



Later Modern Ireland: Topic 5

Politics and Society in Northern Ireland, 1949–1993

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The origin of Northern Ireland 1

Why Ireland was partitioned

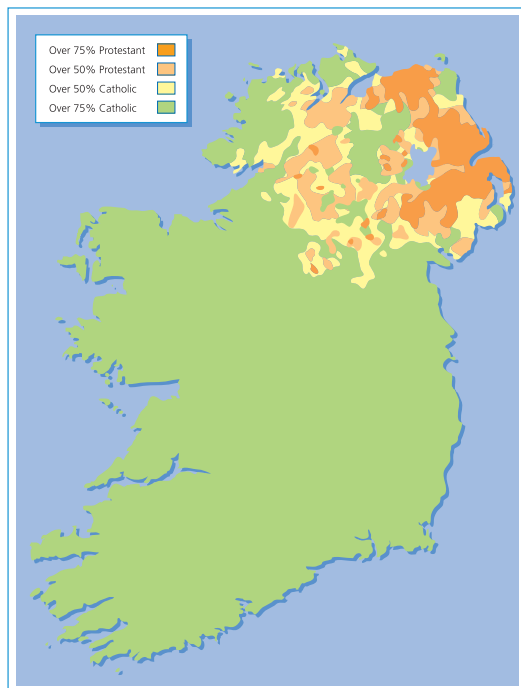
Ireland in the United Kingdom

- Up to 1920 the whole island of Ireland was united with Britain, forming the **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (the UK)**.
- Laws and taxes for Ireland were decided in the Westminster parliament in London.
- Irish voters elected **105 MPs** to represent their interests there.

Nationalists

- Some Irish people disliked being part of the United Kingdom. They were called **nationalists**. They wanted Irish people to control Irish affairs.
- Most nationalists were **Catholics**. They made up 75% of the population. They did not feel the British had treated them fairly.
- Nationalists also believed that the Irish economy had suffered from being part of the UK. They thought Irish people would manage it better.

Irish religion and politics in 1911



This map is based on the census taken in 1911. In an official document like a census it was not possible to ask people what their political views were but they could be asked about their religion. And since almost all Protestants were unionist and almost all Catholics were nationalists, the religious census also reflected the political divide across the island.

Unionists

- Irish people who thought that union with Britain was good for Ireland were called **unionists**.
- Most unionists were **Protestants**. They were only 25% of the population in Ireland but were a majority in the northeast of Ulster (see map on p.91).
- That part of Ireland was prosperous in the 19th century. It sold linen and ships to Britain and its empire. Ulster unionists feared they would lose the British market if Ireland left the UK.
- Many Protestants also **felt that they were British as well as Irish** because their ancestors had come from Britain to Ireland during the 17th-century plantations. They were loyal to the British monarch and because of that were sometimes called **loyalists**. They felt at home in the UK and wanted to remain in part of it.
- Protestants also feared that they would suffer discrimination in jobs and education if Ireland was ruled by the Catholic majority.

The partition of Ireland

- When nationalists demanded an Irish parliament, unionists said they would resist it by force if necessary.
- In 1918 a majority of nationalists voted for the **Sinn Féin Party** which wanted to cut all ties with Britain and make Ireland a **republic**. Their army, the IRA, began to fight the British forces in Ireland.
- This made the unionists more determined than ever to resist Irish independence. In 1920 they got the British government to pass the **Government of Ireland Act**. It partitioned (divided) Ireland into two parts:
 - ‘Southern Ireland’ had 26 counties. In it, 93% of the population were Catholic.
 - **Northern Ireland** had six counties. In it, 66% of the population were Protestant and 33% were Catholic.
- Nationalists refused to agree to this. Their war continued until 1921 when they made the **Anglo-Irish Treaty** with Britain. This turned ‘Southern Ireland’ into the **Irish Free State**. In 1949 it became a republic, completely independent of Britain.

Top Tip

For a fuller account of the events from 1912 to 1925, see section on p.39.

The Constitution of Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland remained part of the United Kingdom, though it had its own locally elected parliament and government.

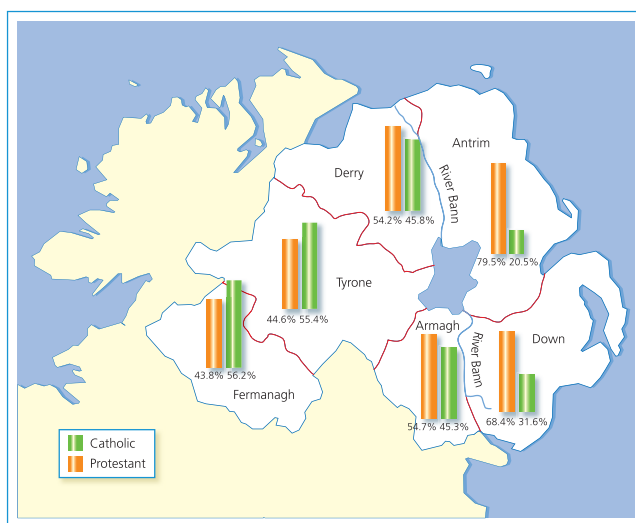
- The Northern parliament controlled industry, transport, agriculture, education and health and had a limited power to raise taxes.
- There were 52 MPs in the Northern Ireland House of Commons. They elected a **Prime Minister** and a **Cabinet** which contained ministers responsible for Finance, Home Affairs, Education, etc.
- The first Prime Minister was **Sir James Craig** (later **Lord Craigavon**) who remained in office until he died in 1940.

Point to note
 After the Unionist government built a splendid home for the Northern Ireland parliament at Stormont Castle, it was often called the Stormont parliament.

Northern Ireland and the Westminster parliament

- Because Northern Ireland was still part of the United Kingdom, the Westminster parliament was still supreme over it. Because of this, Northern Ireland voters elected 13 MPs to represent their interests in Westminster.
- Westminster decided on most of the taxes Northern Irish people paid. The British then handed the money raised to the Northern government to spend.
- Although the Westminster parliament was supposed to control Northern Ireland, in reality it refused to discuss anything happening in the North. The British said this was because Northern Ireland had its own parliament to look after its affairs.

Religious division within Northern Ireland



The Bann river, which flows through Lough Neagh, divides Northern Ireland into two halves. East of the Bann, Protestants are in a clear majority. West of the Bann there are Catholic majorities in many areas.

Nationalists and Northern Ireland

- Nationalists throughout Ireland refused to accept partition. They believed that the whole of Ireland should be united under one government.
- Within Northern Ireland nationalists (almost all Catholics) were a third of the population. They wanted to be part of the Free State but the British made them part of Northern Ireland without any consultation.
- In areas **west of the Bann**, like Fermanagh, Tyrone, south Down, south Armagh and Derry city, nationalists formed a local majority (see map on p.93). In 1920 they elected local councils which supported the Dublin government rather than the Unionist government in Belfast.
- To stop this, the Unionist government changed the method of voting for local councils from **PR** to 'first past the post'.
- They also reorganised the constituency boundaries to ensure that unionists would control most of these councils in the future. This is called '**gerrymandering**'.
- These changes meant that up to 1970, the Unionist Party controlled most local councils in Northern Ireland, even in areas where Catholics were in a majority.

Point to note

Proportional representation (PR): in an election, seats are given in proportion to the votes cast. This system is used in the republic.

'First past the post' voting: the person with the most votes wins, even if, overall, others got more votes. This system is used in Britain.

Northern Ireland 1920–1949: A divided state

The RUC, the 'B Specials' and the 'Special Powers Act'

- When Northern Ireland was set up, the Unionist government formed its own police force, the **Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)**.
- The IRA attacked it even after there was peace in the South.
- To combat the IRA, especially near the border, the Unionist government appointed '**Special Constables**' to assist the RUC. They were heavily armed part-time policemen, all of them Protestant.
- They patrolled the areas where they lived. By 1923 their local knowledge had helped to defeat the IRA.
- The '**Specials**' were supposed to be temporary but the Unionist government kept the part-time B unit in existence up to 1970. '**B Specials**' patrolled country areas and their often undisciplined behaviour earned the hatred of Catholics.

- To combat the IRA, the Belfast parliament also passed the **Special Powers Act** in 1922. It gave the Northern government the right to **intern** (imprison) suspected IRA men without trial.
- Like the 'B Specials' the Special Powers Act began as an emergency response to IRA activity but was made permanent in 1933. It was used almost exclusively against nationalists.

How nationalists fared in Northern Ireland

These developments did nothing to win Catholic support for Northern Ireland.

- Its police force, the RUC, was mainly Protestant and the few Catholics in it did not get promotion.
- The 'B Specials' and the Special Powers Act were used mainly against the Catholic community.
- The political system, especially at local level, was rigged against them by gerrymandering and the use of 'first past the post' voting, so that they could not win power even where they were in a majority.

The Nationalist Party, Sinn Féin and the IRA

- After 1925 most nationalists reluctantly accepted that Northern Ireland existed. They voted for the moderate **Nationalist Party**.
- It won seats in the Stormont parliament but was unable to achieve much for its voters.
- A small minority of Northern nationalists were **republicans**. Their party was **Sinn Féin**, but it usually refused to take part in elections.
- A few republicans joined the IRA and occasionally attacked the RUC. These attacks achieved nothing but gave unionists an excuse to keep the 'B Specials' and the Special Powers Act.
- From 1922 until the 1960s, many Northern Catholics bitterly resented Unionist government policies but, apart from occasional IRA violence, did little about them.

Sectarian politics

- From 1921 to 1972 the Unionist Party formed the government of Northern Ireland. It was exclusively Protestant.
- At first Protestants of all classes, who feared Catholic rule, voted for it. But in the late 1920s, when peace returned and the economy declined, some working-class Protestants began to vote for the **Northern Ireland Labour Party** (NILP).
- Craig feared this would weaken unionist power. To stop it he changed the method of electing MPs to Stormont from PR to 'first past the post'.

- The result was that every election in Northern Ireland became a straight fight between Protestant unionists and Catholic nationalists. That kept **sectarian differences** at the centre of Northern politics and made it almost impossible for non-sectarian parties like Labour to emerge.

Point to note

Sectarian: relating to a particular religion (sect).
Sectarianism: judging people or issues according to their connection to a religious group.

Unionists feel under siege

After 1923 unionists were firmly in control of Northern Ireland but they never felt secure.

- They knew that in Ireland as a whole they were a small minority. They grew nervous when southern politicians like de Valera demanded that Northern Ireland be forced to unite with the South.
- They feared that northern Catholics supported this idea and resented the way they refused to get involved in Northern Ireland affairs.
- Catholics had bigger families than Protestants and 40% of school children were Catholics. Unionists feared that eventually that might lead to a Catholic majority within Northern Ireland.

Discrimination

This insecurity made unionists discriminate against Catholics:

- They refused to give them important jobs in the civil service because they did not think a Catholic would be loyal to Northern Ireland.
- Catholics were not encouraged to join the RUC and those who did were not promoted to the higher ranks.
- Although there were many qualified Catholic lawyers, very few became judges.
- Unionists reorganised local government so that even in areas where Catholics were in a majority, the Unionist Party controlled local councils. These councils controlled many jobs but they seldom gave them to Catholics.
- Discrimination left many Catholics with a strong sense of injustice, which eventually contributed to the outbreak of violence.

Question

- 1 How did the Unionist government treat the nationalist minority within Northern Ireland up to the 1960s and how do you account for their attitude?



Culture and society in Northern Ireland

2

Cultural divides

Culture in a divided society

Partition created a divided society in Northern Ireland.

- There were two communities, the Catholics/nationalists and the Protestants/unionists.
- Each community kept to itself and had little to do with the other.

Nationalist cultural activities

- Catholics/nationalists believed they were Irish and rejected the Northern state. They kept their cultural ties with the rest of the island and developed them through their schools, newspapers and clubs.
- Catholic schools taught students the Irish language and Irish history, which were not part of the official school curriculum. They usually played hurling or Gaelic football, rather than rugby or soccer.
- The **Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA)** was the most public expression of nationalist identity. Most Catholic parishes had a GAA club, which was often the centre of social activity.
- Some Catholic men also belonged to the **Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH)**. It was like a Catholic version of the Orange Order, though it was much less powerful. It had links with the Nationalist Party.
- The AOH organised parades on St Patrick's Day and on 15 August. The RUC only allowed them to march in Catholic areas and would not let them to go through town centres.

Unionist cultural identity

- Protestants/unionists felt they were British and looked to London for cultural inspiration and leadership.
- The official school curriculum required students to study English literature and English history, with very little reference to Ireland.

The Loyal Orders and the tradition of parades

- The most distinctive part of the unionist culture was the tradition of loyalist parades.
- These were organised by the **loyal orders** – the **Orange Order**, the **Apprentice Boys of Derry** and a number of smaller organisations.
- These parades commemorated significant events in the history of Protestants in Ireland. Their aim was to give Protestants a sense of shared identity and unite them in their determination to resist any threat from the Catholic/nationalist majority within Ireland.

Unionist identity

The Orange Order

- The Orange Order was by far the biggest of the loyal orders.
- It had close ties to the Unionist Party. It was represented on the party's governing body, the **Ulster Unionist Council**, and no unionist politician could succeed unless he was an Orangeman.
- The Orange Order has a lodge (branch) in almost every town and village. Usually it met in the Orange hall, where the Protestant community also held dances, band practices and other meetings.
- Lodges organise parades. The most important parade is on **12 July**. It celebrates the victory of the Protestant King William of Orange over his Catholic father-in-law, King James II, at the **Battle of the Boyne** (1690).
- Thousands of Orangemen and women march behind bands playing traditional airs. After the march, families picnic while listening to speeches from unionist leaders.
- When Orange marches passed through mainly Protestant districts they were usually peaceful. But when they went through Catholic areas there was tension and sometimes violence.
- Catholics resented having to put up with Orange marches when the RUC had stopped them from marching in Protestant areas. They also disliked the anti-Catholic nature of some Orange songs and speeches.

Case Study

Case Study: The Apprentice Boys of Derry

- Another of the loyal orders is the **Apprentice Boys of Derry**. It is much smaller than the Orange Order but just as important to unionist cultural identity.
- Its main purpose is to commemorate the **Siege of Derry**. That took place in 1688–1689 during the war between William and James.

The Siege of Derry

- In 1690, after the Protestant William ousted the Catholic James from the British throne, Irish Catholics stayed loyal to James.
- Protestants in Ulster feared for their lives and fled for safety to the walled city of Derry.
- On 7 December King James's army arrived before the walls and demanded to be let in. While the city's leaders considered what to do, **13 apprentice boys**, shouting '*no surrender*', locked the gates against the Catholic forces.
- A long siege followed. No food got through. People were starving but when the governor of the city, **Colonel Lundy**, suggested giving in, they expelled him. From then on, the name 'Lundy' meant a traitor to the Protestant cause.
- During the siege about 4,000 people died of hunger and disease. At last a ship, the *Mountjoy*, laden with food, broke through and Derry was saved.

Why the story of the siege mattered to Ulster Protestants

- Later Protestants saw the siege of Derry as a symbol of their heroic defence of their freedom against Catholic rule.
- And because Catholics outnumbered Protestants in modern Ireland, Ulster unionists felt they were still under siege, just as their ancestors had been in 1688–1689.
- In speeches, unionist leaders used the language of the siege to show what they felt. Like those heroic ancestors, they too were brave and defiant (*no surrender*) and they too had to be constantly on the alert against traitors (*Lundys*) who might sell them out.

The Apprentice Boys of Derry

- An organisation called the **Apprentice Boys of Derry** was set up to commemorate the siege. It is based in Derry where its headquarters is the **Memorial Hall**.
- The Apprentice Boys hold two main events each year:
 - A smaller parade in December commemorates the original apprentices closing Derry's gates. At it, an image of 'Lundy' is symbolically burnt.
 - The larger parade on 12 August commemorates the arrival of the *Mountjoy*. It is an important date in the North's marching season. In the 1960s up to 40,000 people from Ulster and abroad went to Derry every year to take part.
- On the day of the parade, the city was decorated with crimson flags and bunting. The marchers gathered on the Mall wall. This looked down on the Catholic ghetto of the Bogside and symbolically showed the supremacy of Protestants over Catholics.
- Led by their bands, the Apprentice Boys marched around the walls of Derry. The march ended with a service in St Columb's Church of Ireland Cathedral.

- Like the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys had close ties to the Unionist Party.
- Many prominent unionist politicians, including Lord Brookeborough, Terence O'Neill and Brian Faulkner, were members of the Apprentice Boys. Ian Paisley remained a member even after he left the Orange Order in 1965.

The Apprentice Boys and the 'Troubles'

- Apprentice Boys marches in Derry were one of the sparks that set off the Troubles.
- A reason for this was that Derry was 60% Catholic but the council that ran the city was unionist-controlled as a result of gerrymandering (see p.115).
- Nationalists resented the marches because they stressed Catholic defeat and the marchers often behaved in a disrespectful way.
- In October 1968 when civil rights demonstrators planned to march inside the city walls, the Apprentice Boys called a special parade. The Home Affairs minister, William Craig, used this as a reason to ban both marches and violence followed.
- But Craig refused to ban their August 1969 march even though violence was likely. This was because of its symbolic importance within the Protestant community.
- The parade sparked off the 'Battle of the Bogside' and led to the introduction of British troops (see p.124).
- For most of the 1970s and 1980s, Apprentice Boys parades were banned completely or confined to Protestant areas.
- But as community relations in Derry improved at the end of the 1980s, the nationalist-dominated council let parades start again. In 1989, at the third centenary of the siege, it organised a pageant to celebrate it.

Northern writers

- There were other aspects to Ulster culture, although they received little support from the Stormont government.
- Northern Ireland produced several fine writers:
 - **John Hewitt** wrote poetry and published ballads sung by the weavers who made Ulster's prosperity in the 18th and 19th centuries. He urged Ulster artists to develop a 'regional identity' to which both communities in the North could relate.
 - **Sam Thompson** was an important playwright. Working in the Belfast shipyards, he lost his job for attacking sectarianism but used his experience in his most successful play, *Over the Bridge*.
- After the Welfare State made higher education more common, a new generation of poets, both Catholic and Protestant, emerged in the 1960s. Seamus Heaney was typical of them.



Key personality

Seamus Heaney (1939–2013)

- Heaney was born in 1939; his home was a farm called Mossbawn and his memory of it later shaped his poetry.
- At 12, he won a scholarship to St Columb's College, a Catholic boarding school in Derry city. This move, which he described as from '*the earth of farm labour to the heaven of education*' is a recurrent theme in his work.
- While Seamus was in school, his 4-year-old brother Christopher was killed in an accident, an event that inspired two poems, 'Mid-Term Break' and 'The Blackbird of Glanmore'.
- Heaney lectured in Queen's University in Belfast until 1972 when he moved to Co. Wicklow where he worked as a poet and lecturer. As his reputation grew, Harvard University gave him a part-time post which allowed him to spend more time writing. In 1995 he won the Nobel Prize for Literature.
- In 1966 Heaney published his first collection of poems, *Death of a Naturalist*. People associated him with several other young writers like Michael Longley and Derek Mahon, saying they formed part of a new 'Northern School' of Irish writing.
- After the Troubles began in 1969, Heaney had to consider his attitude to violence. Should a poet be free to concentrate on his work or should he reflect his place in a divided society? Heaney discussed these issues in a book called *The Government of the Tongue* (1988).
- Generally his poems do not refer directly to violence but it often appears indirectly in them.
- In the 1980s and 1990s his poems were concerned with Ireland's Gaelic past. He produced several long poems based on Gaelic stories, among them *Sweeney Astray* (1983).
- In 1980 Heaney became involved in the Derry-based **Field Day Theatre Company**. Working with other poets and with the playwright, Brian Friel, Field Day explored the crisis in Northern Ireland through plays, poems and pamphlets.
- He died in 2013.

Cultivating cultural diversity

- From the 1980s the British and Irish governments gave grants to cultural activities, hoping to build bridges between the two communities.
- They encouraged conferences and summer schools where people from all communities could discuss the things that united and separated them.

Trying to heal a divided community

- In the 1960s the **ecumenical movement** encouraged Christians to look at the things they had in common rather than the things that divided them.
- This led to meetings and discussions between Catholics and Protestants.
- Many thought that separate schools for Catholic and Protestant children contributed to the conflict.
- To counter this, the British government in 1989 added **Education for Mutual Understanding** to the school curriculum. It encouraged pupils from Catholic and Protestant schools to meet and talk, work and play together.

Exam questions

- 1 What was the contribution of the Apprentice Boys of Derry to the celebration of religious and cultural identity among that city's unionist minority?
(HL 2006)
- 2 What was the significance for Northern Ireland of one or more of the following?
 - Religious affiliation and cultural identity
 - The Apprentice Boys of Derry
 - Seamus Heaney.*(HL 2012)*



The Brookeborough years

3

1943–1963

Brookeborough's social and economic policies

Lord Brookeborough and the British government

- **Lord Brookeborough** was Prime Minister of Northern Ireland from 1943 to 1963.
- World War II ended shortly after he took over. It had strengthened the unionists because British leaders resented the South's neutrality and were grateful to Northern unionists for their support.
- When the South declared a republic and left the British Commonwealth in 1949, the British brought in the **Ireland Act**. It guaranteed that Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom as long as the majority of people in the North wanted it.

The Labour government and the Welfare State

- In 1945, the British Labour Party won the general election. It introduced reforms in education, health and social welfare which were known as the **Welfare State**.
- Because Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom, its people shared in these reforms. But because Northern Ireland was poorer than Britain, the British taxpayer paid most of the extra cost.

Reforms in education

- In 1947 a new system of primary, secondary and third-level education was set up.
 - All children in their last year at primary school did an exam called the '**Eleven Plus**'.
 - The top 25% of pupils got free places in **grammar schools**. If they did well, they got scholarships to go to university.
 - The remaining 75% went to free **secondary modern schools**. They got a practical education and most of them left school at 14 or 15.

- Schools under the control of local councils got full grants for building and maintenance. Their pupils did not have to pay fees. Catholics would not send their children to these schools, so they were mainly Protestant.
- Catholic-owned schools got 65% of the cost of building and maintenance. Up to 80% of their pupils received scholarships but the rest had to pay fees.

The impact of educational reforms

- The new education system gave bright but poor boys and girls a first-class education that their families could never have afforded to pay for.
- Children from both communities benefited, but as there were more poor Catholics than Protestants, Catholics gained most.
- By the 1960s the education reforms had produced a generation of well-educated young Catholics. They resented the discrimination they experienced under unionist rule and led the struggle to reform it.

Reforms in health

- The **National Health Service** (NHS) was set up in 1946. It gave free medical care to all patients.
- A **Hospitals Authority** took over the supervision of hospitals.
- There was a problem over **the Mater Hospital**. It was run by nuns, who feared the Hospitals Authority might interfere too much. But the unionists would not agree to a special arrangement, so the Mater did not get any government grants.

Reforms in social welfare

- A system of national insurance was introduced in 1948. All employed people paid a national insurance contribution and got generous children's allowances, old age pensions or unemployment pay.
- In the 1950s and 1960s unionist politicians often pointed out that this made northerners much better off than people in the South.

Reforms in housing

- In 1943 a report said that 200,000 new houses were needed in Northern Ireland.
- The 1945 **Housing Act** gave local councils and a new body called the **Northern Ireland Housing Trust** power to clear slums and build new houses.
- By 1961 these two bodies had built 56,000 houses across Northern Ireland. These houses were given to poor people for a low rent.

Household franchise and discrimination in housing

- The Housing Trust gave houses on the basis of need (e.g. how bad their present home was). Most of Northern Ireland's 73 local councils did the same but 12 councils followed a different policy.
- These councils included Fermanagh, Tyrone, Derry city, Dungannon and Omagh. In all of them, Catholics were in a majority locally but the Unionist Party controlled the council.
- This was partly due to gerrymandering (see p.115) but also to the 'household franchise'. That was a law which said that only 'householders' (i.e. the head of the household) could vote in local elections.
- But household franchise meant that giving a Catholic a house also meant creating more Catholic voters and so endangering unionist control.
- As a result, these unionist councils often left poor Catholic families in overcrowded slums while giving houses to less needy Protestants.
- Catholics bitterly resented this and the issue of housing was the spark which set off the civil rights movement in the 1960s (see p.115).

Brookeborough's economic policies

Agriculture was the North's most important industry in the 1940s: 14% of people still worked on the land. Most farm produce was sold to Britain.

- After the war, the British government gave generous subsidies to farmers to get them to grow more food.
- This helped Northern farmers to buy tractors and other machinery and encouraged the development of intensive pig and poultry farming.
- This made farmers more prosperous but the number of people working in farming steadily declined.

The **North's other industries** faced major problems.

- The linen industry declined and many jobs were lost. Shipbuilding did well into the 1950s but in the 1960 lost out to more efficient shipyards in Poland and Japan.
- To deal with these problems, Brookeborough introduced a number of measures:
 - The 1945 **Industries Development Act** gave loans and grants to new industries to set up in Northern Ireland.
 - The **Northern Ireland Development Company** was set up 1956 to bring in foreign firms.
 - To improve transport, the government took over the railways and closed uneconomic lines. It also improved the roads and built Ireland's first motorway in 1962.

- As a result, industrial production in Northern Ireland rose by 50% between 1950 and 1962 and the number of jobs went up by 10,000. But unemployment stayed high and Northern Ireland was the poorest part of the United Kingdom.

Brookeborough and the nationalists

- Up to the mid-1950s Brookeborough was more generous to Catholics than many unionists wanted.
 - He supported increasing the grant to Catholic schools against the wishes of some unionists, including the young **Ian Paisley**.
 - He supported the easing of the **Special Powers Act** and encouraged the RUC to stop Orange parades in nationalist areas.
- But he did nothing that might undermine unionist supremacy. When the British replaced household franchise for local elections with ‘one person, one vote’, he insisted on keeping it in Northern Ireland.

Northern nationalists and the IRA border campaign

- After the war, nationalists still wanted a united Ireland.
- In the late 1940s, southern leaders began an **anti-partition campaign**. They made speeches demanding a united Ireland but in reality they did little about it.
- This inspired a few young nationalists to join the IRA. Mostly from the South, they knew little about Northern Ireland and even less about the unionists.
- In December 1956 the IRA announced a campaign against ‘British imperialism’ and called on all the people of the North to help them.
- It attacked border posts and police barracks. Two policemen and several IRA men were killed.
- Brookeborough used the Special Powers Act to intern IRA suspects without trial. In the South, de Valera also interned IRA men.
- The campaign faded away and the IRA called it off in 1962. It was a complete failure and got almost no support from northern nationalists.


The end of the Brookeborough government

- In 1963 the economy declined. Unemployment was growing, especially in the shipyards where many Protestants worked. Some of them voted for the Northern Ireland Labour Party, which won seats in Stormont.
- Unionists began to criticise Brookeborough. Was he too old to cope with the problems Northern Ireland faced?
- In March 1963 Brookeborough suddenly retired.

Exam question

- 1 What were the main political, social and economic developments within Northern Ireland between 1945 and 1963 while Lord Brookeborough was Prime Minister? How was Northern Ireland affected by developments in one or more of the following?
 - Education
 - Health
 - Housing.

(HL 2013)



4 The early years of Terence O'Neill 1963–1967

Terence O'Neill becomes Prime Minister of Northern Ireland

The rivals for power

- Two leading members of the Unionist government hoped to replace Brookeborough as Prime Minister.
 - One was the Finance Minister, **Terence O'Neill**. He wanted to modernise Northern Ireland through planned economic development.
 - The other was the Minister for Home Affairs, **Brian Faulkner**. He had used internment in 1959 to defeat the IRA's border campaign. This made him popular with traditional unionists who disliked O'Neill's modernising ideas.



Key personality

Terence O'Neill (1914–1990)

- Born into an aristocratic family in Co. Antrim, O'Neill grew up in England and served in the British army during World War II. Afterwards he settled in Northern Ireland and was elected to Stormont.
- Brookeborough made him Minister for Home Affairs in 1955 and Minister for Finance in 1956.
- When Brookeborough retired, O'Neill became PM. He wanted to modernise Northern Ireland, through economic planning and development.
 - He encouraged multinational companies to come to Northern Ireland to replace jobs lost in the traditional industries of linen and shipbuilding.
 - He also set up committees to suggest reforms in education, transport and town planning.
- In order to encourage economic co-operation with the republic, he invited Taoiseach Seán Lemass to visit Belfast and went to Dublin himself.
- In order to improve relations with the Catholic minority, he made some small gestures like visiting a Catholic school.

- But even these gestures were too much for some unionists. Led by Ian Paisley, they mounted an ‘O’Neill must go’ campaign.
- At the same time, Catholics noted that he made no significant concessions. After he agreed to site the North’s new university in Protestant Coleraine rather than Catholic Derry, some of them decided that only direct action could lead to reform. This led to the civil rights campaign in 1967.
- When violence broke out in Derry, O’Neill tried to strengthen his own position by calling an election for February 1969. The gamble failed.
- Violence grew and in April he resigned as Prime Minister. O’Neill moved to England and was given a seat in the House of Lords.
- His English background and stiff manner made it hard for him to persuade unionist voters that Stormont had to reform if it was to survive.



Key personality

Brian Faulkner (1921–1977)

- Faulkner was elected as a Unionist MP to Stormont in 1949. In 1959, during the IRA border campaign, Brookeborough made him Minister for Home Affairs.
- His tough policy towards the IRA made him popular with the ordinary unionists.
- He hoped to become Prime Minister but when Brookeborough resigned, he was in America and the leaders of the Unionist Party chose O’Neill instead.
- O’Neill made him Minister of Commerce and he got foreign companies to set up in Northern Ireland.
- But his relationship with O’Neill was always tense and he resigned in January 1969 in protest at the reforms O’Neill introduced on the orders of the British government.
- When O’Neill resigned in April, Faulkner lost the leadership by one vote to James Chichester-Clark. He became Minister of Development in Chichester-Clark’s government and worked hard to push through the reforms he had previously opposed.
- After violence grew, Chichester-Clark resigned in March 1971 and at last Faulkner was elected leader.
- As a gesture to nationalists, he proposed powerful committees in Stormont which nationalist MPs would chair.
- But unionists wanted him to take a hard line with the IRA and he introduced internment on 9 August 1971.
- Because of the way it was imposed, it alienated moderate nationalists and strengthened the IRA. Violence grew over the rest of the year, culminating in Bloody Sunday in Derry in January 1972.
- After that, British Prime Minister Edward Heath took responsibility for security and Faulkner resigned in protest.

- That ended the Stormont government and began the period of ‘direct rule’ from London. At first Faulkner opposed direct rule but soon realised that power-sharing was the only way forward.
- After talks with the SDLP and the British and Irish governments late in 1973, he signed the **Sunningdale Agreement**.
- It set up a power-sharing Executive with Faulkner as First Minister.
- But the plan for a **Council of Ireland** angered many unionists who saw it as the first step to a united Ireland. When his own Unionist Party rejected the Agreement in December 1973, Faulkner left and set up the **Unionist Party of Northern Ireland**.
- The power-sharing Executive began work in January 1974 but was undermined when Heath called a general election and unionists opposed to the Executive won 11 out of the 12 Westminster seats.
- It fell in May when the **Ulster Workers’ Council** strike paralysed Northern Ireland.
- Faulkner lost influence after that and he retired from politics in 1977. He died shortly afterwards in a hunting accident.

O’Neill becomes Prime Minister

- When Brookeborough resigned, Faulkner was in America. A small group of Unionist leaders quickly chose O’Neill to be Prime Minister without an election.
- The lack of an election and O’Neill’s English accent and aloof manner meant that he never got the wholehearted support of Unionist MPs.

The impact of ecumenism

- When O’Neill took over, the **ecumenical movement** had eased traditional rivalries between Catholics and Protestants around the world.
- In Rome Pope John XXIII (23rd) supported **ecumenism** and encouraged Catholics to work with Protestants. He also held the second **Vatican Council** to reform the Catholic Church.
- In the republic **Seán Lemass** became Taoiseach in 1959. He was more interested in economic development in the South and co-operation with the North than in talking about Irish unity.
- Around Ireland some Catholics and Protestants felt the old enmities were meaningless. They began to attend each others’ churches and support each others’ charities.

Point to note

Ecumenism: the idea that the various Christian Churches should leave aside past enmities. Instead they should stress the ideas they share and work together for the common good.

- In the North, some people wanted to forget the old Catholic/nationalist and Protestant/unionist divide and work together to make Northern Ireland a better place.
- But more traditional Protestants were opposed to the ecumenical movement. Their most prominent spokesman was **Ian Paisley**.

O'Neill and the nationalists

- Influenced by ecumenism, O'Neill made some small gestures of good will towards Northern Catholics.
 - He was the first Northern Prime Minister to visit a Catholic school.
 - When Pope John XXIII died in 1964, he had flags fly at half mast.
- O'Neill also invited Taoiseach Seán Lemass to visit Belfast in January 1965 and soon afterwards visited Dublin himself. This led to talks on crossborder co-operation in tourism and agriculture.
- This was popular in the South and among Northern nationalists. But it angered traditional unionists and Paisley gained attention by attacking O'Neill's policies.

O'Neill's social and economic policies

Planning for economic development

- O'Neill faced big economic and political problems. Unemployment was up, especially among Protestant workers in the shipyards. Some of them voted for the **Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP)** rather than the Unionists.
- O'Neill hoped to win them back by developing the North's economy. He set up several committees to suggest new economic policies. Catholics noted that, in spite of his fair words, he did not appoint any Catholics to these committees.
 - The **Matthew Committee** suggested having new 'growth centres' outside Belfast. Many people thought this meant Derry, the North's second city, but O'Neill decided to build a completely new city near Lurgan and called it Craigavon. This decision was unpopular with people west of the Bann.
 - The **Wilson Committee** wanted to encourage foreign firms to set up in Northern Ireland. Brian Faulkner as Minister for Commerce was successful in attracting some multinationals.
- By 1965, unemployment had fallen but most of the new industries and jobs went to the Protestant heartlands east of the Bann.

Case Study: The Coleraine University controversy

The need for more university places

- O'Neill also wanted to increase the number of students going to university. Northern Ireland's only university was Queen's in Belfast. The problem was: should the extra students go there or should a completely new university be set up?
- In Britain, the Robbins Committee had looked at similar issues and recommended several new universities.

The Lockwood Committee 1963–1965

- In 1963 O'Neill set up a committee to consider what should be done in Northern Ireland. Chaired by **Sir John Lockwood**, it had eight members, three of whom were English. One Catholic was invited to serve on it but when he was unable to do so, no other Catholic was appointed.
- The **Lockwood Committee** quickly decided that Queen's should not be expanded. The question then was where to put the new university.

Where to put the new university?

- Derry, Coleraine, Armagh and Craigavon all competed to be the site of the new university, which would create jobs and boost the local economy.
- Most people assumed that Derry would win. It already had a small third-level college, **Magee**. This looked like the ideal basis for a new university but its building was small and in poor repair and there was nowhere for students to live.
- The Lockwood Committee quickly decided against Armagh and Craigavon and focused on Derry and Coleraine. The Committee members visited both places and talked to their representatives.
- They were looking for:
 - A site where the new university could be built
 - A place to accommodate students.
- Derry offered Magee but was so sure of success that they did not discuss other sites or accommodation for students.
- Coleraine offered a site for the university. They also said that the nearby holiday resorts of Portstewart and Portrush had plenty of boarding houses which were empty all winter, so students could live there at no cost to the government.

Lockwood decides on Coleraine

- The Derry case did not impress the Lockwood Committee members. They thought Magee was too small. New buildings would be needed and costly student hostels would have to be built.
- They also felt that Derry's sectarian tensions and lack of industrial development made it unsuitable for a university.
- Coleraine, on the other hand, had offered a site and could house students cheaply. It was also solidly Protestant and so free of sectarian tensions.
- As a result they recommended that Magee be closed and a new university be built in Coleraine.

Derry's response to the Lockwood report

- Derry people were angry when word of this decision got out. In January 1965 a **University for Derry Committee** was set up. Its members included unionists and nationalists. One of them was a young teacher, **John Hume**.
- They organised protest meetings and met with O'Neill and his Minister of Education.
- On 18 February the Unionist mayor of Derry and the Nationalist MP led a 2,000-strong motorcade to Stormont, while back in Derry pubs and shops closed in protest.

O'Neill and the Derry unionists

- The following day, O'Neill met secretly with leading Derry unionists. They persuaded him to keep Magee open but did not press him to give the university to Derry.
- It seems they feared that it might draw new people, some of them Catholic, into the city. That could upset the delicately balanced unionist control of the city council.
- In the end O'Neill decided to put the new university in Coleraine, although he also decided to keep Magee open.

Why did the Lockwood Committee choose Coleraine?

- Many people in Derry believed that O'Neill's government had influenced Lockwood's choice but there is no evidence to support that theory.
- It seems more likely that the committee members made their decision on the kind of rational grounds – a site and student accommodation – that the Robbins Committee had applied in England.
- Several Lockwood members were English and others had spent their working lives there.

- But Northern Ireland was not England. Its political realities were very different and the Lockwood report ignored these.

Why did O'Neill accept their recommendation?

- O'Neill did not have to accept their recommendation. He could have put the new university in Derry.
- But, like Derry unionists, he feared that doing so would disturb their control of the city.
- He also knew that it would please unionist voters outside Derry if it was put in the mainly Protestant town of Coleraine.

Question

- 1 How did the controversy about the location of Northern Ireland's second university reflect the political and religious divisions there?

Exam question

- 1 To what extent were the activities of the Apprentice Boys of Derry and/or the choice of Coleraine as the site of Northern Ireland's second university divisive?
(HL 2009)



The descent into violence 1967–1969

5

The start of the civil rights campaign

New nationalist attitudes to Northern Ireland

- About the time O'Neill came to power, the attitude of younger nationalists to Northern Ireland was changing.
- They still wished for a united Ireland but knew it was unlikely to come because a million unionists were opposed to it.
- Many of them were well educated, thanks to the Welfare State, and they knew they would not have had such a good education in the poorer South.

What the Catholics complained about

But there were a number of things about Northern Ireland that left Catholics with a sense of injustice.

- Because of **gerrymandering**, and the **household franchise**, 12 local councils west of the Bann were controlled by the Unionist Party even though the majority of the people living in them were Catholics.
- Derry was a particularly clear example of this. Sixty per cent of the population was Catholic but because of the way election boundaries were gerrymandered, 7,500 Protestant voters elected 12 local councillors while 10,000 Catholics only elected 8.
- Derry and other unionist-controlled councils **discriminated** against Catholics by giving almost all important and well-paid jobs to Protestants.
- They were also reluctant to give council houses to Catholics, even when they lived in very bad conditions. This was because the household franchise meant that when a person got a house he/she also got a vote and too many new Catholic voters might undermine unionist control of some of these councils.
- The Stormont government also discriminated against Catholics. There were no Catholics in the Unionist Party and the government did not appoint Catholics to any of the top jobs in the civil service, the police or the law.
- There were few Catholics in the police (RUC) and none in the paramilitary 'B Specials' who patrolled country areas and harassed Catholics.

- The government also kept the **Special Powers Act** and used it mainly against nationalists.

Faith in O'Neill undermined

- Younger nationalists thought that neither the passive attitude of the Nationalist party nor the violence of the IRA had improved the situation.
- They put their hopes in O'Neill. If he could get the unionists to treat them fairly, they would settle down and work within Northern Ireland.
- **John Hume** was typical of this new attitude. Thanks to the educational opportunities of the Welfare State, he had become a teacher in Derry and was a leader of the University for Derry Committee.
- But O'Neill's decision about the university undermined the hope of people like him. They came to believe that only direct action would make the Unionist government give justice to the Catholic minority.
- The civil rights movement grew out of this feeling.



Key personality

John Hume (1937–)

- Derry-born John Hume came from a poor family but the Welfare State enabled him to get a good education and become a teacher.
- He joined the campaign to get a university for Derry and in January 1965 became chairman of the **University for Derry Committee** which opposed the Lockwood Committee's report.
- This experience convinced Hume that only direct action would make the Unionist government give justice to the Catholic minority and he became involved in the civil rights movement.
- After the violence that followed a civil rights march on 5 October 1968, he was elected on to the **Derry Citizens' Action Committee** and tried to ensure that later protests were peaceful.
- In 1969 he was elected to the Stormont parliament. In 1970 he worked with other anti-unionist MPs to create a new party, the **Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)** of which he was Deputy Leader.
- He was one of the first people to suggest peace would only come when a way was found for nationalists to share power with unionists.
- He was one of the SDLP delegates in the negotiations leading to the Sunningdale Agreement in December 1973. In the Executive he was Minister of Commerce, dealing with the economic problems caused by the Loyalist workers' strike.

- The failure of Sunningdale convinced Hume that any settlement in Northern Ireland must involve political leaders from the United States and Europe as well as from Northern Ireland, the republic and Britain.
- In 1979 Hume replaced Gerry Fitt as leader of the SDLP. He was also elected to the European Parliament and in 1983 to Westminster. These positions allowed him to meet foreign leaders and try to persuade them to support his ideas.
- He refused to get involved in attempts by the British government to find an internal solution to Northern Ireland's problems but he played an active part in Garret FitzGerald's New Ireland Forum in Dublin in 1983–1984.
- The 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement was the first sign that his ideas might be influencing developments. But this had only a limited impact while the Provisionals continued to bomb and kill.
- Hoping to persuade them to consider an alternative to violence, Hume secretly talked to Gerry Adams and other republicans. At the time the talks were heavily criticised but they laid the basis for the IRA ceasefire in 1994.

The Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ)

- The civil rights movement started with protests about housing in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone. In fifteen years the council built 194 houses but gave most of them to Protestants even though there were several hundred poor Catholic families living in crowded slums.
- Inspired by the civil rights movement in America, local women formed the **Homeless Citizens League** and began to picket council meetings.
- They were joined by **Patricia McCluskey** who, with her husband **Conn**, a local doctor, set up the **Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ)** in 1964.
- They collected facts about injustices to Catholics which they published in a pamphlet, *Northern Ireland: The Plain Truth*, and presented to British politicians.
- They argued that if Northern Catholics were part of the United Kingdom they were entitled to the same rights as other UK citizens.



Key personalities

Patricia and Conn McCluskey

- Patricia McShane worked as a social worker in Glasgow before returning to Northern Ireland to marry Conn McCluskey, a medical doctor, in Dungannon, Co. Tyrone.
- Disturbed by the refusal of the unionist-controlled town council to give council houses to Catholics, even when they were living in very bad conditions, she helped to found the **Homeless Citizens League** in 1963.

- To put pressure on local councils and the Unionist government to give justice to Catholics, the McCluskeys helped to found the **Campaign for Social Justice (CSJ)** in 1964. Unlike earlier Catholic groups, their aim was not Irish unity but civil rights. They argued that if they lived in the United Kingdom they were entitled to the same rights as other citizens of the UK.
- To support their case they systematically collected data about gerrymandering and discrimination in employment, housing and public appointments. In 1964 they published their findings in a pamphlet called *Northern Ireland: The Plain Truth*.
- The CSJ presented this to prominent politicians in Westminster where MPs set up a Campaign for Democracy in Ulster but the British and Northern Ireland governments took no effective action at this time.
- The McCluskeys were members of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) when it was founded in 1967 but withdrew from public life after its aims were achieved and violence erupted in 1970.

Ian Paisley and the ‘O’Neill must go’ campaign

- But O’Neill was powerless to deal with Catholic complaints. Even his little gestures towards them angered many unionists. **Ian Paisley** began an ‘O’Neill must go’ campaign.
- The violent language he used encouraged a group of extreme unionists, calling themselves the **Ulster Volunteer Force**, to murder three innocent Catholics.
- Paisley denounced the murders but his ‘O’Neill must go’ campaign still won the backing of a large part of the Unionist Party and of the Orange Order.



Key personality

Ian Paisley (1926–)

- A fundamentalist Protestant who believed the Bible to be the word of God, Ian Paisley founded the **Free Presbyterian Church** of which he was Moderator (head) in 1951.
- He first attracted public notice with attacks on the ecumenical movement for encouraging contacts between Protestants and Catholics. He saw O’Neill’s meeting with Lemass in 1965 as betraying unionists and launched an ‘O’Neill must go’ campaign.
- More unionists supported him after the civil rights movement began. His **Ulster Protestant Volunteers** held counter-demonstrations to coincide with civil rights marches. Although he always denied any link to loyalist paramilitaries, some of them supported him and claimed to be acting in his name.
- In 1968 Paisley founded the **Protestant Unionist Party**. In the 1969 he fatally undermined O’Neill by almost defeating him in the Stormont general election. O’Neill resigned soon after and Paisley then won his Stormont seat. In 1970 he was elected to the Westminster parliament as the MP for North Antrim.

- In September 1971 Paisley founded **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)**. Many members also belonged to his Free Presbyterian Church and gave unquestioning loyalty to the leader.
- The DUP opposed the reforms that Chichester-Clark and Brian Faulkner introduced in response to pressure from Britain.
- After direct rule was imposed in March 1972, the DUP worked for the restoration of Stormont. They opposed power-sharing but took their seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly elected in 1973. Although Paisley played little part in the Ulster Workers' Council strike that destroyed the Sunningdale Agreement, he got much of the credit.
- When the British rejected the demand of the Constitutional Convention (1975–1976) to restore Stormont, Paisley led another workers' strike but it was defeated in 1977. In spite of that he topped the poll in the first direct election to the European Parliament in 1979.
- The DUP and the Ulster Unionist Party joined together against the **1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement**. But Paisley's links to loyalist paramilitaries put off many moderate unionists.
- Paisley opposed the 'peace process', especially any talks with the SDLP or the Dublin government. He condemned the Downing Street Declaration of 1993, attacked the 1998 Good Friday Agreement and campaigned for a 'No' vote in the referendum that followed.

Gerry Fitt and the Labour government

- In London the Campaign for Social Justice had influenced members of the Labour Party which won the 1964 election. But the Prime Minister **Harold Wilson** refused to interfere in the North.
- This changed in 1966 when **Gerry Fitt** was elected as a Republican Labour MP for West Belfast. At Westminster, he insisted on asking questions about unionist discrimination against Northern Catholics.
- This encouraged Labour MPs to ask why the British taxpayer should subsidise a government responsible for so many injustices.

The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA)

- In 1967 frustrated Catholics decided to put pressure on the Unionist government and they set up the **Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA)**.
- Although most members came from a nationalist background, they had a wide variety of aims:
 - Some were moderate nationalists like John Hume and the McCluskeys, who wanted full civil rights and the end of discrimination.
 - There were also socialists, communists and militant students like **Bernadette Devlin**. They hoped for a socialist revolution.

- After the IRA's border campaign failed, some of its leaders turned to socialism. They too supported NICRA.
- NICRA demanded:
 - An end to the Special Powers Act and the B Specials
 - Council houses to be given on a fair points system
 - 'One man, one vote' in local elections and an end to gerrymandering.
- Unionists could not accept these demands which would have reduced their power, especially west of the Bann. Instead they claimed that NICRA was a republican and/or communist conspiracy to destroy Northern Ireland.

Point to note

'One man one vote' was a demand to end the household franchise, which only allowed people with a house to vote. Of course it included women too!



Key personality

Bernadette Devlin (1947–)

- Bernadette Devlin became involved in the civil rights movement while a student at Queen's University in Belfast in 1968.
- After taking part in the early demonstrations organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, she joined a radical leftwing student group, the **People's Democracy (PD)**.
- In the 1969 Stormont election, she stood against Chichester-Clark. Her youth and energetic way of speaking attracted media attention and she was selected as the 'unity' candidate to oppose the unionists in a by-election to the Westminster Parliament in 1969.
- She won the seat, and at 21 became the youngest woman ever elected to the House of Commons. She kept the seat until 1974.
- She took part in the 'Battle of the Bogside' in Derry in August 1969 and in 1970 received a six-month jail sentence for her activities. In the House of Commons, after Bloody Sunday (January 1972) she punched the British Home Secretary, Reginald Maudling, when he said that the British army fired in self-defence.
- After she lost her Westminster seat she helped to found the **Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP)** when it broke away from the Official IRA. But she later left it when it was involved in violence.
- In 1979 she stood for election to the European Parliament to publicise the blanket protests by republican prisoners opposed to the British government's policy of treating them as criminals. She got over 38,000 votes. This showed that many nationalists would support republicans if they rejected violence and it helped to encourage Sinn Féin's move towards a political solution.
- In 1981 loyalist paramilitaries attacked her and her husband Michael McAliskey, leaving them seriously wounded.

- After she recovered she continued to campaign on left-wing issues and criticised Sinn Féin's part in the peace process.

The beginning of violence

August 1968: The NICRA march in Dungannon

- In Dungannon, the local Nationalist MP, **Austin Currie**, encouraged Catholic families to squat in council houses. After the RUC evicted them the unionist-controlled council gave one house to an unmarried Protestant girl.
- To attract attention to the case, NICRA staged a march from Coalisland to Dungannon in August 1968. Led by Currie and Fitt, the marchers sang the American civil rights anthem, 'We Shall Overcome'.
- When Ian Paisley organised a counter-demonstration, the RUC stopped the NICRA marchers from getting to the centre of Dungannon.

October 1968: The clash in Derry

- In Derry a Housing Action Committee then persuaded NICRA to back its march on 5 October.
- The Apprentice Boys announced that they planned to march on the same day.
- The hardline Minister for Home Affairs **William Craig** then forbade both marches from going to the centre of Derry. Moderates like the McCluskeys and John Hume wanted to postpone the march for a week but local radicals insisted on going ahead.
- Only 400 people turned up but they included Gerry Fitt and three British Labour MPs who came to watch.
- The RUC blocked the marchers, then used their batons to beat the peaceful demonstrators, including Fitt.
- Within hours, images of the violence appeared on TV around the world. In response, reporters and camera men flocked to Northern Ireland to see what was going on.
- Across the North, Catholics organised demonstrations in sympathy with the Derry marchers.
- In Belfast radical students led by Michael Farrell set up the **Peoples' Democracy**. Influenced by Marxist ideas, they hoped to bring about a socialist revolution.

O'Neill introduces some reforms

- The London government warned O'Neill that they would withhold subsidies to Northern Ireland unless he introduced reforms.
- Reluctantly O'Neill agreed to:
 - Introduce a points system for council housing

- Review the Special Powers Act
- Set up a Development Commission to replace Derry city council.
- But he did not include ‘one man, one vote’.
- **William Craig** and some members of the Unionist Party criticised O’Neill for giving in to London.

The People’s Democracy march: January 1969

- On 9 December 1968, O’Neill appeared on TV, asking for support. Warning that ‘Ulster is at a crossroads’, he told unionists that their way of life depended on British subsidies and begged nationalists to give his reforms time to work.
- Unionists and nationalists backed O’Neill. NICRA called off marches and he felt strong enough to sack Craig.
- But the young radicals in the People’s Democracy were opposed to NICRA’s moderation. On 1 January they set out to march from Belfast to Derry.
- At **Burntollet Bridge** near Derry, hundreds of extreme unionists, including some off-duty B Specials, attacked them with stones and clubs. Films of the attack showed the RUC did little to protect the marchers.
- As they reached Derry there were riots. The RUC followed some rioters into the Catholic Bogside district and used excessive force against them.
- This undermined support for moderation among nationalists and Hume announced that NICRA marches would resume.

January to March 1969: The Cameron Report and the election

- O’Neill appointed Judge Cameron to enquire into the causes of the violence. (Later he produced the **Cameron Report** which was critical of unionist rule in Northern Ireland.)
- In protest, Brian Faulkner resigned and 12 Unionist MPs called for O’Neill to go. Hoping the public would back him, O’Neill called an election.
- But of the 39 unionist MPs elected, only 27 backed O’Neill. Ian Paisley almost defeated him in his own constituency.
- On the nationalist side several members of the civil rights campaign, including John Hume, won seats.

O’Neill’s resignation

- After the election, O’Neill agreed to accept ‘one man, one vote’ in local elections but violence increased.

- There were riots in Derry and one man, beaten by the RUC, died. A few days later loyalist paramilitaries set off bombs in Belfast's water mains to undermine support for O'Neill.
- More unionist MPs called for O'Neill to go and he resigned on 28 April 1969.
- O'Neill had few contacts among ordinary unionist voters and his stiff manner and aloof personality made it hard for him to win their support for the reforms that were essential to preserve unionist rule.

Exam questions

- 1 How effective was the contribution of Terence O'Neill to the affairs of Northern Ireland? *(HL 2012)*
- 2 Who was the more effective leader of Northern Ireland, Brookeborough or O'Neill? Argue your case by referring to both. *(HL 2009)*
- 3 Why did the Civil Rights movement emerge in Northern Ireland and how successful was it? *(HL 2008)*



6 The end of Stormont 1969–1972

James Chichester-Clark and the growth of violence

James Chichester-Clark becomes Prime Minister

- Brian Faulkner sought the leadership but the Unionist Party elected **James Chichester-Clark**. A landlord, like O'Neill, he lacked the political skill needed to restore peace to Northern Ireland.
- He promised to continue O'Neill's reforms and freed people imprisoned for rioting. In return NICRA called off its marches.

12 August 1969: The 'Battle of the Bogside'

- But he would not ban the annual Apprentice Boys parade in Derry, even though it seemed likely to cause trouble.
- In the Bogside, young men stockpiled stones and petrol bombs to defend themselves against the RUC.
- Rioting began after some Apprentice Boys threw pennies from the walls onto the Bogside below.
- Chichester-Clark called in the B Specials but that only made things worse.

The violence spreads

- The violence spread to Belfast. For four days Catholic and Protestant mobs in the Lower Falls and Ardoyne areas attacked each other.
- Seven people died, five of them Catholic; and 180 buildings, mostly Catholic-owned, were burnt out. The Catholics claimed the RUC sided with the Protestants.
- In the republic, people were horrified at the violence. On 13 August, Taoiseach **Jack Lynch** spoke on TV saying the South could '*no longer stand by and see innocent people injured*'. He sent Irish army units to the border to help refugees.
- Lynch's speech infuriated unionists who thought he meant to invade Northern Ireland. That made the violence worse.

The British army arrives

- After two days, Chichester-Clark asked the Prime Minister Harold Wilson to send in the British army to help the exhausted RUC.
- British soldiers arrived in Derry on 14 August and in Belfast the following day. Catholics welcomed them, hoping for protection.
- The troops restored peace, often by allowing barriers to be built between Catholic and Protestant areas.

The civil rights campaign's aims achieved

- Because British soldiers were there, the British government was now directly involved in Northern Ireland.
- Harold Wilson insisted that the unionists continue to reform and by the end of 1969 most of the aims of the civil rights movement had been achieved.
 - Local government was reformed. All citizens over 18 could vote and the fairer PR system replaced 'first past the post' voting.
 - A **Housing Executive** took over all public housing and was to distribute it on a fair points system.
 - An English police officer was sent to reorganise the RUC and Catholics were to be encouraged to join it.
 - The B Specials were replaced by the **Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR)**. It was controlled by the British army, not the unionists.

The growth of loyalist paramilitary groups

- Violence encouraged people in both communities to join paramilitary groups in order to defend their areas.
- Various Protestant paramilitaries had existed since the mid-1960s. In 1971 some of them combined into the **Ulster Defence Association (UDA)**. At its height in 1971–1973 it had about 40,000 members who manned barricades and patrolled their areas.
- A small group, who used various names like the **Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF)**, said they would kill republicans. But most of their victims were unlucky Catholics who crossed their path by chance. In 1972–1973 they killed over 200 people.

Point to note

Paramilitary: an unofficial army containing people who carry arms and wear uniforms.

The Provisional IRA (PIRA or Provos)

- During the 1960s the IRA's leaders had turned away from violence and supported the civil rights campaign.
- In 1969 when Protestant mobs attacked Catholic areas of Belfast, there was no one to defend them. The words '*IRA, I Ran Away*' appeared on walls. Belfast republicans resented their helplessness.
- In December 1969 at an IRA convention in Dublin, the leaders suggested that they recognise the Dublin and Belfast governments.
- Traditional republicans rejected this and the IRA split:
 - A majority stayed with the leadership and they became known as the '**Official IRA**'.
 - The minority elected a 'provisional executive' as a temporary measure and after that became known as the '**Provisional IRA**'.
- A similar split occurred in the republican party, Sinn Féin.

What the Provisionals believed

- The Provisionals were traditional republicans. For them the enemy was Britain. They believed that it was Britain which partitioned Ireland and kept partition in existence.
- Therefore they would fight the British until they left, after which, they thought, there would be a united Ireland with Protestants and Catholics living peacefully together.
- The Provisionals ignored the wishes of a million Northern unionists who considered themselves British and wanted to remain part of the United Kingdom.
- They got money and guns from Irish-Americans and from some members of Fianna Fáil who preferred their ideas to those of the socialist 'Officials'.

June 1970: A new government in Britain

- In Britain, Harold Wilson lost the general election in June 1970.
- The new Conservative government was led by **Edward Heath** and his Home Secretary **Reginald Maudling**.
- They knew little about Northern Ireland and left most decisions about it to the Unionist government and the British army commander. This led to the disastrous Falls Road curfew.

The Falls Road curfew: 3–4 July 1970

- After shots were fired at soldiers, the army imposed a 36-hour curfew on the Catholic Falls Road area of Belfast.

- 20,000 people were trapped in their houses as soldiers went from house to house, pulling up floor boards and smashing furniture. They found 100 guns.
- In an exchange of fire with the IRA, the army killed four Catholics.
- Afterwards they escorted two Unionist ministers around to see the result of the curfew.
- The 'Falls curfew' changed Catholic attitudes to the British army. It no longer seemed neutral but had sided with the unionists.
- Angry young nationalists joined the IRA and the Provisionals felt strong enough to begin bombing hotels and other public buildings. They wanted to undermine the economy of Northern Ireland so that the British would leave.

Founding the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)

- Most nationalists rejected violence and supported democratic politics but when the old Nationalist Party almost disappeared in 1969 they had no party to represent them.
- In August 1970, Gerry Fitt and John Hume got anti-unionist MPs to form the **Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP)**. It was led by Gerry Fitt, with Hume as his deputy.

The SDLP aims at 'power-sharing'

- By 1970, the aims of the civil rights movement had been achieved and a united Ireland was impossible, so what should the SDLP aim for?
- Usually political parties hope to form a government but that could not happen in Northern Ireland. Because over 60% of the people were Protestant and because most people voted along sectarian lines, a mainly Catholic party could not be part of the government.
- Hume said this was because of the unfair way Northern Ireland had been set up. To overcome this inbuilt injustice, he said that some way must be found to allow the two communities to **share power** between them.

The Alliance Party

- This idea also influenced the **Alliance Party** which was set up in 1970.
- Its founders hoped to create a non-sectarian party in which both Catholics and Protestants could work together for the good of all.
- But because Alliance also supported Northern Ireland's union with Britain, most of its supporters were moderate unionists, not nationalists.
- Although it never got more than 10% of the vote, that was enough to allow it to play a part in the formation of power-sharing governments.

Brian Faulkner and the end of Stormont

Brian Faulkner becomes Prime Minister

- Violence got worse in 1971. Early in the year Provisionals blew up a BBC radio transmitter, killing three men. In March they kidnapped and killed three teenage soldiers.
- The Unionist Party was divided about what to do.
 - **Brian Faulkner** and other moderates backed Chichester-Clark in continuing reforms.
 - **William Craig** and other hardline unionists wanted the army to get tough with the IRA and intern its leaders. Craig had a lot of support among unionists west of the Bann. They were upset at the loss of the B Specials whom they regarded as their defenders against republicans.
- After the young soldiers were killed, Chichester-Clark asked Heath to take tougher action against the IRA. When the request was refused he resigned.
- Faulkner defeated Craig to become the next Prime Minister.

Faulkner's policies

- A shrewd politician, Faulkner hoped to win over nationalists while also dealing with the men of violence.
- He offered to let members of the SDLP chair committees of the Stormont parliament which oversaw the work of the government. This was a limited form of power-sharing.
- He banned all marches across Northern Ireland, much to the annoyance of the Orange Order.
- But he got the British government to let soldiers fire on rioters.
- The SDLP began talks on his committee idea but withdrew after the army killed two innocent men during riots in Derry.

Internment: 9 August 1971

- Faulkner thought internment would end the violence as it had ended the IRA's 1950s border campaign. After 300 bombs went off, mostly from the Provisionals, British leaders agreed with him.
- On 9 August soldiers and RUC Special Branch officers rounded up 340 men and took them to an old army camp at **Long Kesh** for interrogation.
- The operation was very badly managed.

Point to note

Internment:
rounding up people
suspected of violence and
imprisoning them without trial
for as long as was needed to restore
peace. Both Irish governments
used internment against the IRA
during World War II and
again in the 1950s.

- It was completely one-sided. No loyalists were arrested, even though they too had engaged in violence.
- Most of the men arrested were not active in the IRA and most current IRA leaders escaped.
- Several men arrested were subjected to what the European Court later described as ‘inhuman and degrading treatment’.
- By 1972 over 2,000 had been rounded up though most were freed within days.

Point to note

The government later built a new prison at **Long Kesh** and renamed it **The Maze** to improve its image.

The impact of internment

- To protest against internment, the SDLP organised demonstrations, withdrew from local councils and supported a rent and rates strike.
- They hoped to keep the protests peaceful but internment unleashed a new wave of violence.
- There were riots between the army and the two IRAs. The worst were in Belfast. On 10 August alone 11 people died and over 400 houses were burnt.
- 7,000 Catholic refugees fled for safety to the South and several hundred Protestants fled to Britain.
- The number of deaths rose sharply. From January to 9 August 1971, 34 people died. For the rest of the year the death toll was 150.
- Thousands moved out of mixed housing estates to segregated areas, well away from people of the other community.
- The Provisionals grew as Catholics turned to them for protection. They became more confident because they thought they were winning and expanded their bombing campaign.
- Loyalist paramilitary groups came together to form the UDA. They responded to IRA violence, though they used assassination more often than bombs.

Points to note

Rent strike: council tenants would not pay rent.

Rates strike: property owners would not pay local taxes (rates) to councils.

Bloody Sunday in Derry: 30 January 1972

- In Derry, moderate nationalists persuaded the British army not to enter the ‘no-go areas’ of the Bogside and Creggan.
- They hoped this would keep the peace but most nights young men (whom the army called **Young Derry Hooligans**) went out to throw petrol bombs and stones at the soldiers. They retaliated with rubber bullets and CS gas.
- IRA snipers also fired on the soldiers from the ‘no-go’ areas. In January 1972 there were over 80 shooting incidents and the IRA killed two soldiers.

- General Ford, the army commander, wanted to deal with the Young Derry Hooligans. He brought in the Parachute Regiment to help.
- His chance came when the Civil Rights movement organised an illegal anti-internment march on Sunday 30 January.
- About 15,000 people turned up. Both IRAs later said they told their people to leave their guns at home.
- Halfway through the march, the Parachute Regiment fired into the crowd, killing 13 men and wounding 12 men and one woman.
- Later the soldiers claimed that someone had fired on them first but no one in the crowd heard any other shots, no guns were found on any of the victims and no soldier was injured.

Reactions to Bloody Sunday

- Like internment, Bloody Sunday made things worse. Many young people joined the Provisional IRA and it expanded its bombing campaign.
- In London, when the House of Commons met, Bernadette Devlin ran across to slap Maudling in the face.
- In the South, Jack Lynch declared a day of mourning. There were protest marches and on 2 February a mob burnt down the British embassy.
- In February the Official IRA set off a bomb in the London headquarters of the Parachute Regiment. It killed a Catholic priest, a gardener and five women who worked in the canteen.
- The London government asked Lord Chief Justice Widgery to investigate events in Derry. The **Widgery Report** defended the soldiers' actions and nationalists regarded it as a whitewash.

The end of Stormont: 23 March 1972

- Up to Bloody Sunday, Prime Minister Edward Heath hoped that Faulkner could sort out Northern Ireland's problems. After Bloody Sunday, he began to look for an alternative policy.
- He considered various options like a united Ireland or giving part of Northern Ireland to the South (re-partition) but rejected them all in favour of **power-sharing** between unionists and nationalists.
- On 22 March, Heath called Faulkner to London and told him they planned to take control of the police. Rather than accept this, the Unionist government resigned.

Points to note

Devolved government: a Belfast-based government dealing with Northern Ireland issues and overseen by the British government.

Direct rule: The British ruling Northern Ireland directly from London.

- At once Heath appointed **William Whitelaw** to be the **Secretary of State for Northern Ireland**. He would run the North directly from London.
- This decision ended 50 years of **devolved government** in Northern Ireland and replaced it with **direct rule**.

Exam question

- 1 What were Brian Faulkner's strengths and weaknesses as a political leader?

(HL 2013)



7 William Whitelaw and the search for peace 1972–1974

William Whitelaw and the impact of ‘direct rule’

William Whitelaw’s aims

- William Whitelaw was the first **Secretary of State for Northern Ireland** under direct rule. A leading English Conservative, he knew little about Northern Ireland but he learned quickly.
- Whitelaw hoped to win the trust of the Catholic community by restraining the British army, ending internment and getting the IRA to stop its violence.
- But to keep the trust of the Protestants, he had to restore order and send the police into the ‘no-go’ areas from which the IRA launched most of its attacks.
- Once peace was restored he hoped to organise a power-sharing government in Northern Ireland and end direct rule.

The Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) after direct rule

- The loss of Stormont badly damaged the once mighty **Ulster Unionist Party**. For 50 years it had won every election in Northern Ireland without effort, so it had not modernised its organisation.
- Party leaders did not control its governing body, the **Ulster Unionist Council**, and in elections, each constituency could pick any candidate it wished without consulting the leaders.
- As the violence got worse, the UUP lost moderate members to the Alliance Party and hardline unionists to William Craig’s Vanguard and Ian Paisley’s Democratic Unionist Party.

William Craig and Ulster Vanguard

- After direct rule began, one of Faulkner’s ministers, William Craig, left the UUP and set up the **Vanguard Party** to campaign against it.
- At first Craig looked powerful but he was not a clever politician.

- His close links with loyalist paramilitaries frightened off moderate unionists.
- And working-class unionists did not like his idea that Northern Ireland should become independent of Britain because they feared losing British subsidies.
- Although Vanguard helped to destroy the Sunningdale Agreement, Vanguard disappeared soon afterwards.

Ian Paisley and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)

- In 1972, Ian Paisley seemed less important than Craig but he was a shrewder politician. When he saw that voters did not like his views he changed them.
- At first he formed the **Protestant Unionist Party** and became an MP at Stormont and Westminster. But many unionists disliked his strident anti-Catholicism and he gradually toned it down.
- He also began to appeal to working-class Protestants who felt that the UUP had neglected them.
- This led to the foundation of the **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** in 1971. It was a tightly disciplined party, with one undisputed leader and a band of devoted followers, many drawn from Paisley's own Free Presbyterian Church.
- After direct rule, Paisley first suggested that Northern Ireland be integrated with Britain. But this was never popular and he soon replaced it with a demand for the restoration of Stormont.

Direct rule and the nationalist community

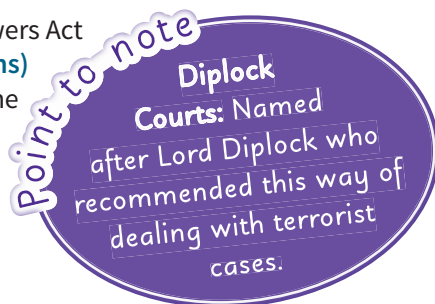
- Most nationalists welcomed the end of Stormont:
 - Moderates like the SDLP hoped for peace and power-sharing.
 - Both wings of the IRA saw it as a victory for their violence. One more push, they believed, could drive out the British and bring about Irish unity. Declaring 'the war goes on', they stepped up their bombing and shooting.

Violence intensifies

- Rioting continued, mainly in Belfast and Derry. People died in crossfire between the army or loyalists and the IRA. IRA car bombs killed innocent passersby from both communities. On 14 April alone, the Provisionals set off 30 bombs across the North.
- Loyalists retaliated with bombs but also tortured and killed individual Catholics who crossed their path.
- This led to a demand for peace. In Belfast 50,000 people signed a petition calling on both wings of the IRA to put aside their arms.
- On 29 May the Official IRA called a ceasefire but the Provisionals would not agree because they thought a truce would undermine the will to go on fighting.

Whitelaw's reforms

- Whitelaw hoped that ending internment would bring peace. He freed hundreds of internees and gave 'special category status' to those who remained. That meant they could wear their own clothes and did not have to work.
- He replaced the old and discredited Special Powers Act with the **Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act**. It introduced the **Diplock Courts** in which one judge, sitting without a jury, tried political cases. This was necessary as terrorist groups could easily intimidate jury members.



Talks with the Provisionals fail

- Whitelaw also made contact with the Provisionals. On 26 June they called a ceasefire and six leading Provisionals, including **Gerry Adams**, met Whitelaw secretly in London.
- They asked Whitelaw to promise that the British would leave Northern Ireland within three years. He said that was impossible because the British could not abandon the unionists against their wishes.
- Some Provisionals wanted to continue the ceasefire but others, including Adams, did not. They were afraid it would let the British army gain the upper hand.

Bloody Friday, Operation Motorman and bombs in Claudy

- On 9 July, during riots in Belfast, Provisionals opened fire and violence resumed. Ten people died over the next few days.
- On the afternoon of **Friday 21 July**, as people were out shopping, the Provisionals set off 18 bombs in Belfast as well as three in Derry and 16 in other areas. They killed nine people and seriously injured hundreds of others.
- Meanwhile, five more people died during fierce gun battles between the Provisionals and the British army.
- People across Ireland were horrified at the scale of the slaughter on **Bloody Friday**.
- This allowed Whitelaw to launch **Operation Motorman** on 30 July. The army took over the 'no-go' areas in Belfast and Derry which had been largely controlled by the IRA. After this it was harder for the Provisionals to build bombs or attack the army.
- On 31 July the Provisionals retaliated by leaving three car bombs in the mixed and peaceful village of **Claudy**, near Derry. Nine people died, five Protestants and four Catholics, and thirty were horribly injured.
- July 1972, when 92 people died, was the worst month of the Troubles.

Loyalist violence

- Loyalist violence also increased, especially as they heard that Whitelaw had talked to the Provisionals. They petrol bombed Catholic homes and killed Catholics who crossed their path.
- In December 1972 they set off bombs in the republic, killing two people in Dublin and two more in Cavan.
- Overall, 467 people died violently in 1972, which was the worst year of the Troubles.

The impact of the Troubles on the South

- Before the Troubles began, many people in the South knew little about Northern Ireland but they had plenty of prejudices.
- They did not understand that unionists felt British and wanted to be part of the United Kingdom.
- They felt Ireland should be united and blamed the British, not the unionists, for partition.
- They knew about discrimination against Catholics and backed the civil rights movement.
- At first southerners even sympathised with the IRA and believed they were continuing the struggle that won independence for the rest of the country in 1921.
- But from 1972 attitudes changed. The aims of the civil rights campaign had been achieved. Even the Stormont government was no more. And still republican violence continued.
- Many in the South were sickened when IRA car bombs killed innocent men, women and children. Was a united Ireland worth such slaughter?

Dealing with the IRA

- These changing views made it easier for southern governments to take a tougher line against the IRA.
- They strengthened the **Offences Against the State Act** which had been used against the IRA since 1939. They also set up the '**Special Criminal Court**'. In it, three judges, acting without a jury, tried people accused of IRA activity.
- They closed down the Sinn Féin offices in Dublin and stopped RTÉ broadcasting interviews with IRA leaders.
- Irish army and Garda patrols were stepped up along the border, though it was far too long and winding to be closed completely.

The republic changes as a result of Northern developments

- As southerners became better informed about Northern Ireland, they began to understand the unionists' fear of Irish unity and their desire to preserve their British identity.
- They also became aware of the things about the South that the unionists disliked. These included the power of the Catholic Church and the ban on contraception and divorce.
- This led to a debate:
 - Should these things be changed?
 - And if so, was that because they were obstacles to unity or because they were bad in themselves?
- In 1972 a large majority voted in a referendum to remove the 'special status' that the Constitution gave to the Roman Catholic Church.
- Later the law against contraception was eased. A referendum to remove the ban on divorce in the Constitution failed in 1986 but a second one succeeded in 1995.
- People also began to look again at the idea of Irish unity. Some even suggested that it would be better to encourage the two communities in the North to share power and live as good neighbours with the South.

Case Study

Case Study: The failure of the Sunningdale Agreement

Seeking peace

- In 1972 the British thought direct rule was only temporary. They hoped to end it as soon as the **constitutional politicians** in Northern Ireland agreed to share power.
- All through 1972 Whitelaw talked to them behind the scenes. By 1973 he was ready to act.

Point to note

Constitutional parties/ politicians: political groups and leaders who operate peacefully and within the law.

The 'Border Poll' and the White Paper

- To reassure unionists, Whitelaw organised a referendum on the border (known as the 'border poll') in March 1973.
- Nationalists, who were still protesting about internment, did not vote. Of the people who did, 99% voted to keep Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom.

- Whitelaw then produced a **White Paper** called *Northern Ireland Constitutional Proposals*. It said:
 - Northern Ireland would remain part of the United Kingdom as long as the majority wanted that.
 - It would have an **Assembly**, elected by PR.
 - The Assembly would elect a **Northern Ireland Executive** (government) but it must contain representatives from both communities within Northern Ireland (i.e. power-sharing).
 - London would then hand over control of health, education and local government. Control over the police and courts could be handed over later if the Executive was successful.
 - To satisfy nationalists, a **Council of Ireland** would be set up to encourage co-operation with the republic.

Point to note

'Assembly' was used instead of 'parliament' and 'Executive' instead of 'government' to stress the change from the old Stormont.

Point to note

White Paper: when a government wants to consult about an issue, it produces a 'White Paper' saying what it intends to do. This allows people to comment and suggest changes.

Responses to the White Paper

- The SDLP welcomed the White Paper because it supported power-sharing.
- Republicans rejected it because it accepted partition.
- Faulkner and moderate unionists gave it a cautious welcome but in the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) a minority led by **Harry West** opposed power-sharing.
- Craig, Paisley and the Orange Order condemned it completely.

The Assembly election: 28 June 1973

- Elections to the new Assembly were held on 28 June. They showed up the divisions on the unionist side.
- While Paisley and Craig were united against power-sharing, Faulkner's UUP was divided. He asked candidates to sign a pledge to follow him but some constituencies picked candidates who sided with West and refused to sign the pledge.
- Faulkner tried to reassure doubters by promising not to share power with people 'whose **primary objective** is to break the union with Great Britain'. He later claimed this only meant Sinn Féin but some unionists thought he meant SDLP too.

- The election results disappointed Whitelaw.
 - 1 The 'neutral' parties, Alliance and the NILP, won only nine seats.
 - 2 Faulkner only won 24 seats compared with 26 for the combined anti power-sharing unionists. Later two of the 24 changed sides.
 - 3 The SDLP did well but republicans boycotted the election, so it was impossible to say how much support they had among nationalists.

Party	SDLP	Alliance	NILP	UUP (Faulkner, pledged)	UUP (West, unpledged)	DUP (Paisley)	Vanguard (Craig)	Loyalists
No. of seats	19	8	1	24	8	8	7	3
% of vote	22%	10.5%	2%	29%	10%	10%	11.5%	4.2%

Agreeing to talk

- When the Assembly met, DUP and Vanguard members attacked other unionists, often physically.
- But a majority favoured talks. It was agreed to have them in two phases:
 - 1 First the Northern Irish parties would agree among themselves to set up an Executive and accept a Council of Ireland.
 - 2 Then they would meet with the British and Irish governments to decide how much power the Council of Ireland would have.

Talking about an Executive

- Whitelaw chaired the first phase of talks. They began on 5 October and ended on 21 November 1973.
- Six unionists led by Faulkner, six SDLP members led by Gerry Fitt and three members of the Alliance Party took part.
- The issues before them were:
 - 1 Forming an Executive (government)
 - 2 The powers of a Council of Ireland.
- On the Executive, the main problem was how many ministries each party should get. In the end it was agreed that there would be six ministers from the UUP, four from the SDLP and one from Alliance.
- There was disagreement about how much power a Council of Ireland should have.
 - Faulkner wanted it to contain only members of the two Irish governments and to deal with uncontroversial issues like tourism.
 - John Hume and the SDLP wanted it to contain members of the Dáil and the

Assembly and deal with important issues like the police.

- Whitelaw backed the SDLP, hoping this would undermine support for the IRA. Reluctantly, Faulkner gave way.
- The SDLP agreed to end the rent and rate strike which had begun after internment.

Starting talks at Sunningdale: 6–9 December 1973

- The second phase of the negotiations took place in England. The British and Irish governments and the Northern parties met at **Sunningdale** between 6 and 9 December. Here the main issue was the Council of Ireland.
- Shortly before it began, Prime Minister Edward Heath replaced Whitelaw with **Francis Pym**. This robbed the talks of Whitelaw's negotiating skill and experience. Pym knew little about Northern Ireland and played no part in the talks.
- Heath presided over the negotiations. He was impatient with the unionists and admired John Hume. He backed his line on the Council of Ireland.
- The Irish delegation was led by the Taoiseach, **Liam Cosgrave**, whose Fine Gael/Labour coalition government was formed in February. They too supported John Hume's views.

The Sunningdale Agreement

- Faulkner was forced to agree to a Council of Ireland with strong powers but he hoped for something in return. He wanted Cosgrave to promise to:
 - 1 **Extradite** IRA people to Northern Ireland to stand trial there
 - 2 Remove **Articles 2 and 3** from the Irish Constitution. These articles offended unionists because they claimed that the Dublin government had the right to rule the whole island of Ireland.
- But Cosgrave could not do either of these things. He pointed out that:
 - 1 It was the courts, not the government, that could order a person to be extradited
 - 2 Articles 2 and 3 could only be changed by a referendum. Fianna Fáil was bound to oppose the change so it would not pass. Anyway, he assured Faulkner that the two articles were only words and had no practical meaning.
- In the end all Faulkner got was:
 - 1 A promise that Cosgrave would acknowledge the right of Northern Ireland to exist as long as the unionist majority wanted it
 - 2 A promise to do more about policing.
- The lack of concessions made it very difficult for Faulkner to sell the Agreement to a sceptical unionist community.

Opposition to power-sharing

- On 6 December, as the talks began in Sunningdale, the DUP, Vanguard, Harry West's followers and the Orange Order formed the **United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC)** to oppose power-sharing.
- After the Agreement was signed, the **Ulster Unionist Council** (the governing body of Faulkner's party) met to discuss it. By 427 votes to 374 they voted to reject a Council of Ireland.
- After this defeat, Faulkner resigned as party leader and was replaced by Harry West. With his remaining pro-Agreement followers, he set up the **Unionist Party of Northern Ireland**.

Point to note

Extradite: send a person accused of a crime in another country to that country to stand trial.

Power-sharing begins

- The power-sharing Executive took over on 1 January 1974. **Brian Faulkner** was **Chief Minister** and **Gerry Fitt** was his deputy.
- At first many unionists were prepared to give the Executive a chance to prove itself. But unfortunately events in Northern Ireland, in the republic and in Britain made this impossible.

Undermining the Executive

- In the North, the Provisionals believed they were on the way to victory and they continued to bomb and kill.
- In the republic a former Fianna Fáil minister, **Kevin Boland**, went to the Supreme Court claiming the Agreement was against the Constitution because it accepted partition. Although Boland lost, the case damaged Faulkner because:
 - 1 In court Cosgrave's lawyers had to claim that Articles 2 and 3 were important even though he had tried to persuade unionists that they were not
 - 2 Cosgrave could not make the statement on the existence of Northern Ireland which he had promised until it was over. When he finally issued it on 13 March, it was too late.
- But the worst blow to the Executive was Edward Heath's decision on 28 February to call a **general election** in the United Kingdom.
- The United Ulster Unionist Council treated the election like a referendum on the Agreement. They put up just one anti-Agreement candidate in each of the North's 12 Westminster constituencies, while all the pro-Agreement parties competed with each other.
- The result undermined Faulkner's credibility. The UUUC won 11 of the 12 seats and 51% of the votes. Paisley, Craig and West were all elected, with only Gerry Fitt winning on the pro-Agreement side.

A Labour government

- In Britain, Heath lost the election and Harold Wilson returned to power. He appointed **Merlyn Rees** to be Northern Secretary.
- Rees, a hesitant and indecisive man, promised to support the Sunningdale Agreement.

The Ulster Workers' Council (UWC)

- Although weakened by these blows, the Executive continued to work.
- This infuriated some loyalist workers who formed the **Ulster Workers' Council (UWC)**. Many of them worked in electric power stations where past discrimination against Catholics meant that almost all the workers were Protestants.
- On 15 May, after the Assembly passed a vote of confidence in the Executive, they called a strike.

The UWC strike: May 1974

- The strikers controlled the power stations. Within days they had cut electricity output by 60%. As a result, people could not cook, factories closed, sewerage plants did not work and in hospitals, life support systems began to break down.
- Loyalist paramilitaries supported the strikers. They formed 'tartan gangs' who blocked roads and 'persuaded' workers not to go to work.
- They were probably also responsible for bombs that went off in Dublin and Monaghan on 17 May, killing 32 people.
- The UWC did not interfere in the strike and Rees failed to order the British army to dismantle the barricades. This was partly because it was soon clear that many Protestants supported the strikers.
- Their support grew even stronger after Wilson, in a badly judged broadcast on 25 May, accused Northern Irish people of 'sponging' on the British taxpayer.

The Executive falls

- Hoping to buy time, Faulkner begged the SDLP and the Dublin government to reduce the powers of the Council of Ireland. They agreed but it was too late.
- When the strikers heard of a plan to use the army to protect petrol supplies, they cut electricity supplies even more.
- Fearing a breakdown in society, the Executive resigned.

Why did the Sunningdale experiment fail?

- The main reason for the failure was that a clear majority of unionists opposed the Agreement and supported the UWC strike.
- They feared the Council of Ireland would force them into a united Ireland. The Boland case in Dublin strengthened these fears as did unwise speeches about Irish reunification from some nationalist politicians.
- Some unionists also opposed it because of power-sharing. They could not accept men like Gerry Fitt, whom they blamed for the fall of Stormont, being part of their government.
- Nationalists blamed Merlyn Rees for not using the police and army against the strikers. This might have worked if he had acted quickly but he hesitated and once the strike was fully under way it is unlikely it would have been any good.
- He hesitated for several reasons:
 - The result of the general election showed a majority of unionists were against the Agreement.
 - Army commanders did not want to take on the loyalists while they were still fighting the IRA.
 - The fact that the Agreement was put in place by the Conservatives made Labour leaders less concerned about its fate.

The 'double veto' leads to stalemate

- Rees made another attempt to get power-sharing in 1975. He held elections to a **Constitutional Convention** in which anti power-sharing unionists, including Craig and Paisley, won a clear majority.
- The SDLP boycotted the Convention and the unionists demanded a return to the Stormont system. The British turned this down.
- The failure of the Sunningdale Agreement and the Convention showed what people called 'the double veto'.
 - Nationalists could stop unionists getting the majority rule they wanted
 - Unionists could stop nationalists getting the power-sharing they wanted.
- As a result, the rest of the 1970s was a period of stalemate. Direct rule, which the British hoped would be temporary, continued and there was little political action.

Question

- 1 What led to the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and why did it fail?

Exam question

- 1 Account for the fall of Stormont and the collapse of the power-sharing Executive 1973–1974.

(HL 2007)

Case Study questions

Case Study to which the documents relate: *The Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing executive, 1973–1974*

Study the documents and answer the questions below.

Document A

Brian Faulkner, chief executive of the power-sharing executive, brought about by the Sunningdale Agreement, recalls the Ulster Workers' Council strike.

On Monday morning, 20 May 1974, I was told by the police that there were so many barricades on roads between my home and Stormont that I would have to be flown in by helicopter. As we travelled across County Down I could see beneath me the evidence of paramilitary activity.

Even at Stormont, as we came in to land, I could see a barricade within sight of Merlyn Rees' office. I went in to the Secretary of State [Rees] and demanded, angrily, that something be done to remove all the barricades; but he insisted, at first, that the security forces had the problem under control and that the roads were, in general, clear.

I ended the argument by taking him to the window and pointing to the barricade at Dundonald House; and, in agitation, he turned to instruct his officials to have it cleared. Shortly afterwards a bulldozer arrived and pushed the obstruction aside; but, in an hour or so, it was up again at the same spot.

(Edited extract from Brian Faulkner, *Memoirs of a Statesman*, London, 1978)

Document B

Merlyn Rees, the British government's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, writes of that time.

Our very position in the province was in question. I had personally been warned of an assassination attempt; and I, with my small Northern Ireland British staff, found it difficult to travel the roads. We had tried 'chopping' [traveling by helicopter] from the Culloden Hotel, but working from there at night, in inadequate quarters, had been proving difficult.

We, therefore, decided to camp in the Speaker's House at Stormont. The conditions were elementary – camp beds, tinned food – and the atmosphere was reminiscent of periods in my war service. We were isolated, working long hours, and I do not think Westminster realised how difficult that time was for us. Every report we received showed the deteriorating situation. Effective administration was in the hands of the strikers.

(Edited extract from Merlyn Rees, *Northern Ireland: A Personal Perspective*, London, 1985)

1

- (a) According to document A, why did Brian Faulkner travel to Stormont by helicopter?
- (b) According to document A, what sort of activity did Faulkner see on the ground?
- (c) According to document A, what demand did Faulkner make in the Secretary of State's office?
- (d) In document B, what complaint did Merlyn Rees have against the British government?

(20)

2

(a) Do the documents support the claim, made by Rees in document A, that the authorities were in control of security? Explain your answer, referring to both documents.

(b) From the evidence of the documents, who showed better leadership, Faulkner or Rees? Give reasons for your answer.

(20)

3 Should a historian accept document A as a reliable historical source? Give reasons for your answer.

(20)

4 What were the difficulties associated with implementing the Sunningdale Agreement?

(40)



8 Stalemate 1975–1979

Roy Mason's security and economic policies

Roy Mason

- In September 1976 **Roy Mason**, a tough former miner, replaced Merlyn Rees as Northern Ireland Secretary.
- Aware of the 'double veto' he did not look for a political solution.
- Instead he planned to strengthen security and develop the North's economy in the hope that jobs might draw people away from violence.

Mason deals with the second loyalist strike

- In May 1977 Ian Paisley called another strike to demand the return of Stormont.
- Mason acted decisively. He sent soldiers into the power stations and told the RUC to remove barricades as soon as they were built.
- After a few days the strike collapsed. This was partly because of Mason's action, but also because fewer unionists supported this strike.

Mason's anti-terrorism policies

- After IRA bombs in England killed 28 people in 1973–1974, Westminster passed the **Prevention of Terrorism Act**. It allowed the police to question suspected terrorists for seven days before they were charged.
- Northern Ireland police questioned suspects at Castlereagh in Belfast and Gough Barracks in Armagh. They used the information they got to bring people before the Diplock courts. But there were rumours that suspects were beaten during interrogation.
- Mason continued to free internees but he ended '**special category status**' for anyone sentenced by the Diplock courts. They were to be treated like ordinary criminals. IRA prisoners objected to this and it led eventually to the hunger strikes.
- The deaths of young soldiers in Northern Ireland led to a 'troops out' movement in Britain. To counter it, Mason gave the RUC and the Ulster Defence Regiment (UDR) a bigger part in combating violence. This was called '**Ulsterisation**'. From then on the army was mainly involved in patrolling the border areas.

- By 1979 Mason could claim some success. More IRA people were in jail and the level of violence had fallen. Only about 100 people died violently in 1977 and in 1978, compared with over 500 in 1972.

Mason's economic policy

- The North's economy did badly in the 1970s. Unemployment averaged 10%, though in some Catholic areas 50% of the men had no job.
- Many multinational firms closed and the violence discouraged others from starting up. In 1974 British government had to take over the shipbuilders Harland and Wolff to stop them closing.
- Mason increased government spending and gave generous grants to community groups and local leisure centres. He protected Harland and Wolff and tried to bring in foreign firms.
- One apparent success was the plan by an American, **John DeLorean**, to build a new type of car in Belfast. But after the government had spent millions, the plan collapsed when DeLorean was charged with embezzling the funds.

Unionist power struggles

- After the UUUC defeated Sunningdale, it soon fell apart as Craig, West and Paisley competed for the leadership of the unionist community.
- **Craig's Vanguard Party** was quickly discredited by its links to loyalist paramilitaries and Craig's poor leadership.
- **West** led the traditionally strong **Ulster Unionist Party** (UUP) but he too was a poor leader and was hampered by the party's weak organisation. In the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979, he lost out to Paisley.
- He then resigned and was replaced by **James Molyneaux**. He thought Northern Ireland should be more fully integrated into Britain and spent much of his time in Westminster.
- **Ian Paisley** quickly recovered from the defeat of the second loyalist strike and his party gained support in local elections at the expense of the UUP. His victory over West in the European elections saw him emerge as an important unionist spokesman.



Key personality

James Molyneaux (1920–)

- Molyneaux served in the RAF in World War II, then became a farmer in Co. Antrim. An active member of the Orange Order and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), he was elected to Westminster in 1970.

- He opposed the Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing Executive.
- While Harry West was leader of the UUP in Northern Ireland, Molyneaux led the Ulster Unionist MPs at Westminster.
- When the Labour government needed extra votes in the late 1970s he supported them in return for a number of concessions to unionists. The main one was to increase the number of Northern Ireland seats at Westminster from 12 to 17.
- In 1979 he replaced West as UUP leader. The party was under threat from Paisley's DUP and divided about what policy to follow. Should it work for Northern Ireland to be further integrated into Britain or look for a return to devolved government?
- Molyneaux favoured integration to Britain but most of his followers wanted to restore Stormont.
- He opposed power-sharing and any involvement with the republic and he trusted **Margaret Thatcher** to defend the unionists.
- Because of this he did not take part in the talks that led to the 1985 **Anglo-Irish Agreement** which took him completely by surprise.
- He joined with Ian Paisley in opposing it. As part of the protest he resigned his seat in Westminster but won it back in the subsequent by-election. He drew back from the protests when the DUP seemed to be working with loyalist paramilitaries.
- In the early 1990s he led the UUP delegation to the all-party talks with the main political parties in Northern Ireland (apart from Sinn Féin) and the London and Dublin governments. When these ended in failure, the British and Irish governments pursued an alternative strategy which led to the Downing Street Declaration of 15 December 1993.
- Though sceptical, Molyneaux gave it a guarded welcome. Discontent with his leadership began to emerge and in 1995 he resigned.
- He remained active in politics, opposing the Good Friday Agreement and power-sharing.
- A quiet, rather grey man, Molyneaux led the UUP for 16 years but his desire to integrate Northern Ireland into Britain was not shared by the majority of his followers.

The nationalists after Sunningdale

The SDLP after Sunningdale

- On the nationalist side, Gerry Fitt resigned from the SDLP in 1979 because he felt it had become too nationalist. **John Hume** then became leader. He was also elected to the Westminster and European parliaments.

- He used these positions to win influence over political leaders in Britain, the EU and the United States. He wanted them to support a political settlement in Northern Ireland which would involve:
 - Nationalists accepting that a united Ireland could only come with the consent of the unionists in Northern Ireland
 - The British saying that they would do nothing to stop a united Ireland if the unionists agreed to it.
- This he thought would open the way to another power-sharing Executive.

Gerry Adams and the reorganisation of the Provisional IRA

- In the early 1970s most IRA leaders were based in Dublin. This changed after they agreed to a ceasefire in 1975. Northern republicans disapproved and they took over the leadership.
- The most significant of the new leaders were **Gerry Adams** and **Martin McGuinness**. They thought that republicans must engage in a ‘long war’ to force the British to leave Northern Ireland.
- They reorganised the Provisionals. Small **Active Service Units** (ASUs), which engaged in bombing, murder and bank raids, replaced bigger battalions. It was harder for the police to infiltrate the smaller units and captured members could only give information about their own ASU.
- Adams also believed in political action. He encouraged the IRA’s political wing, **Sinn Féin**, to become active in local politics, helping nationalists with issues like housing and jobs.



Key personality

Gerry Adams (1948–)

- Belfast-born Adams was working as a barman when violence broke out in 1969.
- He became involved in the IRA and was interned in 1971 because the RUC believed he was the local commander.
- He was freed in 1972 to take part in secret talks with William Whitelaw. They failed when the republicans demanded that the British withdraw from Northern Ireland.
- The Provisionals resumed their violence. Adams was re-arrested in 1973 and spent four years in the Maze prison. While there he developed the idea that republicans should have a political programme as well as the ‘armed struggle’.
- Released in 1977, he remained at the centre of the republican movement though he denied that he was in the IRA. In 1978 he became Vice-President of Sinn Féin and was elected President in 1983.

- Bobby Sands' election to Westminster won over more republicans to his idea of political action. In 1982 Adams and four other Sinn Féin candidates won seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly elections and others won seats in Dáil Éireann. In 1983 Adams took Gerry Fitt's seat in Westminster.
- The Sinn Féin candidates refused to take their seats in any of these assemblies (**abstention**). Adams believed that abstention prevented further Sinn Féin success and in 1986 he got the party to end it in relation to Dáil Éireann. Although more traditional republicans left Sinn Féin, the majority stayed with Adams.
- In the later 1980s talks between Adams and John Hume helped to convince republicans that they could gain more from peace than violence.
- That led to an IRA ceasefire in August 1994 and opened the way for talks between all the parties in Northern Ireland and the British and Irish governments.
- As leaders of Sinn Féin Adams and McGuinness were careful to move slowly in the direction of peace and they skilfully kept the majority of republicans united behind them in spite of abandoning traditional republican ideas and policies.

The Peace People

- Opposition to the Provisionals' brutal bombings and killings led to the emergence of the **Peace People**.
- After an IRA getaway car killed three children, their aunt, **Mairead Corrigan**, and **Betty Williams** set up the Peace People to campaign against violence.
- They organised marches in both communities and the two women won the Nobel Peace Prize but the movement fizzled out after quarrels about future policy.

Exam question

1 What were the social and economic effects of the 'Troubles'?

(HL 2009)

Margaret Thatcher, the hunger strikes and the Anglo-Irish Agreement 1979–1985

Margaret Thatcher's Northern Ireland policies

Margaret Thatcher

- In 1979, the Labour Party lost the British general election and **Margaret Thatcher**, leader of the Conservative Party, became Prime Minister. Known as the *Iron Lady*, she dominated British politics until she retired in 1990.
- On Northern Ireland she:
 - Supported the unionists' desire to remain part of the United Kingdom
 - Rejected the idea that the republic should have any role in the North
 - Was determined to defeat terrorism.
- Her opposition to the IRA was strengthened in 1979 when they killed her adviser on Northern Ireland, Airey Neave. In 1984 the Provisionals almost killed her too when they set off a bomb in Brighton during the Conservative Party conference.
- At first Thatcher continued the Labour government's policy towards Northern Ireland. But in 1980–1981 she had to deal with the IRA hunger strikes.

Protests at criminalisation

- These were due to Roy Mason's decision to treat paramilitary prisoners like ordinary criminals (**criminalisation**).
- After being sentenced in the Diplock courts, paramilitary prisoners were put into the newly built **H-Blocks** in the Maze prison where they had to wear prison clothes and obey prison rules.
- When IRA prisoners refused to wear prison clothes they were left in their cells with only a blanket for covering. When this failed to change anything, they refused to clean the cells, then began to smear the walls with excrement.

- By 1978 over 300 prisoners were involved in the 'dirty protest'. To support them, the IRA killed prison officers.

Bobby Sands and the hunger strikes

- Not many people outside the republican movement were aware of these protests, although Bernadette Devlin stood in the 1979 European election to draw attention to them.
- Finally the prisoners decided to go on hunger strike in October 1980, although republican leaders opposed this. The strike ended after 53 days because they thought the government had promised concessions.
- But nothing changed so the IRA leader in the Maze, **Bobby Sands**, began a second hunger strike on 1 March 1981. After two weeks another prisoner joined him, then a week later a third and so on. They hoped the propaganda impact would grow as, one by one, the men approached death.
- When the Nationalist MP for Fermanagh-South Tyrone died suddenly, the republicans nominated Sands to replace him. No other nationalist stood and he won by 30,492 votes to 29,046. This put Bobby Sands and the hunger strike on news bulletins around the world.
- Thatcher saw the hunger strikers as terrorists and was determined not to give in to them. By August, ten were dead.
- In the end the strikers' families persuaded doctors to treat men who became unconscious. The strike ended in October.
- The strikers believed they had failed but afterwards the government quietly granted many of their demands.

The impact of the hunger strikes

- The hunger strikes had a huge impact on Northern Ireland.
- They strengthened the Provisionals by bringing in new recruits. This let them to continue their campaign of bombing and destruction into the 1980s and 1990s.
- But Sands' election victory also showed republican leaders the value of political activity. Sinn Féin began to fight elections. In the republic they got several TDs elected to the Dáil and in Northern Ireland, Adams won Gerry Fitt's Westminster seat, although he refused to enter the Commons.
- The way Britain handled the hunger strikes damaged its reputation around the world.
- It also appalled the Irish government, which knew that the hunger strikes would strengthen republicans at the expense of the moderate SDLP.

Thatcher looks for power-sharing

- The hunger strikes made Thatcher think again about her Northern Ireland policy.
- She knew that the conflict there damaged Britain's international reputation, drained its economic resources and killed its soldiers.
- William Whitelaw persuaded her that power-sharing was the best way to achieve peace, but she knew that would not be possible if the hunger strikes destroyed the moderate SDLP.
- She encouraged her Northern Ireland Secretaries to look for agreement among the Northern parties. But various attempts ended in failure as unionists refused to accept power-sharing and demanded a return of Stormont.

Agreement with the South

- Thatcher also changed her attitude towards the republic because:
 - She hoped that this would improve security along the border and make it easier to control the IRA.
 - US President Reagan, influenced by important Irish-Americans like Edward Kennedy, urged her to talk to the Dublin government.
- Soon after Thatcher came to power she met Taoiseach **Charles Haughey**. They got on well but relations grew frosty when he announced that a united Ireland was coming soon.
- She got on better with the next Taoiseach, **Garret FitzGerald**, who led a Fine Gael/Labour Coalition between 1982 and 1987.

Towards the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985

Garret FitzGerald and the New Ireland Forum

- FitzGerald feared the hunger strike would undermine support for the SDLP. To help nationalists decide on their aims, he set up the **New Ireland Forum** in 1983.
- Representatives of all the Dáil parties met in Dublin Castle and interviewed many people including Catholic bishops, Protestant clergymen and individual unionists about the future of Ireland.
- The discussions at the Forum encouraged nationalists to re-examine their attitudes to the northern conflict.

The 1985 Anglo-Irish ('Hillsborough') Agreement

- Thatcher rejected the Forum's proposal for a united Ireland but soon afterwards talks began between the two governments.

- There were several reasons for this:
 - Thatcher liked and trusted Garret FitzGerald. He convinced her that only co-operation between the two governments would make northern Catholics trust the RUC and the British army.
 - She hoped that he would do more to control the border and extradite IRA people to Northern Ireland to stand trial.
 - In the European Union, Irish and British politicians and civil servants had worked together and had learned to trust each other.
- The talks led to the Anglo-Irish Agreement, which the two leaders signed at Hillsborough, Co. Down on 15 November 1985. It contained several important parts:
 - 1 To reassure unionists, the Irish government accepted that Northern Ireland was part of the United Kingdom and that could only change with the consent of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland. (This is called *the principle of consent*.)
 - 2 But to protect nationalists, an **Inter-Governmental Conference** was set up.
 - It would meet regularly and be jointly chaired by the Northern Ireland Secretary and the Irish Foreign Minister.
 - It would discuss issues that concerned the Catholic community such as job discrimination or the teaching of Irish. A ‘determined effort’ would be made to sort out differences.
 - To support the Conference, civil servants from London and Dublin would be permanently based in **Maryfield**, near Belfast.

Nationalist reactions to the Agreement

- The IRA and Sinn Féin denounced the Agreement.
- So did Charles Haughey, saying it ‘copper-fastened partition’. He later amended this attitude when it became clear that a majority of people in the republic supported the Agreement.

Unionists resist the Agreement

- Unionists were caught off guard by the Agreement. The UUP leader, James Molyneaux, had refused to join in the talks because he was sure Thatcher would not do a deal with Dublin.
- They were horrified to realise that officials and ministers from the republic would be at the heart of Northern Ireland’s government. They felt the British had betrayed them.
- Molyneaux and Paisley led a huge ‘*Ulster says no*’ rally in central Belfast. Loyalist workers called a one-day strike and loyalist paramilitaries threatened to kill the civil servants and ministers at Maryfield.

- Fifteen Unionist MPs resigned their Westminster seats and stood again in the by-elections as anti-Agreement candidates. Their aim was to stage a kind of referendum on the Agreement but they lost one of the seats to the SDLP.
- In the end, unionist resistance proved futile. Margaret Thatcher again lived up to her reputation and refused to bend.



Key personality

Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013)

- Margaret Thatcher joined the Conservative Party while a student in Oxford and was elected an MP in 1959.
- In 1970 Edward Heath appointed her Education Secretary. After the Conservatives lost to Labour in 1974, she was elected party leader in 1975. She won the 1979 general election, mainly because of Britain's economic decline under the Labour government.
- Thatcher supported the unionists' place in the United Kingdom and was committed to defeating the IRA, which had assassinated her Northern Ireland adviser, Airey Neave, shortly before the election.
- She refused to negotiate with the republican hunger strikers, ignoring pleas from the Dublin government.
- But her friend, William Whitelaw, persuaded her that power-sharing between Protestants and Catholics was the best way to get peace. She allowed her Northern Ireland Secretaries to organise talks between the leaders of the two communities. But she did little to encourage them and was not too surprised when they failed.
- She hoped that better relations with the republic would improve security by sealing the border and extraditing republicans to Northern Ireland for trial.
- She got on well with Charles Haughey at first but that changed after he claimed a united Ireland was near.
- She had a better relationship with Garret FitzGerald, whom she trusted, but she bluntly rejected the proposals of his New Ireland Forum.
- In spite of that, talks continued, leading to the signing of the **Anglo-Irish Agreement** at **Hillsborough**, Co. Down in November 1985.
- To the fury of unionists, the Agreement gave the Irish government a say in Northern Ireland affairs and created a permanent Secretariat of civil servants from both governments in Maryfield near Belfast.
- Thatcher withstood the unionist 'Ulster says no' campaign but grew disillusioned with the Agreement because it failed to deliver the better security she had hoped for.
- In 1990 she resigned as Conservative leader. Later she expressed doubts about the 'peace process' and criticised the 1998 Good Friday Agreement for allowing the early release of paramilitary prisoners.
- She died in 2013.

Question

- 1 What part did one or more of the following play in developments in Northern Ireland between 1963 and 1993?
 - Ian Paisley
 - John Hume
 - Bernadette Devlin

Exam questions

- 1 What was the impact of Republican and Loyalist terrorism on Northern Ireland?

(HL 2013)
- 2 Why was Direct Rule (from London) introduced in 1972 and why did it last so long?

(HL 2006)



From Agreement to Ceasefire 1985–1994

10

Violence continues

Libyan arms and Provisional murders

- Northern violence increased in the late 1980s. Part of the reason for this was three shiploads of arms and Semtex explosives sent by the Libyan dictator, **Colonel Gaddafi**, to the Provisionals.
- To damage the economy and make it too expensive for the British to remain in Northern Ireland, the Provisional used the Semtex to set off large explosions in town centres.
- Although their main targets were buildings not people, people were killed. On 11 November 1987 an IRA bomb at a **Remembrance Day** ceremony in Enniskillen killed eleven Protestants.
- The IRA also announced that anyone providing a service to the British army was a '*legitimate target*' and they murdered people like civil servants, caterers and builders.
- Some of their victims were Catholics but most were Protestants. This increased the bitterness between the two communities.

'Shoot to kill' and 'supergrasses'

- In response to IRA violence the British brought in their counter-terrorism agents, the **SAS**. They succeeded in intercepting some IRA actions.
- At Loughgall in Co. Armagh on 8 May 1987 they killed eight IRA men as they attacked an RUC barracks. Guns they captured had been used in 33 raids or murders. Republicans complained about a British 'shoot to kill' policy.
- The British also used '**supergrasses**', i.e. IRA people who informed on their comrades.

Loyalist tit-for-tat killing

- Loyalist violence also increased in response to IRA activity. Between 1986 and 1989 the UDA killed over 40 Catholics.

- In the early 1990s they succeeded in killing a number of IRA men and Sinn Féin councillors. Republicans claimed that the security forces showed them who to kill.

The impact of the violence

- The violence made life difficult for people in Northern Ireland. There was always fear of a bomb or a shooting. Town centres were sealed off and people were searched when they went shopping.
- The economy was damaged. Businesses closed after bombs went off and no new ones wanted to open, so unemployment remained high. Only a large British subsidy kept the economy from collapsing.

A new departure in Sinn Féin policy

- But behind the scenes, changes were taking place. The most important was a gradual shift in Provisional thinking.
- Gerry Adams was impressed by Sinn Féin's success in winning seats in Northern Ireland and the republic during the hunger strike. But when the impact of the hunger strikes wore off, they lost these seats.
- Adams thought that one reason for that was the Sinn Féin policy of **abstention**. Ever since the Treaty in 1922, Sinn Féin TDs had refused to take their seats in Dáil Éireann. In 1986 he got the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis to end abstention.
- He also encouraged Sinn Féin people to get elected to local councils where they helped local people with issues like unemployment, vandalism and drugs.
- But this led to tension within the republican movement:
 - How could Sinn Féin councillors get jobs for people when IRA bombs were destroying them?
 - And would more people vote for Sinn Féin if IRA violence stopped?
- These issues started a debate among republicans. What was the best way forward? Could they win the war? If not, might it not be better to cease fire so that talks could begin?

Moving slowly towards a ceasefire

‘Talks about talks’

- Alongside the violence in the late 1980s, there was a complex web of secret ‘talks about talks’ to try to get the Provisionals to agree to a ceasefire.
- There were secret contacts between Gerry Adams and John Hume, and between Adams and Taoiseach Charles Haughey.
- They all told Adams that if the IRA called a ceasefire, a **‘pan-nationalist’** alliance could be formed to negotiate with the British.

- The British held talks with the unionists hoping for agreement on powersharing but these failed when Molyneux wanted to get rid of the Maryfield Secretariat.
- The British also had informers within the leadership of Sinn Féin and were aware of the debates among republicans about future policy. They held secret talks with Provisionals, hoping to encourage a more peaceful approach.
- Republicans wanted the British to promise to leave Ireland if an agreement was reached between nationalists and unionists. This led the Northern Secretary, Peter Brooke, to make an important speech in November 1990. In it he said that '*... the British government has no selfish strategic or economic interest in Northern Ireland*'.



The IRA bombs England

- But even as the secret 'talks about talks' were going on, the IRA set off bombs in England. In 1992 it fired mortars into the garden of 10 Downing Street while the British Cabinet was meeting and set off a huge bomb in the financial district of London, causing millions of pounds worth of damage.
- This may have been intended to show that the IRA was still strong, even if it did call a ceasefire.

Three new leaders

- Three new leaders who appeared on the scene in the early 1990s helped to achieve peace. They were:
 - 1 **John Major** who replaced Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister in 1990. He had formed a personal friendship with Albert Reynolds, when they met at EU meetings.
 - 2 In 1992 **Reynolds** replaced Haughey as Taoiseach. A practical businessman, he was eager to achieve peace in Northern Ireland. His friendship with Major made it easier to persuade the British to deal with the republicans.
 - 3 In 1992 **Bill Clinton** became President of the United States. He was influenced by a group of wealthy and powerful Irish-Americans and promised to seek peace in Northern Ireland.
- Progress towards peace was interrupted in October 1993 when an IRA bomb exploded in the Protestant Shankill Road area of Belfast, killing nine Protestants as well as the IRA bomber. To keep the trust of his followers, Adams carried the coffin of the bomber at his funeral.
- Outrage at this nearly ended all negotiations but Reynolds convinced Major that it was important to go on talking.

15 December 1993: The Downing Street Declaration

- On 27 October 1993 the Irish government issued ‘*six principles*’ which must underlie any peace settlement. They included:
 - No talking to people who used violence
 - No change in the status of Northern Ireland without the clear consent of the majority there.
- Major accepted these principles.
- On 15 December Reynolds met Major in Downing Street and they issued the **Downing Street Declaration**.
- A short document with just eleven paragraphs, it stated firmly that it was up to ‘*the people of the island alone*’ to decide their future and that a united Ireland could only come ‘*on the basis of consent, freely given, North and South*’.

Tempting the republicans

- Some hardline IRA people wanted to ignore the Declaration but Adams and McGuinness thought it could form the basis of talks.
- Reynolds then offered concessions to Sinn Féin. He let them appear on TV and radio and set up a **Forum for Peace and Reconciliation** to discuss the way forward.
- In America, Clinton agreed to let Adams attend a conference on Northern Ireland in New York but only if there was a permanent IRA ceasefire.
- The republican leaders hesitated and in London the IRA fired mortar bombs at Heathrow airport.
- This produced an angry reaction from Reynolds and the Americans. So did the announcement of a limited ceasefire in March 1994.
- Finally, on 31 August 1994 the IRA announced an unconditional ceasefire.
- At last the way was open to a full peace process.

Questions

- 1 What role did Margaret Thatcher play in developments in Northern Ireland between 1979 and 1990?
- 2 What role did John Hume and/or Gerry Adams play in the conflict in Northern Ireland?

Exam questions

- 1 What moves were made to find a peaceful resolution of the Troubles between 1973 and 1993? (HL 2008)
- 2 What was the importance of one or more of the following?
 - The Sunningdale Agreement 1973
 - The Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985
 - The Downing Street Declaration 1993. (HL 2009)

Case Study questions

OL 2013

Case Study to which the documents relate: *The Apprentice Boys of Derry*

Study the documents and answer the questions below.

Document A

This edited extract from *The Irish Times* (14/12/1966) relates to the Apprentice Boys of Derry.

The Northern Ireland Minister for Commerce, Mr. Brian Faulkner, was initiated into the Apprentice Boys of Derry Order last night in Derry city. This ceremony can only be performed within the walls of Derry, and Mr. Faulkner made a special journey for the purpose.

Among the members of the Order is the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Captain Terence O'Neill, who was initiated not long after he became Prime Minister.

- 1 What organisation did Brian Faulkner join?
 - 2 Why did Faulkner have to travel to Derry?
 - 3 What office was held by Brian Faulkner at the time?
 - 4 What office was held by Captain Terence O'Neill?
 - 5 Why were the activities of the Apprentice Boys of Derry considered controversial?
- (30)

Case Study to which the documents relate: *The Sunningdale Agreement and the power-sharing executive, 1973–1974*

Study the documents and answer the questions below.

Document A

A member of the power-sharing executive remembers the Ulster Workers' Council strike.

Men wearing masks and carrying cudgels (short thick sticks) were everywhere. Not only did they set up roadblocks on exit roads to housing estates to prevent people from going to work, but they blocked main roads as well. More direct action took place at major centres of employment, such as Harland and Wolff. Their workers were ordered home with the threat that their cars would be burned out if found to be still in the car park.

From the beginning the most effective weapon held by the striking workers was their control of electricity. Many who wished to go to work could not see the point of going since the electricity at their workplaces had been cut off.

(Source: Austin Currie, *All Hell Will Break Loose*, O'Brien Press, Dublin, 2004]

Document B

Garret FitzGerald gives his opinion on the fall of the power-sharing executive.

I can only say that it was an extraordinary neglect of duty of a government taking over direct rule in Northern Ireland to leave power stations in the hands of extremists and do nothing about it. For the government to leave the power supplies of the state outside the control of the government was an extraordinary error.

The BBC were very much in favour of the strike, so much so that the Republic's Minister for Post and Telegraphs rang the BBC in London to ask them what was taking place. He was told that the BBC 'did not monitor broadcasts in Northern Ireland and they had no idea what was going on'. They were running basically a rebel radio station.

(Source: Garret FitzGerald, *Oral History Conference on the Fall of the Executive*. Organised by the Institute of Contemporary British History.)

1

- (a) What have the men in document A done to avoid being identified?
- (b) In document A, why did the men set up road blocks?
- (c) In document A, what were the workers in Harland and Wolff ordered to do?
- (d) According to document B, what error did the government make?
- (e) According to document B, what was the attitude of the BBC towards the strike?

(20)

2

- (a) Which document, A or B, attempts to give reasons for the success of the strike? Explain your answer, referring to both documents.
- (b) Which document, A or B, would be more valuable to a historian? Give a reason for your answer.

(20)

3

- (a) Is document A objective or biased? Give a reason for your answer.
- (b) Why does document B criticise the BBC?

(20)

4 What was the Sunningdale Agreement and why did most unionists oppose it?

Exam questions

OL 2013

B Write a short paragraph on one of the following.

- 1 Society and economy in Northern Ireland, 1949–1969
- 2 Seamus Heaney
- 3 The Anglo-Irish Agreement, 1985
- 4 The impact of the ‘Troubles’ on the economy of Northern Ireland.

(30)

C Answer one of the following.

- 1 How did Terence O’Neill attempt to bring about change in Northern Ireland?
- 2 Why was it decided not to locate a university in Derry and how was Derry affected by that decision?
- 3 Why did the power-sharing executive, 1973–1974, end in failure?
- 4 What part did Bernadette Devlin and/or Ian Paisley play in the affairs of Northern Ireland?

(40)

2009 OL

B Write a short paragraph on one of the following.

- 1 The welfare state in Northern Ireland
- 2 Seamus Heaney
- 3 The impact of the Troubles on everyday life in Northern Ireland
- 4 Ian Paisley.

(30)

C Answer one of the following.

- 1 Why were the activities of the Apprentice Boys a source of tension in Derry?
- 2 What part did John Hume play in the affairs of Northern Ireland?
- 3 As British Prime Minister, what policies did Margaret Thatcher follow with regard to Northern Ireland?
- 4 What was proposed by one or more of the following?
 - The Sunningdale Agreement 1973
 - The Anglo-Irish Agreement 1985
 - The Downing Street Declaration 1993.

(40)