IRE223: NATIONS IN CONFLICT

Maya Hadar



On The Agenda for Today

- 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

- 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)



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Protestants perceived the civil rights movement as a threat to the integrity of the state- counter-demonstration => Riots, suppression

- 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'



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

- 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





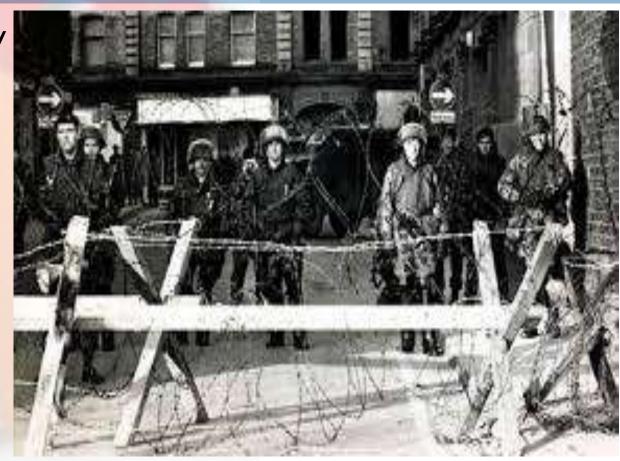
- Protestant-Catholic views increasingly polarised
- As the situation deteriorated, British soldiers sent to NI to restore order
 - Perceived as oppressors by Catholics
- The Civil Rights Movement developed into social upheaval
- Clashes continued during the 1970s







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Clashes continued during the 1970s: "The Troubles"



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







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THE LAST RITES

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)

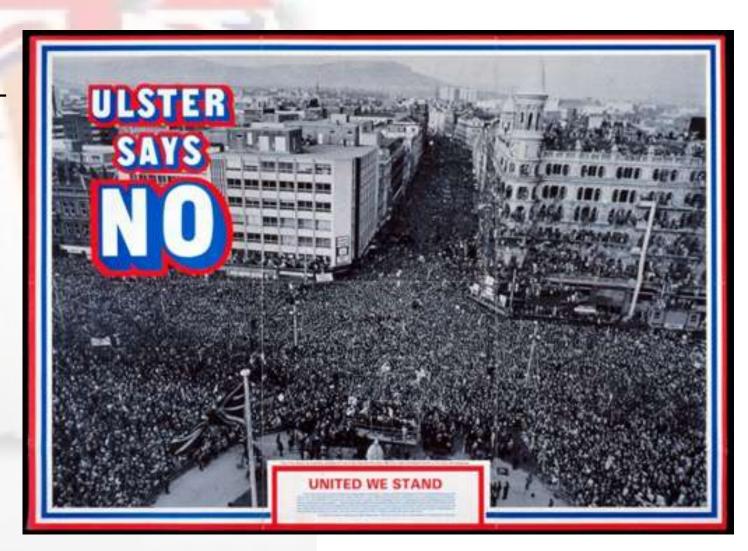


The Anglo-Irish Agreement: 1985

- 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 crossborder 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:

- 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!



- 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 identity 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

- 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





Lack of Voting Rights =>

- <1969, only property owners eligible to vote</p>
- 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

- 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 London/Derry
- 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...

The Israeli Palestinian Conflict

Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions?