

IRE223: NATIONS IN CONFLICT

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Spring 2020

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

On The Agenda for Today

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- **The 'Troubles'**
 - The Civil Rights Movement
 - Protests Turned Violent
 - Bloody Sunday
 - Seeking an end to the Troubles
 - Sunningdale (1973-1974)
 - The Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985)
 - The Downing Street Declaration
 - The Good Friday Agreement
- **Contemporary Politics in Northern Ireland**
- **Conflict Analysis**
- **Conclusions**

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



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



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



Protests Turned Violent

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- Clashes continued during the 1970s: **“The Troubles”**





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

Bloody Sunday

- 1972 => **Worst year of 'The Troubles'**
- 30 January 1972 => **"Bloody Sunday"**
 - 15k people took part in an illegal, peaceful **civil right march**
 - **British troops opened fire: 13 Catholic civilians shot dead, many wounded**
 - Britain **suspends NI parliament**



ULSTER'S BLOODY SUNDAY



THE LAST RITES Grieving in the road, a priest gives the last rites to a dying man. Picture by Shirley Atkinson. Scene at its bloody aftermath—see Centre Page.

From the scenes in Londonderry
THIRTEEN men were killed yesterday as Army paratroopers broke up a banned Civil Rights march in Londonderry.

Another twelve people—including two women and a child—were wounded by bullets when the Para's stormed into the Catholic Bog side area.

The soldiers opened fire on the marchers at 10.15 am. The first shot was fired at 10.15 am. The first shot was fired at 10.15 am. The first shot was fired at 10.15 am.

13 die..Army accused of 'massacre'

March
The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry. The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry. The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry.

'SOLDIERS DIDN'T FIRE FIRST SHOT'

The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry. The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry. The march was held in the Bog side area of Londonderry.

Bodies
The bodies of the thirteen men who were killed were found in the Bog side area of Londonderry. The bodies of the thirteen men who were killed were found in the Bog side area of Londonderry.



The Troubles

- **After 1972: Further violence** between Protestants and Catholics
 - Catholic homes + businesses were burnt/petrol-bombed, local police did nothing to stop the violence
 - The British Army raided Catholic homes and damaged property
- The IRA attacked British soldiers + Protestant homes & businesses
 - Many **innocents** were caught in the crossfire





The Troubles

- The two sides fought against each other for most of the **1970's** and early **1980's** => Became evident that progress/end was **NOT** going to be reached using **force**
- **Political alignment** of the IRA + the UVF with political parties (Sinn Fein vs. DUP)

Seeking an end to the Troubles

- Many believed 'the **Troubles**' could end with a **compromise**: If **Catholics + Nationalists** were better **represented** in **government**, support for the IRA would decline => **Power-sharing**
 - Distribute executive power between Unionists and Nationalists
 - Reducing discrimination
 - Encouraging political partnership
 - Increase stability
- **Unionists dubious** on power-sharing with the Social Democratic and Labour Party (nationalistic)



Sunningdale 1973-1974

- The Sunningdale Agreement (Dec 1973) set up a **new form of government**; Three political bodies:
 - An **executive government** with **power shared** by **Nationalists** and **Unionists- coalition cabinet**
 - A proportionally-elected **NI Assembly**
 - A “**Council of Ireland**”, made up of delegates from both NI and the Republic of Ireland
- UK Gen Election shows large **unionist** majority **against** Sunningdale
- **Attempt** eventually **failed** due to **serious Loyalist backlash**
- NI returned to **Direct Rule** under the **British government**



Seeking an end to the Troubles

- Long-standing **tension** between **Britain** and **Ireland** on the subject of NI
- Many political leaders, even those committed to British sovereignty in NI, realized that a **solution** to years of **sectarian violence** in NI could only be achieved by means of an **arrangement**
- 1985 => The '**Anglo-Irish Agreement**' (AIA) between the UK & Ireland
- Considered one of the **most significant developments in British-Irish relations** since the establishment of the **Irish Free State (1922)**



The Anglo-Irish Agreement: 1985

- Framework for **cooperation** between **ministers** in the **Irish** and **British governments**
 - Under the agreement, **Dublin** was able to send **representatives** to Westminster when matters affecting the **Catholic minority in NI** were concerned (political matters; security and related issues; legal matters, the promotion of cross-border cooperation)
 - Gave the Irish Government a right to provide consultation on some NI affairs: was seen as a move towards **joint authority**

The Anglo-Irish Agreement: 1985

- **Unionist opposition**
 - The **Ulster Unionist Party** + **other unionists** denounced the agreement, UUP members of Parliament in NI **resigned**
 - The party organized **mass protests** + **boycotts** of **local councils**, filed a **lawsuit** challenging the legality of the agreement
 - The agreement **failed**



The Anglo-Irish Agreement: 1985

- Contacts between the **Irish** and **British governments continued**
 - **Fears over spill over violence** to Ireland proved **unfounded** (Irish concern)
 - The UUP **participated** in new negotiations on the future of NI (1990–93) despite objecting power sharing
- 1994 => **Ceasefire** declared by **republican** and **unionist paramilitary forces**
 - Fell apart in 1996 because **Sinn Féin**, which had replaced the more moderate Social Democratic and Labour Party as the leading nationalist party, had been **excluded from peace talks**

Seeking an end to the Troubles

- 1997 => IRA resumed cease-fire, **Sinn Féin joined the peace talks**
- No deal was accepted by all sides for four years, until the **Good Friday Agreement** (April 1998)
 - A result of a **multi-party negotiation**
 - Created the **NI Assembly** and new **cross-border institutions**

The Good Friday Agreement

- 10 April 1998 => The **Good Friday Agreement/Belfast Agreement (GFA)** was signed
 - Supported by UUP, Progressive Unionist Party and Ulster Democratic Party
 - Opposed by DUP and some smaller unionist groups
- **Power-sharing executive: The NI Assembly**
 - Ruled itself, Instead of being controlled from Westminster



The Good Friday Agreement

Highlights of the agreement:

1. The agreement must be ratified by the **citizens of NI and the republic of Ireland**
 2. **Citizens** could be **Irish, British**, or both
 3. The Republic of Ireland would drop territorial claim in relation to NI
- Main concerns: Security – prisoner releases, decommissioning of paramilitary weapons, extent of police reform
 - A **copy of the agreement** was sent to **every house** in **NI** and the **Republic of Ireland**

The Good Friday Agreement

- May 1998, a joint **referendum** was held on the agreement => 94% approval in the republic, 71% in NI
- The Assembly took their seats in December
- An **IRA splinter group** violated the spirit of the agreement, with a **bombing** in Omagh in August 1998



Contemporary NI

■ Political Instability

- In **2002**, the **NI Assembly** was **suspended**, and its decision-making duties were returned to the UK (Westminster)
- The **Assembly** was given **back** power in **2007**
- January 2017=> **Disagreement** between the main parties (DUP + Sinn Fein) controlling NI led to the **government** being **dissolved**
- NI ruled by Westminster for **3 years**
- January 2020 => NI government is back!



The Conflict: Analysis

- **Catholics** and **Protestants** see themselves as **distinct groups**
- **Conflicting Loyalties**
 - Most NI **Protestants** identify as **British**, wish to stay part of the UK
 - Most NI **Catholics** identify as **Irish**, wish to be **united** with the Republic of **Ireland**
- **Identity and Territory, politics and sectarianism**
 - Political problem: Unification or independence
 - Religious problem: Protestants vs. Roman Catholics

The Conflict: Analysis

- NI Catholics suffered prolonged **discrimination**; considered NI under occupation by a foreign ruler (the Brits)
 - **Unequal Allocation of Housing:** Large Catholic families had to wait long to get partially subsidized houses => **Frustration**
 - **Unequal Employment Opportunities:** For Catholics despite having similar qualifications => **Resentment, frustration**



The Conflict: Analysis

Lack of Voting Rights =>

- <1969, only **property owners** eligible to vote
- Each **household** had 2 votes, **business owners** given votes based on the number of **staff**
 - Protestants had **large businesses**: more votes
 - **Voting districts** were **drawn** up to secure in **Protestant majority**
- Since 1969, **every citizen can vote** (one vote), regardless of religious/political affiliation



The Conflict: Analysis

- **Lack of Opportunities for Social Interaction**
 - **Segregation in housing + school system** (Catholics and Protestants lived in separate areas)
 - Attempts for **joints catholic-protestant schools failed**
 - **Protestant children** are taught **British history**, speak **English** and conform to **British cultural particularism** (play rugby, hockey and cricket)
 - **Catholic children** are taught **Irish history**, **Irish language** and conform to **Irish cultural particularism** (play hurling, celebrate st. Patrick's day)
 - **Few opportunities for social interaction**

Conclusion

- Britain ruled Ireland for hundreds of years. In 1922, the island was split:
 - **NI** was left **part of the UK** and **southern Ireland** became its own state (Free Irish State => **the Republic of Ireland**)
- When this happened, the **population** of NI was **divided** into:
 - **Unionists/Loyalists**- Wanted to remain part of the UK
 - **Nationalists/Republicans**- Wanted NI to unite with the Republic of Ireland
- Unionists were mostly Protestant, and Nationalists were mostly Catholic
- When NI separated, its government was mainly Unionist (Protestant were the majority ethnic group in NI)

Conclusion

- **Catholics** found it difficult to get homes and jobs and **protested**
 - The **Unionist** community held their own **protests** in response
- During the 1960s, the **tensions** between the two groups **turned violent**
- **'The Troubles'** is a period between the end of the 1960s and the 1990s that was **characterized** by **intense fighting** between **armed groups** on both sides
- **British troops** were sent to NI to deal with the situation and violently **clashed** with Republican armed groups, the largest being the **Irish Republican Army**

Conclusion

- The **IRA** carried out **bombings** in **Britain** and **NI** to force the Brits out of NI. Armed Loyalists (e.g., the **UVF**) responded in **violence**. **Both** groups were responsible for many **killings** and **injuries** of militants and **civilians**
- The situation deteriorated:
 - **Bloody Sunday** in 1972, when 14 people were killed by British troops during a peaceful civil rights march in Londonderry
- The **Good Friday agreement** (1998) brought an **end** to a period of conflict in the region
 - However, contemporary NI is still **divided by walls**, physical and metaphoric

Next Session...

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- **The Israeli Palestinian Conflict**



Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions?