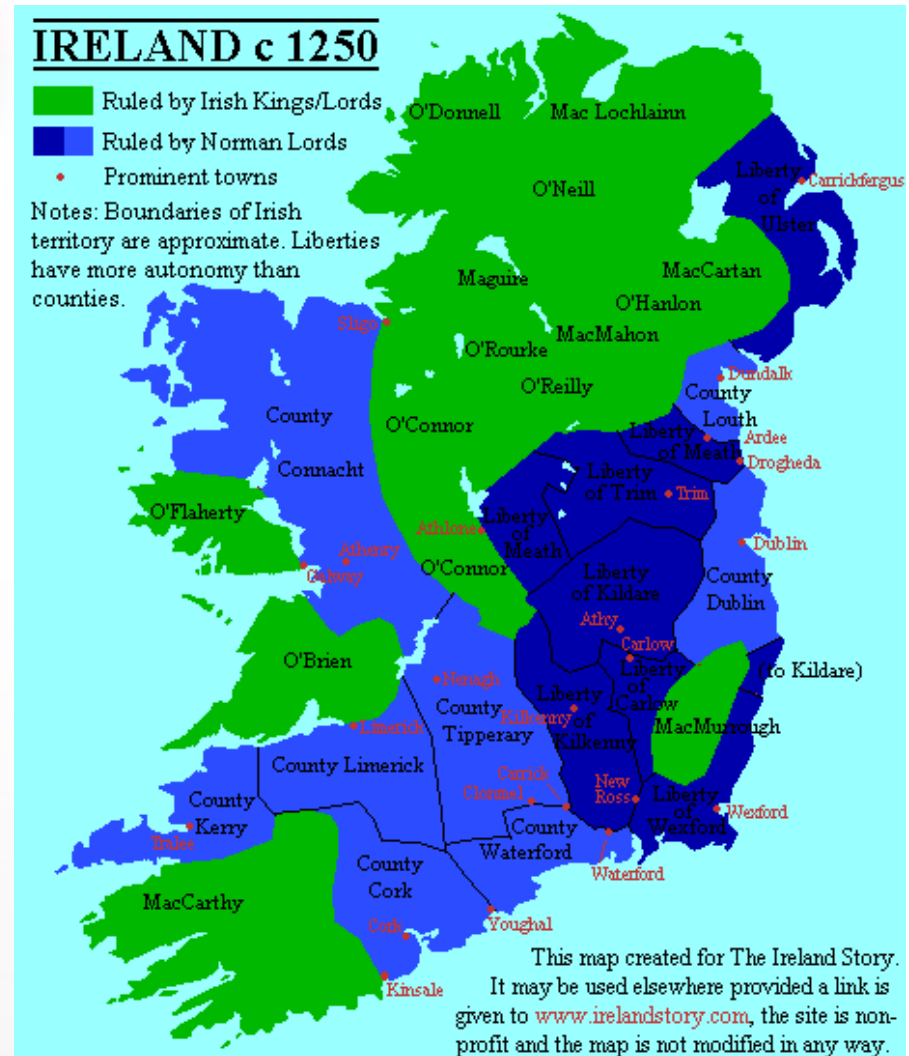
- 1100s => **Ireland** was a **single state**
- 1170 => **Civil war between Irish lords**
  - Lord **Strongbow** triggered **English intervention** (asked English King **Henry II** for help): king Henry claimed lordship over **all of Ireland**
- **Irish lords struggle but fail to force the English out of Ireland**



# Historical Background

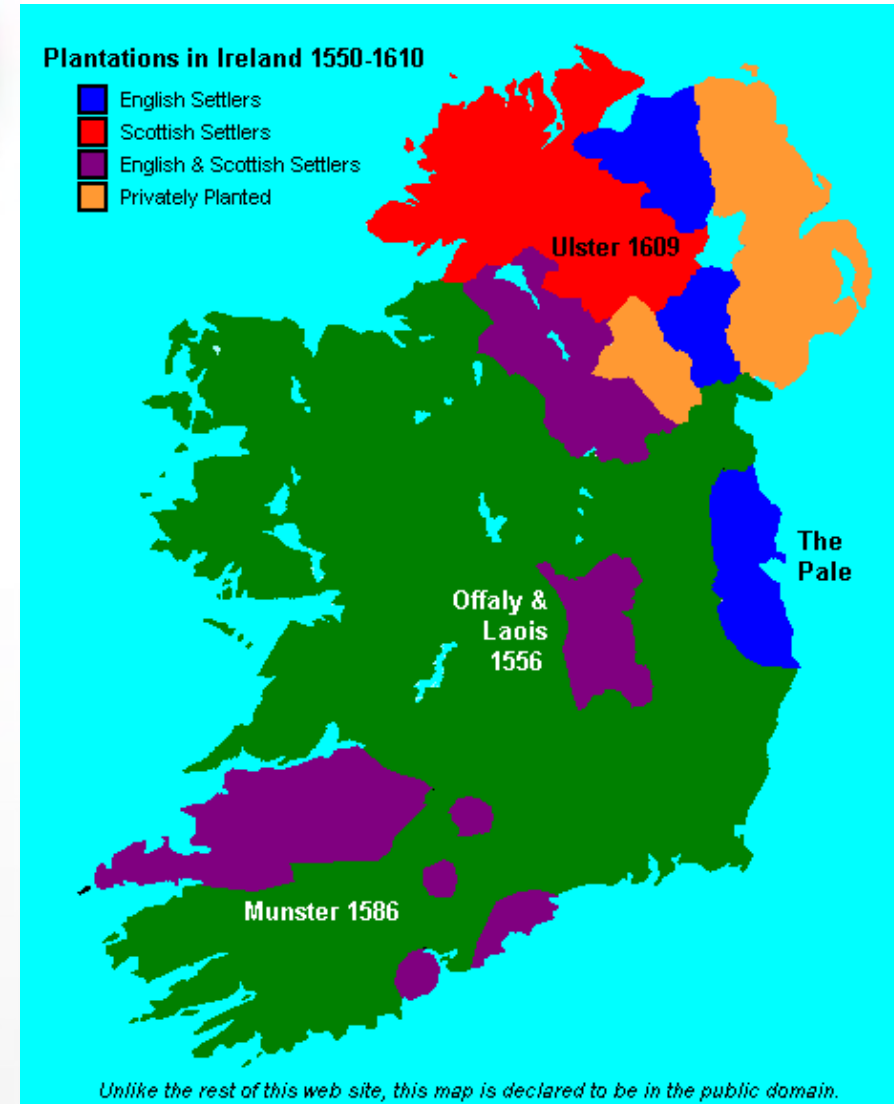
## The Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland

- 1200s => **Ireland** was **conquered** by **GB**
  - Irish **Catholics** were given **less fertile land**
  - **English** landlords brought **Protestant settlers** to the **northern** parts of Ireland + pushed local Catholic farmers out
  - NI became predominantly **Protestant**



# Historical Background

- Irish rebellions were forcefully put down by Queen **Elizabeth I** and her successors
  - She rewarded her troops with **land in Ireland** (known as ‘**plantations**’)
- 1608 => The **Plantation of Ulster** was established, as more **English** and **Scottish settlers** moved into the **northern** parts of Ireland



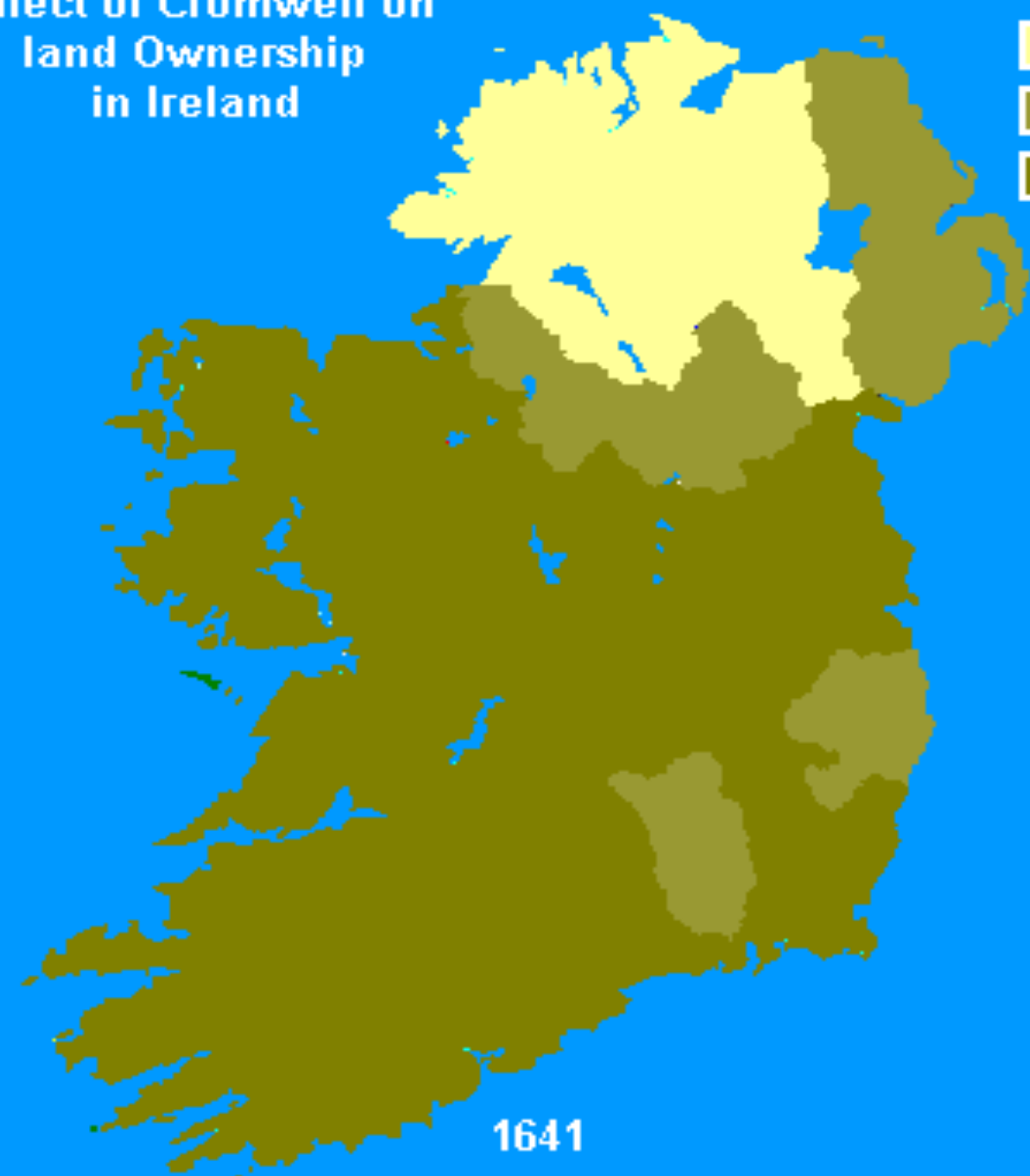
# Historical Background

- 1641 => **The Irish Rebellion**
  - **Irish Catholics** resented the **loss of lands** to English/Scottish Protestants
  - Many protestants were killed, mainly during the **Ulster Protestant massacre**
- The rebellion escalated into **The Irish Confederate War (1642)**
- **Cromwell** (English leader & army man) **invaded Ireland**
  - Disciplined army of **English Puritans**, wanted to **avenge** the Ulster Protestant massacre

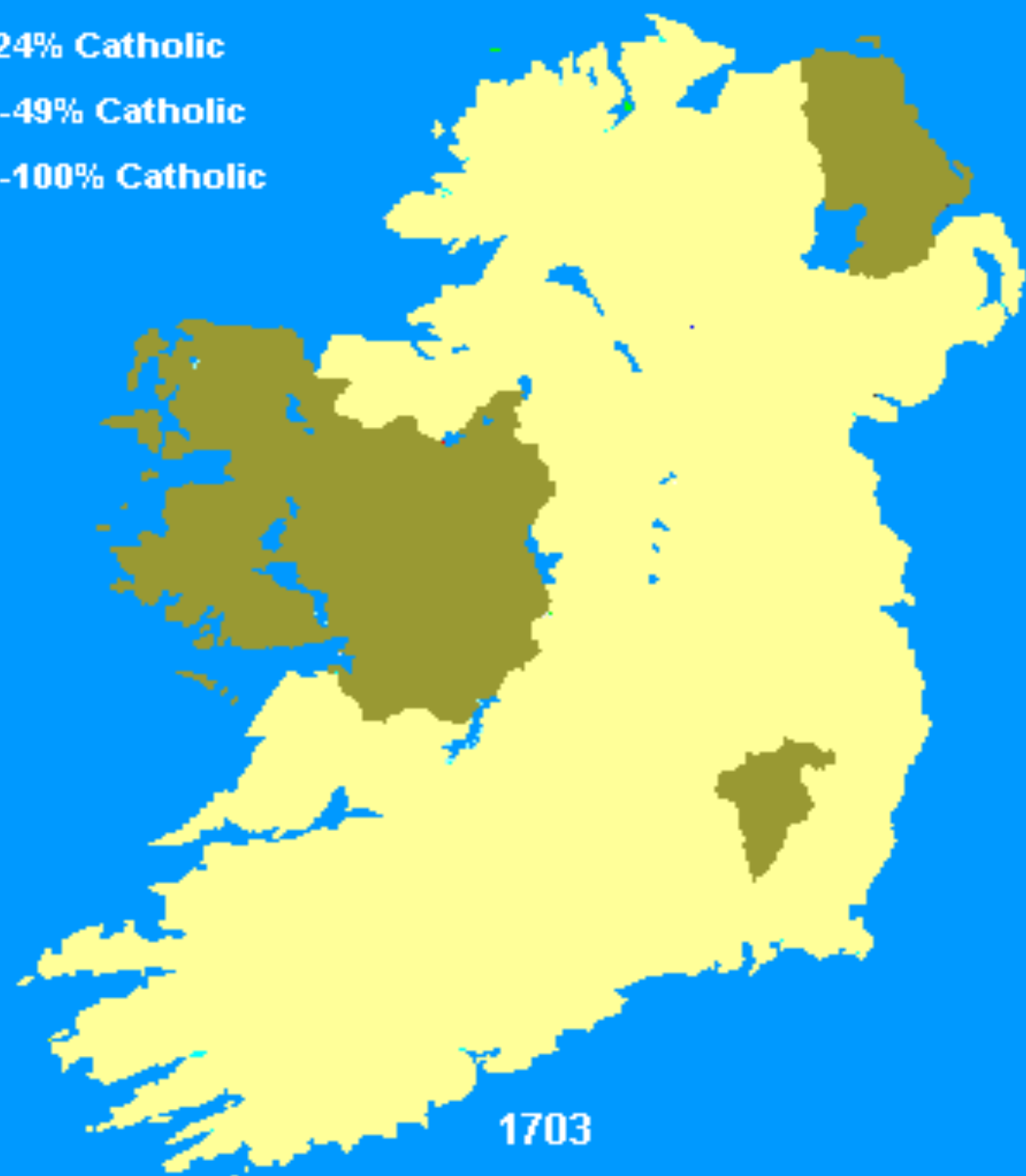


# Effect of Cromwell on land Ownership in Ireland

- 0-24% Catholic
- 25-49% Catholic
- 50-100% Catholic



1641



1703

# Historical Background



- **Rivalry** between English kings **divided Ireland along religious lines**
  - King **James II** (Roman catholic) vs. King **William of Orange** (Protestant)
- **June 1690 => The Battle of Boyne**
  - **William of Orange** defeated **James II**, **conquered Dublin and Cork**
  - The victory is still celebrated in parades in NI
- King **James left Ireland**



# Historical Background

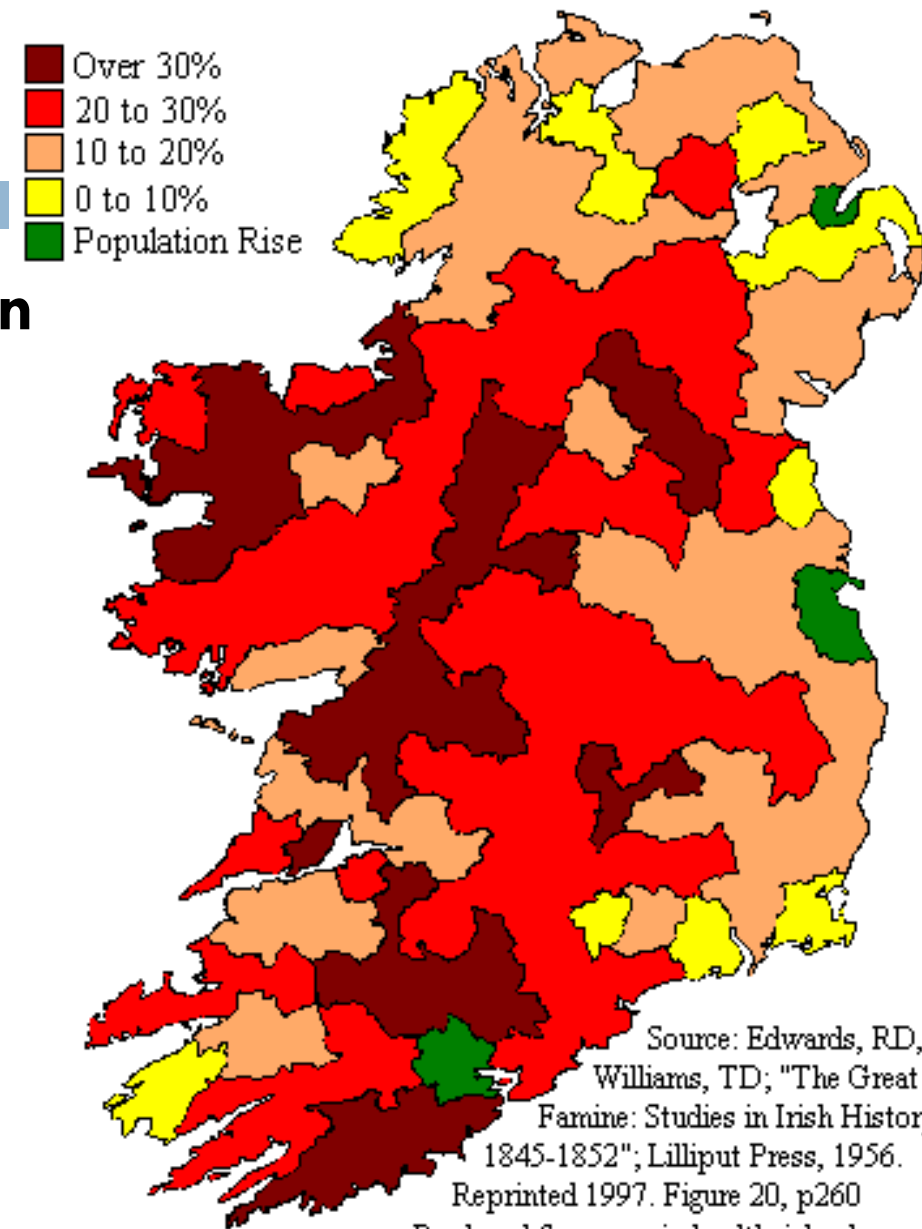
- 1801 => The **'Act of Union'** abolished the **Irish Parliament** and politically bound **Ireland** and **Britain** together as parts of the **United Kingdom**
  - Created the **"United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland"**
- In response: The **Home Rule movement** was established: campaigned for self-government, aimed at restoring the kingdom of **Ireland**



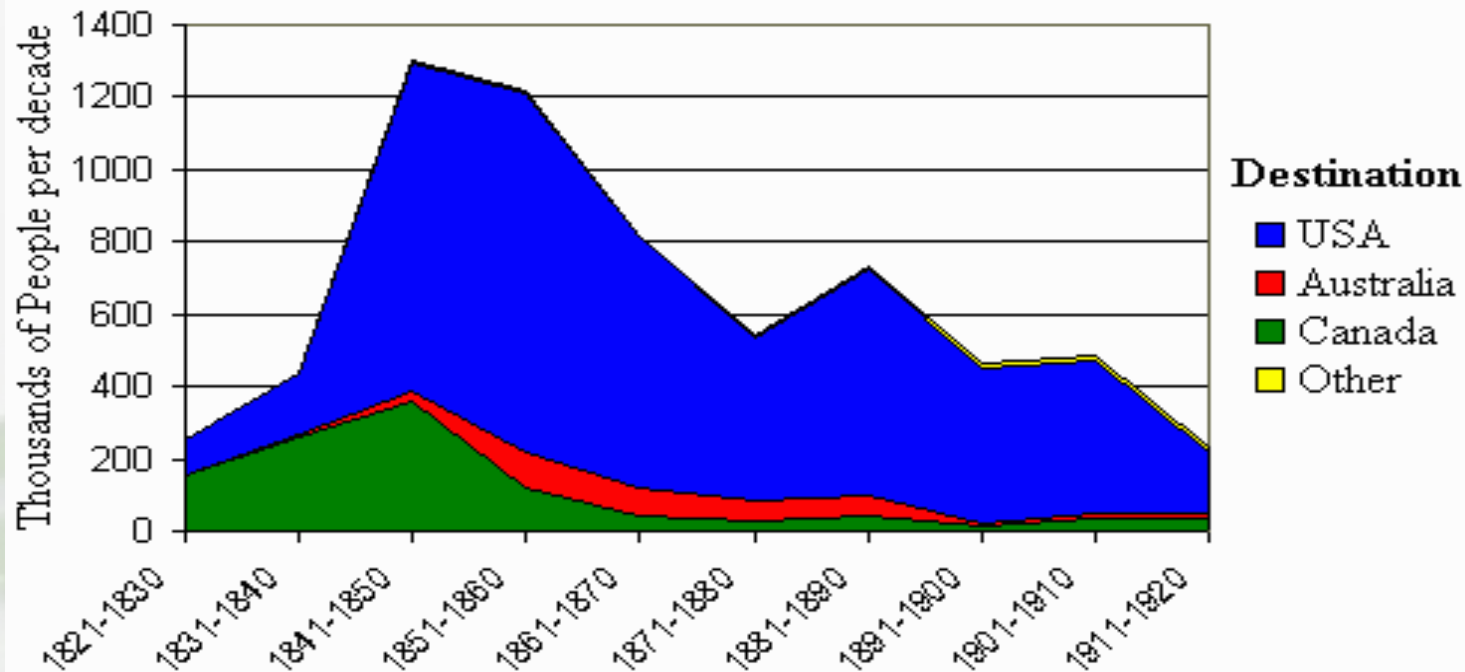


# Historical Background

- The 19<sup>th</sup> Century => **Decline in Irish population** due to **emigration + Irish potato famine**



## Destination of Overseas Emigrants from Ireland 1821-1920



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Unlike the rest of this site, this map is declared to be in the public domain.

# Historical Background

- **Demands for self-government** ('Home Rule') by Irish Catholics grew over the course of the 19th Century as the British government passed **laws excluding/limiting Catholics** from government, education, jobs
  - Protestants resisted incorporation into a self-governing Ireland:
- 1912 => **Ulster Solemn League and Covenant**
  - Signed by over 400k Protestants who wanted to remain in the Union
- 1913 => **Paramilitary groups** were established on both sides (UVF, IRA)

# Paramilitary Groups

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The (Provisional) Irish Republican Army (PIRA => IRA) =>

- **Irish republican para-military organization** of NI Catholics
- Created in 1919 as a successor to the **Irish Volunteers**, a **militant nationalist organization** founded in 1913
- The IRA was the **military wing** of the **underground Dáil** government (pre-state Irish Parliament)
- Fighting (**Guerrilla war**) for an **independent Ireland**
- Gained catholic **public support** + **members** in response to **British suppression** of the **civil rights movement**

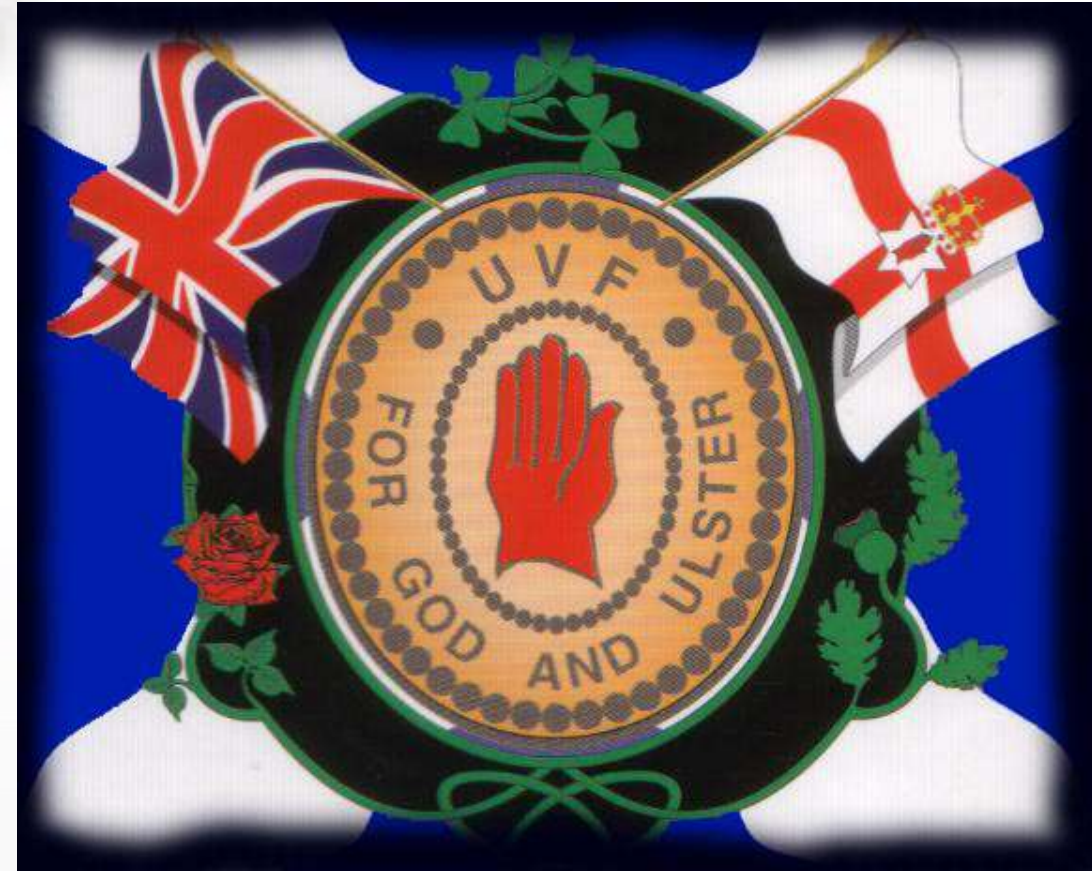


# Paramilitary Groups

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## Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) =>

- **Loyalist unionist militia**
- Formed in response to the establishment of the Provisional **Irish Republic Army**
- Used **violence** to advance its goals => upholding **NI's union with Britain** at all costs
- Killed members of the IRA, unaffiliated Roman Catholics + even Protestants



# Historical Background

- During **WWI**, the **British** were **focused on fighting the Germans** in Europe
- 1916 => The '**Easter Rising**' in Dublin: Intended to end **British rule in Ireland**
  - Group of **Irish nationalists** proclaimed the establishment of the **Irish Republic**
  - Staged a **rebellion** against the British government in Ireland
  - **Seized** prominent buildings in **Dublin** and **clashed with British troops**



# Historical Background

- Counted on **German support** (bad idea)
- Suppressed within a week, leaders executed, over 450 people killed, 2,500 injured
- The rising failed, but it **strengthened the republicans in Irish politics: public opinion turned to support Rising**



# Historical Background

1919-1921: The Irish War of Independence/ 'Anglo-Irish War', a guerrilla war against the British government

- January 1919 => The **Dáil** (parliament of the Irish republic) **declared Irish independence in defiance of British rule** over Ireland
- War fought by the **IRA**, against the British **army**, involved refusal to participate in

activities of the British **government**, **military raids** on British positions in Ireland (Guerilla Warfare), **hunger strikes**



# Historical Background

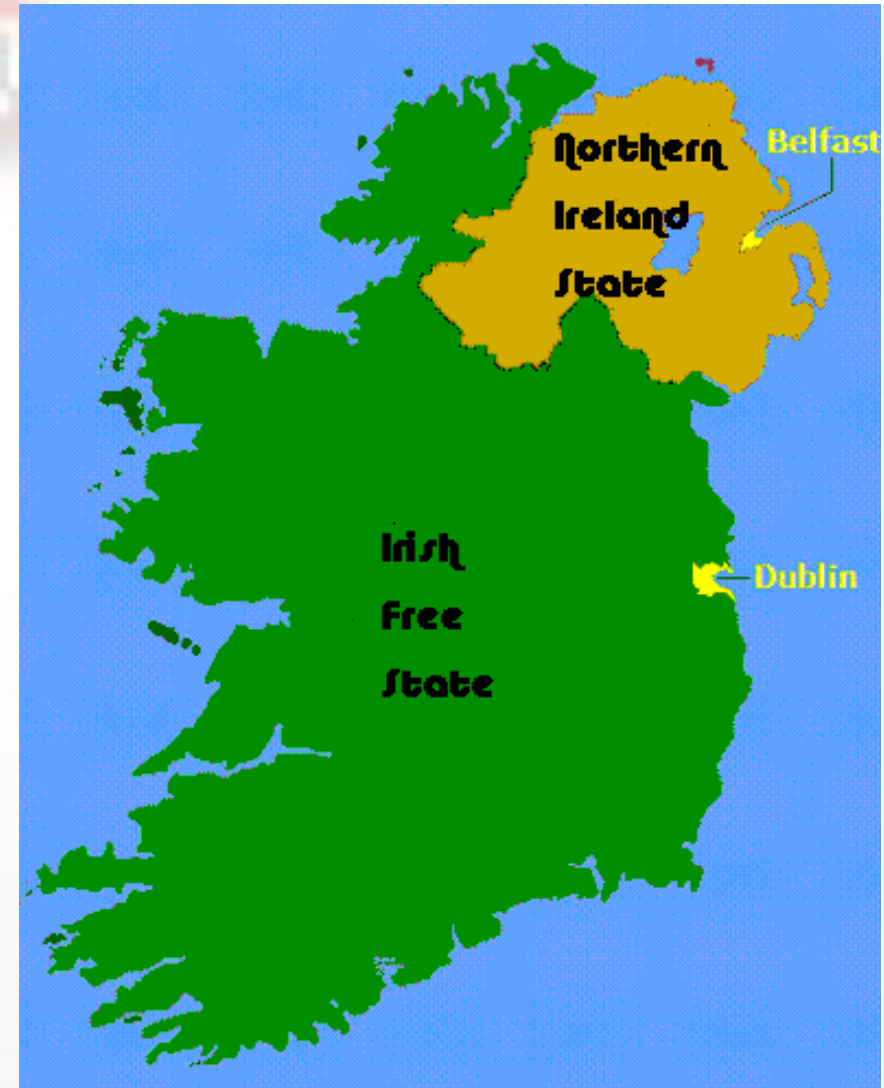
- **“Bloody Sunday”** (Dublin, November 1920) when IRA and British forces killed/fatally wounded 13 British soldiers and police, 14 Irish civilians, 2 high ranking IRA officers
- A central event in nationalist history and an emotional turning-point in the War of Independence
- The exact events which led to the killings have never been conclusively proven, each side contradicting the other





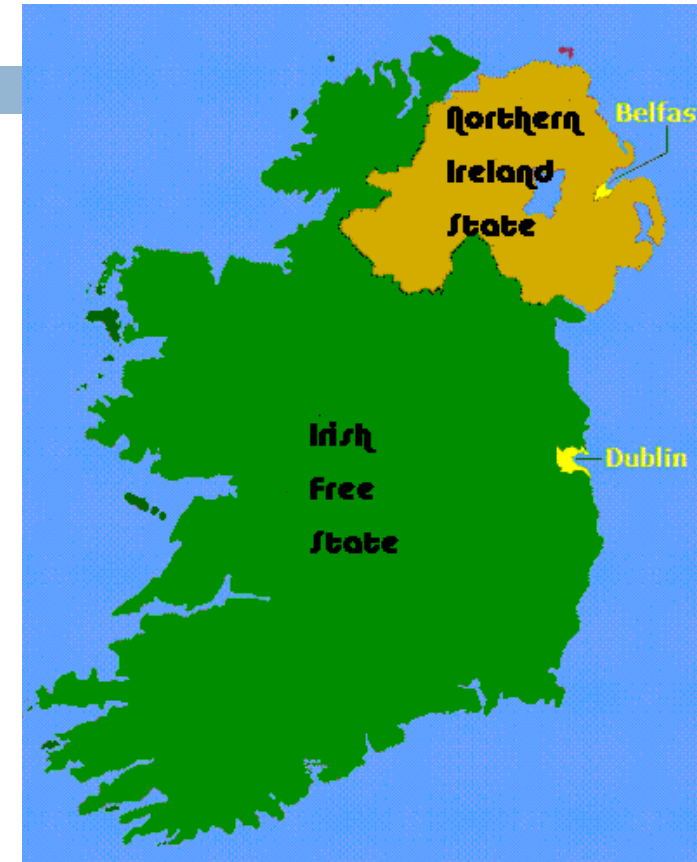
# Historical Background

- July 1921 => **Truce**, peace talks
- December 1921 => **The Anglo-Irish Treaty**
  - **The Irish republic of 1919- disestablished**
  - Ireland **partitioned** into:
    - **NI** (Protestant, part of the UK)
    - **Irish Free State**: 26 counties in the south => more autonomous than before, but still **part of the British Commonwealth**



# Historical Background

- Protestant majority (65/35) in NI
  - **Social + political discrimination against Catholics**  
=> Further turmoil and violence
- The **Anglo-Irish Treaty** was **rejected** by **Sinn Fein + IRA**: continued to fight for a **united catholic Ireland**  
=> **Civil war** among nationalists: 1922-1923
- 1922: **IRA split-**
  - **Official**: Enough progress has been made with the establishment of a free state
  - **Provisional**: Armed force necessary to get the British out + unit the island



# Historical Background

- If you would like to learn more about the the Anglo-Irish War, please refer to this short(ish) 3-parts video series:
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-jUYWfFKd80>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J07wbnNEiAo>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3EeYu9glic>

# Sinn Fein

- Political party, widely regarded as the **political wing** of the **IRA**, founded in 1905
  - Gained **momentum** in the Irish political arena after **the Easter rising**
- Organized in NI and the Republic of Ireland
- Strives for an **end** to the **political partition** of the island of Ireland => **Nationalism, Republicanism**
- Led by **Gerry Adams** (1983-2018)



# Unionist Parties in NI



## Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) =>

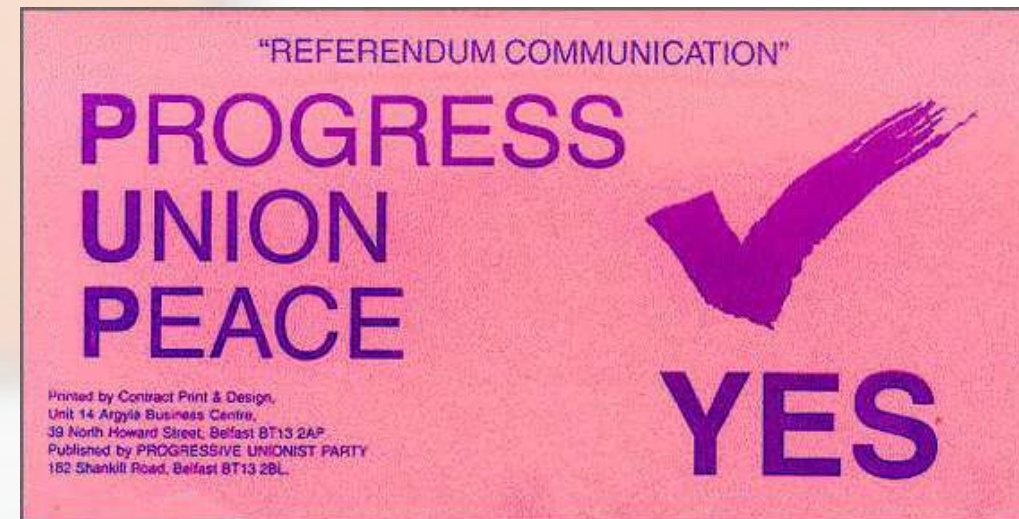
- Founded in 1905 (as Ulster Unionist Council)
- Key **political position**: Maintain the **union** with Britain
- Was the **dominant force in NI politics** for decades: largest party in NI until the 21<sup>st</sup> century: formed the government 1921-1972
  - Declined in recent years
- **Soft-right** of the political spectrum; broadly backs right-of-centre domestic policies



# Unionist Parties in NI

## The Progressive Unionist Party =>

- A **labour** orientated party, established by members of the **Ulster Volunteer Force** & Red Hand Commando (small secretive Ulster loyalist paramilitary group)
- Main support base: loyalist (Protestant) working class communities
- Left-wing 'progressive unionism'
- Ideology: **Anti-sectarian, pluralist**

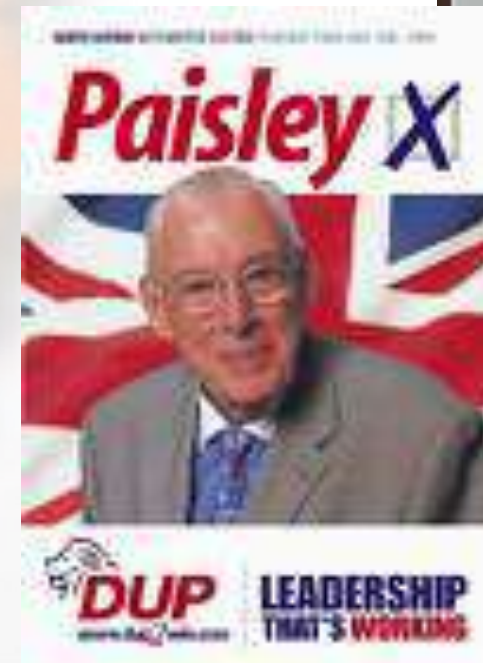


# Unionist Parties in NI



## Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) =>

- Founded in 1971, led by **Ian Paisley** until 2008, **Arlene Foster** since
- Supporting NI remaining part of the UK
- During the **Troubles**, opposed power-sharing with Irish nationalists, rejected attempts to involve the Republic of Ireland in N. Irish affairs
- **Was significant to secure Brexit** before the last UK General Election: 10 seats



# NI Politics: 1921-1963

- **Ulster Unionist Party dominated** political life in NI
  - **Allocation** of jobs, housing, etc. **favoured unionists** over nationalists
  - Public order **policing** not applied evenly
- **Political culture favoured Unionists** and restricted nationalism
  - The '**Twelfth**'- commemoration of the **Battle of Boyne** became a **public holiday**, nationalist displays often **restricted**





# NI Politics: 1921-1963

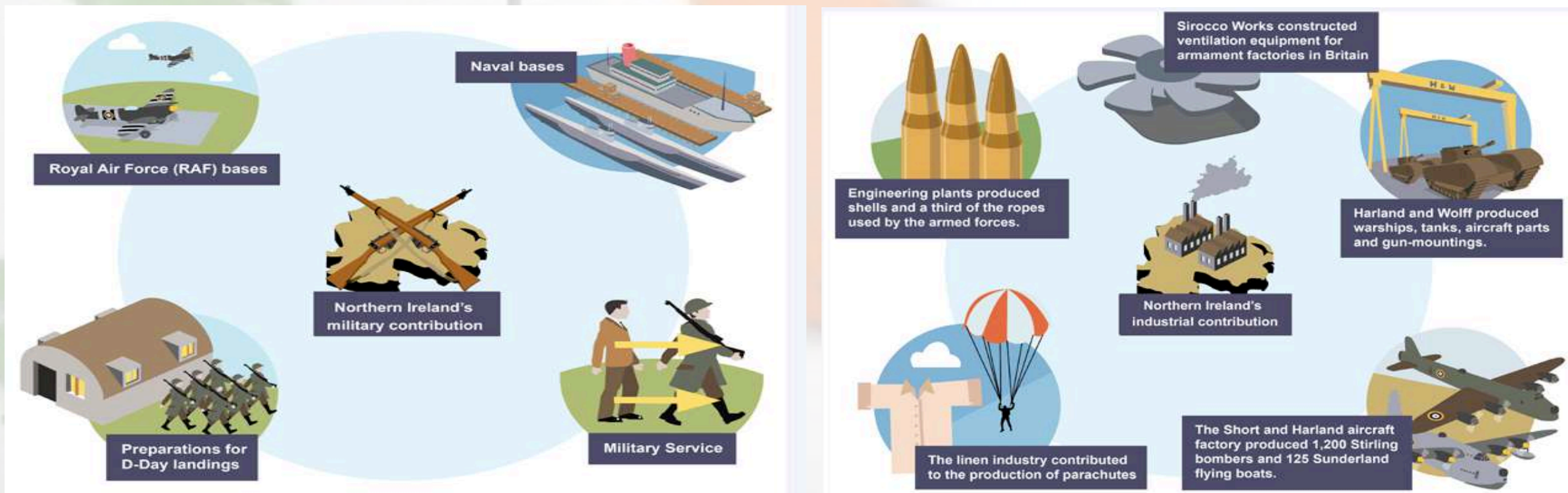
- Unionist **political behaviour** influenced by:
  - Grass-roots unionism, often more hard-line than leadership
  - Continuing **IRA attacks** in NI
  - Continuing **anti-partitionist attitude** of nationalists both in NI and the South



# NI During WWII

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- NI contributed to (British) war effort
  - The war was an opportunity for **unionists** to demonstrate their **loyalty** to **Britain** and convince the government that partition should continue



# NI During WWII

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- 1940: A **Home Guard** was created
  - Controlled by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)
  - Composed mainly of reserve police force members- many Catholics regarded it a **sectarian force**, few applied
- The Home Guard's focused on **countering IRA activities**
- **Imprisonment without trial** (internment) for IRA suspects



# NI Politics: 1963-1968

- 1963 => Terence **O'Neill** becomes the new **Unionist leader**
  - Aims to **reform the economy**, win back working-class Unionist votes lost to NI Labour Party, **improve relations** with **Catholic** community and the **Republic of Ireland**
- **Opposition** within + outside the UUP
- Growing demands from **civil rights groups** to **end discrimination** + growing interest of UK Labour govt in NI



# Protests in NI

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- Mid 1960s – (Catholic) **Civil Rights Movement** emerged
  - **Inspired** by civil rights movement in the US
  - **Demanded equal rights** (housing, jobs, education, voting)
  - **Protested the unfair treatment of Catholics** by non-violent means (marches, speeches)
  - **Protestants** perceived the civil rights movement as a **threat to the integrity of the state**- counter-demonstration => Riots, suppression



# Protests Turned Violent

- October 5th, 1968 => Civil Rights march in **Derry/Londonderry**
  - Marchers beaten by police: **Unionist government** appears repressive
- **Unionists** introduce reforms, but radical student group **People's Democracy** continues campaign
  - Start of 'the Troubles'



# Protests Turned Violent

## People's Democracy (PD) =>

- **Left-wing radical group** formed by students of Queen's University of Belfast four days after the events at the **Derry March** on (5 October 1968)
- Important force in the **civil rights movement**
- Organised a **four-day march** from **Belfast** to **Derry**
  - Passed through many 'Protestant areas', attacked by extreme Loyalists



# Protests Turned Violent

- August 1969 => **Apprentice Boys** (Protestants) **march** in Derry leads to **riots** in **Derry** and **Belfast**
- **Republican** and **loyalist paramilitary groups** became **well established**, undeterred by the state
- **Internments** (August 1971) **increase overall violence**





Police fighting with rioters in 1969, in the area of Londonderry



# Protests Turned Violent

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- Protestant-Catholic views increasingly **polarised**
- As the situation **deteriorated**, British soldiers sent to NI to **restore order**
  - Perceived as **oppressors** by Catholics
- The **Civil Rights Movement** developed into **social upheaval**
- **Clashes continued** during the 1970s





British soldiers charging Catholic youths in Londonderry, Northern Ireland, in 1971



A 45-foot "peace wall," erected by the British authorities, separating Catholic neighborhoods, left, from Protestants in Belfast

# Next Session...

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- **The 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, Part II**

Questions? Feel free to email me =>

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