

Subject : Junior Cycle History
Teacher : Niall Lenehan

LESSON 23
The Troubles in Northern Ireland

Learning Intentions

1. Understand the causes of the troubles in Northern Ireland.
2. Understand the course of the troubles in Northern Ireland.
3. Understand the impact and consequences of the troubles.

2.5 identify the causes, course and consequences of the Northern Ireland Troubles and their impact on North-South and Anglo-Irish relations

Key words – define these

Nationalist

Unionist

Loyalist

Republican

Paramilitary

Sectarianism

Internment

Gerrymandering

What were the troubles?

- ♦ The 'troubles' was an ongoing conflict which occurred in Northern Ireland from the late 1960's until 1998.
- ♦ It was a sectarian conflict between **nationalist and Unionist communities** in Northern Ireland.
- ♦ Nationalists wanted the north to join the Republic of Ireland.
- ♦ Unionists wanted the north to remain as part of the United Kingdom.



- ♦ The Troubles began as Catholic civil rights protests. These led to riots between Nationalists and Unionists.
- ♦ As the violence increased, the British government would send in their army to try and keep the peace.
- ♦ Paramilitary organisations such the **UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force)** and the **IRA (Irish Republican Army)** would attack each other and civilians over the course of the conflict.

The Causes of the Troubles**1. British conquest and colonisation**

British kings and Queens had a policy of plantation in Ireland in the 16th and 17th centuries.

Two groups emerged in Ireland with differing political and religious outlooks.

- **Catholics** predominantly consider themselves Irish and hold nationalist views - they want an independent Ireland free from British control.
- **Protestants** identify largely as British and unionist, meaning they wish to remain linked to the United Kingdom.

2. The partition of Ireland

- In May 1921, the **Government of Ireland Act** was passed, which divided Ireland in two.
- The Act brought together 6 counties to form the self-governing region of **Northern Ireland**, whose population was majority loyalist and Protestant.
- Over the 20th century, Northern Ireland's parliament would be dominated by Unionists – This resulted in **severe tensions** between Catholics and Protestants.



Ireland after partition

3. Discrimination of Catholics

- Catholics were discriminated against in many ways. Many employers discriminated against Catholics.
- Irish Catholics were struggled get housing and access social welfare.
- Irish language and history was not taught in state schools in Northern Ireland.
- **Gerrymandering (rigging elections)** was used by the government to make sure **Unionist majorities** were elected in Catholic areas.



The Course of the Troubles

The Battle of the Bogside

- In 1969, Civil rights marches began to turn violent.
- Riots were caused by a march by the Unionist Apprentice Boys in the Bogside in Derry City.
- This violence also spread to Belfast – **The RUC (Royal Ulster Constabulary)** was unable to cope with the violence.

- The British government sent in the British Army to keep law and order on the streets.



The Violence Escalates

- Paramilitary groups on both sides began to increase in size and strength.
- **The Provisional IRA** broke away from the official IRA in 1969 and began attacking the RUC and armed forces.
- Civilian and military targets were bombed resulting in many deaths during their campaign.
- Loyalist paramilitaries began to use violence to defend their position in the United Kingdom.
- **The UVF and UDA** were set up and carried out attacks on Catholic civilians in response to IRA bombings and shootings.

New Political parties

- The escalating violence led to the formation of the **SDLP (Social democratic Labour party)** - They were a nationalist party led by **Gerry Fitt** and **John Hume** but were against the use of violence.
- The SDLP campaigned for improving the lives of those living in Northern Ireland.
- In 1971, **Ian Paisley** set up the **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** - They opposed any negotiations with nationalists.



Ian Paisley



John Hume

Internment

- As violence continued to escalate, Unionist government leader **Brian Faulkner** decided to bring in internment – This meant people suspected of causing violence could be **imprisoned without trial**.
- Internment was a disaster for the Unionist government as many innocent people were **falsely imprisoned** and only Catholics were targeted.
- Internment angered people and resulted in **more people joining the IRA**.

Bloody Sunday

- On Sunday January 30th 1972, **thirteen people were shot dead** and at least 15 others injured when members of the British Army opened fire on civil rights demonstrators in the Bogside.
- This caused great anger among Catholics.
- In Dublin, a crowd burned down the British Embassy in response to the killings.



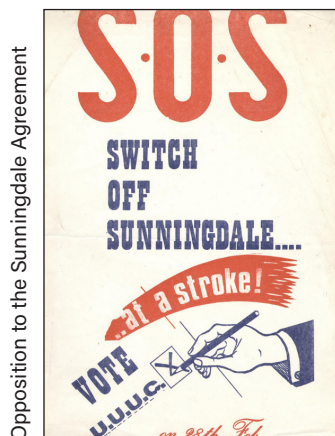
Images from Bloody Sunday

Recap exercise 23.1

- Q1. What were 'the troubles'?
- Q2. Explain two causes of the troubles.
- Q3. What was the Battle of the Bogside?
- Q4. Which paramilitary organisations existed on the Republic and Loyalist sides?
- Q5. Which new political parties emerged during the troubles?
- Q6. What was internment?
- Q7. What happened on Bloody Sunday?

The Sunningdale Agreement

- In March 1972, the British government decided the Unionist government could not handle the trouble in Northern Ireland – The decided to introduce **direct rule from London instead**.
- In 1973, Northern Irish Secretary of State William Whitelaw decided to set up a power-sharing government so Nationalists and Unionists could rule together.
- This was known as the **Sunningdale Agreement** and established a power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland.



The Ulster Workers Council strike

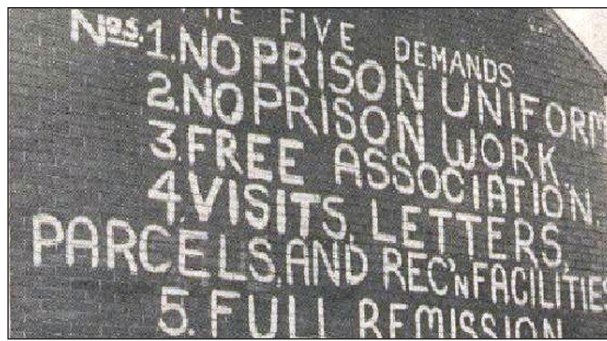
- The IRA disagreed with the Sunningdale Agreement and **continued their campaign of violence**.
- The DUP also **opposed** the idea of **power sharing** with nationalists.
- In May 1974, the **Ulster Workers Council** organised a general strike in protest against the power sharing government.
- This led to a collapse of the power sharing government and the North returned to direct rule from Westminster.

The Hunger strikes

- In the late 1970's IRA prisoners in the Maze prison demanded '**political status**' – This meant that did not want to be treated like ordinary criminals.
- In 1981, a group of prisoners led by **Bobby Sands** went on hunger strike as the British government would not grant them political status.
- **British PM Margaret Thatcher** refused to give in to their demands. Bobby Sand passed away after 66 days. 9 more hunger strikers would also pass away.
- Sands was elected as a Westminster MP while on hunger strike. The IRA eventually called off the hunger strike and Sinn Féin began contesting elections.



The hunger strikers



Demands of the hunger strikers

Giving Peace a chance

The Anglo-Irish Agreement

- In 1985, Taoiseach Garrett FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher agreed to give the Irish Republic a say in the running of Northern Ireland.
- They also agreed a protocol of security cooperation.
- Unionists greatly opposed this agreement.
- Despite this, it was seen as a major step forward in the peace progress.



Garrett FitzGerald and Margaret Thatcher



Unionist Opposition to the Anglo-Irish Agreement

IRA and Loyalist ceasefires

- After negotiations with political parties on both sides – the **Downing Street Declaration** was signed on Dec 1993.
- Parties who signed this declaration had to be **committed to peace** and would have a say on the future of Northern Ireland.
- In 1994, both the **IRA** and **Loyalist groups** called a **ceasefire**.

The Good Friday Agreement 1998

- In the 1990's, talks began between John Hume and Gerry Adams – Hume convinced Adams of the importance of using political means as opposed to violence to achieve their aims.
- **US President Bill Clinton** and senator **George Mitchell** were also involved and helped to negotiate terms that everybody would accept.
- The Good Friday Agreement was officially signed on 10 April 1998.



Terms of the Good Friday Agreement:

1. Created a **power sharing agreement** that included all governments.
2. That **Northern Ireland would remain in the UK** until a majority of people in all of Ireland wanted to leave the UK.
3. Both the **IRA and Unionist paramilitary groups agreed to ceasefire** and to decommission their weapons.
4. Paramilitary **prisoners** from both sides **were released**.



23.3 Homework Correction

Q1. From your study of the 1960's as an important decade in Europe and the wider world, name an important issue or event from the time.

The Civil Rights Movement

Q2. Write an account of this event and explain why it was significant.

African Americans experienced serious racial discrimination and segregation during the 20th century. Black and white Americans were often separated in public places such as schools, restaurants and public transport. In the 1950s, African Americans began demanding better treatment – This was known as the civil rights movement. It was led by Martin Luther King who believed in non-violent protests to achieve change. He travelled around America and campaigned for civil rights, making his 'I have a dream' speech. Martin Luther Kings campaign resulted in President Lyndon B. Johnson passing the Civil Rights Act (1964) which outlawed discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex or ethnicity. In 1968, King was assassinated by a white gunman. Despite this, the rights of African Americans began to improve as more black politicians began to be elected.

