

## History Revision – Political Developments in 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland

### Ireland in 1900.

Ireland was part of the British Empire, the Union Jack flew over all public buildings, such as Trinity College and the GPO and Queen Victoria was Head of State. A **Chief Secretary** was responsible for the day to day running of the country and he lived in the Phoenix Park [now the US Ambassador's Residence]. A **Viceroy** represented the crown and he also lived in the Park [now Áras an Uachtaráin].

**Nationalists** were people, who believed that Ireland should have its own Parliament, elect its own leaders and make its own laws. They were mainly Catholic.

**Unionists** were people, who believed that Ireland should maintain its Union with Great Britain. They were mostly Protestant, lived in the North-East of Ireland and were descended from those who been granted land during the Plantations of the 16th/17th centuries.

### Why did Unionists wish to keep the Union with Britain?

- They wished to remain subjects of the English crown.
- While the Union remained they were a religious majority. In an independent Ireland they would be in a minority and they feared this.
- They owned and worked in the Shipbuilding and Linen industries in Ulster. The future of these depended on access to the markets of Great Britain and the Empire. If Ireland became independent they would lose this.

### Were all Nationalists the same?

No – Nationalists were divided into two groups,

- **Constitutional Nationalists** – They wanted a separate Parliament, but would accept a British monarch as Head of State and allow Britain to look after Ireland's defence and Foreign Policy. They supported **The Home Rule Party**.
- **Republicans** – They wanted to break all links with Britain and believed this could only be done by force and violence. They formed a secret group, known as the **Irish Republican Brotherhood** or **I.R.B.** Their policy was to wait until Britain was involved in a major war and then stage a rebellion. **“England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity”**

By 1910 Irish Nationalists were becoming very powerful in the British Parliament. An election in that year had given the Home Rule Party 80 seats. However the two largest parties in Parliament, the **Liberals** and the **Conservatives** had failed to win an overall majority and needed the votes of the Home Rule party to form a Govt. In return for their support the Home Rule Party demanded Home Rule for Ireland. The Liberal Party, under **David Lloyd George** agreed.

## **The Irish Cultural Revival;**

After the Famine, the Irish Language went into decline, helped by emigration and economic factors.

Also in decline were native games such as Gaelic football and Hurling.

Towards the end of the 19-century, a number of organisations were formed to stop this decline and revive native culture. These organisations also had the effect of making people more aware of their “Irish ness”.

## **The Gaelic Athletic Association [G.A.A.].**

Founded in Thurles in 1884 by **Archbishop Croke**, its aim was to preserve Gaelic Football, Handball and Hurling. Clubs spevery parish and competitions gave rise to a new feeling of local, county and national pride in being Irish that had not been there before. The G.A.A. encouraged anti-British feeling as a way of defining a separate Irish identity.

## **The Gaelic League.**

Founded in Dublin in 1893 by **Douglas Hyde** and **Eoin Macnéill**, its aim was to restore Irish as the National Language. Patrick Pearse edited their newspaper “**An Claidheamh Solais**”. In 1913 they scored a major success when Irish became compulsory at all Irish schools.

## **The Anglo – Irish Literary Society.**

In 1905 **W.B. Yeats** and **Lady Gregory** set up the **Abby Theatre** to present plays written by Irish writers in the English Language. They presented the work of **J.M. Synge**, among others.

## **Sinn Féin.**

Founded in Dublin in 1905, by **Arthur Griffith**. He argued that Irish Members of Parliament should refuse to go to the English House of Commons and instead set up a Parliament and Government in Dublin with the King as Head of State. Sinn Féin drew little support, as most people were sure that the Home Rule Party was about to achieve self-rule for Ireland.

## **The Labour Movement.**

In the early years of the 20-century, Dublin had the worst living conditions for poor people in Europe. 75% of workers were unskilled and employed on a daily basis. Trade Unions were legal, but they only represented skilled workers. Socialists [people who encouraged workers to demand their rights by peaceful means.] suggested that workers should unite and refuse to work for bosses who failed to give proper pay and conditions. **James Larkin** was one of these and he came to Ireland to help Dublin Dock-Workers organise themselves. A friend of his **James Connolly** believed that armed revolution was necessary to secure proper conditions for workers. Together they founded the Irish **Labour Party** in Clonmel in 1912. After the **1913 Lockout** when bosses turned police on striking workers, Connolly formed the **Irish Citizens’ Army**, to protect workers. This would later play a part in the 1916 Rising.

## **The Struggle for Self-Rule.**

Home Rule Bills had been introduced to the British Parliament before, but the House of Lords, which had the power to veto any law, had defeated them.

In 1911 **The Parliament Act** took away the Lords veto. They could now only delay a law for two years.

In 1912 a new **Home Rule Bill** was introduced to Parliament. It was passed through the House of Commons but the House of Lords put a delay of two years on it. Ireland would have Home Rule by 1914. The Unionists were horrified by this development and set about making their feelings known

- They drew up a petition called **The Solemn League and Covenant** in September 1912.
- **Edward Carson** and **James Craig**, the Unionist leaders, threatened to set a separate government in Ulster rather than be involved with the Catholic South.
- **Ulster Volunteer Force** – was set up in January 1913 to defend Ulster from Home Rule. It had 100,000 members.
- In April 1914 they brought **20,000 rifles** from Germany to Larne in Belfast. The British Govt turned a blind eye to it. But Unionists were now in a position to resist Home Rule by force.

Meanwhile in the South the supporters of Home Rule had observed what was happening in Ulster and took steps to defend Home Rule,

- **Irish Volunteer Force** – was set up, by Eoin MacNéill with 180,000 members to protect Home Rule.
- In July 1914 they landed **1,500 rifles** at Howth.

Ireland was on the verge of Civil War. The House of Lords suggested a compromise – that the country should be partitioned, with Ulster being allowed to go its own way. The outbreak of WW I shelved the problem.

The Ulster Volunteers joined the British army to fight against the Germans. However when the Irish Volunteers came to make a decision there was a split in the movement. 170,000 agreed to join the British Army, but 11,000; led by Eoin Macneíll refused and remained in Ireland, preferring to wait for “Ireland’s opportunity”.

## **The 1916 Rising.**

In May 1915, five members of the I.R.B. began to plan a rebellion. Thomas Clarke, Seán MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett and Patrick Pearse. In January 1916, they invited James Connolly to join them. They had secured an offer of weapons from the Germans, to arrive on the “**Aud**”, Easter week.

Thing went wrong from the start. On Good Friday, the “Aud “was captured in Kerry.

Deciding to proceed anyway, the rising was called for Easter Sunday, then cancelled, then rearranged for Easter Monday.

Realising that the rising could not now be a military success, the organisers went ahead, hoping that their deaths would encourage others to give their lives for Ireland. On Monday 24th April 1916, 1,500 Volunteers captured important buildings in Dublin – GPO, Royal College of Surgeons, and Boland's Mills. Pearse stood outside the GPO and announced that a Republic had been set up.

The British declared Martial Law, and a gunboat "**Helga**" sailed up the Liffey and bombed O'Connell Street. On Saturday 29th, Pearse surrendered in Moore Street. **General Sir John Maxwell** was sent to take control of the situation and to punish the leaders. Maxwell was a poor choice; he was harsh and within days had signed 190 execution orders for men and women. Over nine days in May he executed the first 12 and 1,800 were deported to a concentration camp in Wales.

The effect of this on public opinion was devastating. Initially very hostile to the rising, the harshness of Maxwell turned the General Public into supporters of the leaders and of their ideals. Every time he spoke to the media, Maxwell called the events the "Sinn Féin rebellion". In reality the rebellion had nothing to do with Sinn Féin. However the public quickly came to believe that it had and support for that party soared.

### **Victory for Sinn Féin.**

In December 1916, as a gesture of goodwill, most of those deported were released. While in prison they had been tned by the I.R.B. and converted to Republican ideals. A whole new generation of leaders, including **Michael Collins**, returned home and were greeted as heroes by huge crowds. Throughout 1917 support for Sinn Féin continued to soar, by 1918 there were 1,250 branches of the party in the country.

Collins set up an excellent intelligence network, which was very efficient at finding out what the British were up to.

Realising that they could turn the growing support for Sinn Féin into real power, the new leader of the party, **Eamon de Valera**, decided to contest any by-elections that arose. In 1917 they contested four and won the seat every time. For the first time the Home Rule Party had real opposition. It was clear that the mood in Ireland was changing. People were no longer prepared to wait for Britain to grant them Home Rule, now they wanted to take it for themselves. Two events in 1918 were to cement public support for Sinn Féin.

- **Conscription** - short of troops for the war, the British tried to forcibly draft all men into the army. The issue united the country like never before and when the British were forced to back down Sinn Féin was given the credit. Out of touch with the public mood back in Ireland the Home Rule Party had at first supported the British then, realising they had made a mistake, they switched sides – too late.
- **The German Plot** – In an attempt to destroy Sinn Féin. The British decided to tell the Irish people that they were involved in a plot with Germany to invade the country. Collins learned that the British planned to arrest all of the leaders of Sinn Féin in a single night and he arranged for most of them, except the moderates like Arthur Griffith, to be away from home that night. The plan therefore backfired, made the govt. look bad and increased support again for Sinn Féin.

In December 1918, in the General Election, Sinn Fin won 73 seats, wiping out the Home Rule Party.

### **The War of Independence 1919 – 1921.**

**January 21, 1919** Sinn Féin set themselves up as the **first Dáil** in Dublin. The Dáil made three decisions.

- It declared Ireland to be Independent.
- It adopted a Democratic Programme.
- It sent delegates to the Peace Talks at Versailles.

On the same day volunteers attacked a police station in Cork, stealing their weapons. The War of Independence had begun.

The newly organised volunteers were renamed the **I.R.A.** and began to attack country police barracks looking for weapons. The police retreated to the towns, leaving Sinn Féin in control of the countryside. Collins spy network meant that he knew what the British were up to in the towns anyway. In Dublin he organised a group of assassins called **“The Squad”**, who eliminated anyone Collins considered a threat. In May 1921, the I.R.A. attacked and burned the Customs House in Dublin.

The I.R.A. operated **“Flying Columns”**, who ambushed the British and then disappeared into the countryside before the British could react.

Responding to this tactic the British sent in **“The Black and Tans”**. In an attempt to put pressure on the I.R.A. they terrorised the population; they burnt down Cork city and Balbriggan. In December 1920, the Government of Ireland Act partitioned Ireland. On **“Bloody Sunday”**, in 1920 the “Tans” killed 12 people and wounded 60 when they opened fire on a crowd watching a match in Croke Park. Later a group called **“The Auxiliaries”**, made up of army officers, and strengthened them. Both groups were allowed to do pretty much what they liked.

In Britain, public opinion was horrified at the conduct of their forces. It was clear the British had gone too far and on 11 July 1921 a Truce between the Govt. and Sinn Féin came into effect to allow talks to take place.

### **The Anglo-Irish Treaty and The Civil War 1921 – 1923.**

Talks to find a solution began in Downing Street in October 1921. De Valera, President of the Dáil stayed away. Talks dragged on with very little progress until the 6 December. That day the British lost patience and forced the Irish, led by Collins and Griffith to sign a Treaty with the following terms,

- Partition of North and South was recognised.
- Ireland to be called Irish Free State.
- The King was to be Head of State.
- Dáil to take Oath of Allegiance.
- British navy to keep three Ports in Ireland.
- Irish Free State to remain in the British Empire.

Back home there was a huge row over whether to accept or reject the Treaty. De Valera opposed it, while Griffith and Collins argued that it was all that was on offer. On January 7, 1922 the Dáil voted – 64 voted for it while 57 voted against it. De Valera resigned and was replaced by Arthur Griffith as President. Dev led his supporters from the Dáil and when they announced that they would not recognise the new Irish Free State it was clear that a Civil War was near. The I.R.A. also split, those who supported the Treaty being called “**The Regulars**”, while those who rejected it being called “**The Irregulars**”.

The Regulars became the new National Army under the command of Michael Collins.

Over the next months the British prepared to leave Ireland and hand over control to the Dáil. Violence gradually spread across the country as the Irregulars searched for money and weapons to oppose the Treaty. In June 1922 an election was held and it was clear the public supported the Treaty as pro-treaty candidates won a majority.

### **Civil War 1922 – 1923.**

In April 1922 the Irregulars occupied the Four Courts. After the election Collins ordered the building to be bombed and by July the Free State was in control of the Capital. As the summer progressed the better-equipped Regulars pushed the Irregulars out of the towns and cities.

In August the new state suffered two major losses when on the 12, the President Arthur Griffith died from exhaustion. 10 days later Michael Collins was ambushed at **Béal na mBláth** in Cork and killed.

The new leaders of the Free State, **W.T. Cosgrave** and **Kevin O Higgins** adopted a much tougher attitude. Military Tribunals were set up and leading anti-treaty figures were executed without trial. In April 1923 the leader of the Irregulars, **Liam Lynch** was killed and his successor called on his troops to surrender. On 24th May the Civil War ended.

### **Impact of The Civil War.**

- 4,000 people were killed
- 4 Billion Euro worth of damage was caused to property.
- The cost on the new state nearly bankrupted it.
- It divided the country for almost 30 years, as both sides never forgot the bitterness.

### **Cumann na nGaedhael Government 1922 – 1932.**

The supporters of the Treaty formed themselves into a new political party called **Cumann na nGaedhael**. They ruled Ireland for the next ten years, supported by the **Labour Party**.

### **Law and Order.**

**Kevin O Higgins** was the **Minister for Home Affairs** and to him fell the task of restoring law and order after four years of fighting. He introduced the following measures,

- Set up a new police force in 1923, **An Garda Síochána**.
- Reorganise all the law Courts in the country with the **Courts of Justice Act 1924**.

- Introduced **Public Safety Acts** to deal with the I.R.A., which allowed him to execute members.

O Higgins also decided to reduce the size of the army as a cost saving measure. The officers wrote a letter of protest and demanded that the Govt. listen to their political views. O Higgins reacted swiftly he sacked all senior officers and demanded the resignation of the Minister for Defence. The army never questioned the authority of the govt. again.

### **The Economy.**

The standard of living was very low for most people. Agriculture was the largest employer but most farms only produced enough food for the owner. It was clear that farmers would have to be encouraged to grow more food to sell abroad and earn money for the economy.

In 1927 the **Agricultural Credit Corporation** or **ACC** was set up to loan money to farmers at low interest rates to improve the capacity of their farms.

Ireland had almost no Industry, a situation that would have to change if the people's living standards were to improve.

In 1927 the **ESB** was set up and began to build the worlds first **Hydroelectricity Plant** at **Ardnacrusha** on the Shannon. It provided electrical power to factories and homes.

### **Political Developments.**

Sinn Féin, under the leadership of de Valera refused to enter the Dáil, because they would not take the Oath of Allegiance to the King of England. By 1926 Dev. realised that he was no longer influencing events and at the Árd Fhéis that year he proposed that Sinn Féin should enter the Dáil if the Oath was abolished. His proposal was defeated and he resigned as leader.

Later that year in May he set up a new party, **Fianna Fáil** that had three main aims,

- To set up a 32 county Republic.
- To restore the Irish Language.
- To make Ireland self-sufficient in terms of Agriculture and Industry.

In the General election of 1927 Cumann na nGaedhael won 46 seats while Fianna Fáil won 44 seats. As Dev. still refused to enter the Dáil, Cosgrave continued as Taoiseach.

On 10th July Kevin O Higgins was shot dead. The Govt. immediately brought in the **Electoral Amendment Act**, which said that if any member of the Dáil did not take the Oath they would lose their seats. This forced Dev to act and Fianna Fáil entered the Dáil. A General election followed with the Govt. winning 61 seats and Fianna Fáil 57.

Over the next five years Fianna Fáil grew stronger while the Wall Street Crash in 1929 made Cumann na nGaedhael more and more unpopular. In the 1932 Election Fianna Fáil won 72 seats and de Valera became Taoiseach, a position he was to hold until 1948.

## **The Age of de Valera 1932 – 1948.**

The first thing de Valera did was to set about dismantling the Treaty. In 1931 the British Parliament passed a law called **The Statute of Westminster**. This allowed all other Parliaments in the British Empire to reject any laws, which London had enacted, which they did not agree with. This of course included the Dáil and de Valera spotted that this could be applied to the Treaty. Over the next four years Dev took the following steps,

- In April 1932, he abolished the Oath of Allegiance.
- He downgraded the role of the king's representative in Ireland by refusing to attend any functions that the Governor-General was at.
- He abolished the Senate in 1936.
- He introduced a new passport with the Harp as a symbol, replacing the British Crown.
- In 1936 he took advantage of a crisis in the British royal family to almost abolish the role of the King in Irish affairs.
- In 1937 he introduced a new Constitution to replace the Treaty. The Constitution effectively gave Ireland the Independence she had sought in 1921, and when it was accepted by the people in a referendum the Treaty was dead.

## **The Blueshirts.**

In 1932, a group of former army officers set up an organisation called The Army Comrades Association. These men had fought against Dev in the civil war and were hostile to the new government. By the summer membership had risen to 30,000. They began to wear a uniform in imitation of Fascist groups in Italy and Germany and became known as The Blueshirts.

When the Garda Commissioner, Eoin O Duffy was sacked by Fianna Fáil in 1933, the Blueshirts immediately invited him to become their leader. He renamed them The National Guard and modelled himself on Mussolini. He called for a huge march on Leinster house in August 1933. The Government issued an order banning the march and the wearing of the National Guard uniform. Armed police were sent into the streets to prevent the march from taking place. O Duffy lost his nerve and called off the march.

A month later the National Guard joined Cumann na nGaedhael to form a new party called Fine Gael.

## **The Economic War 1932 – 1938.**

Since the Treaty, the Irish Govt. had been making annual payments to Britain called Land Annuities. In 1932 Dev stopped these payments. The British responded by putting a 20% tax on all Irish goods on sale in Britain. Dev then did the same to British goods on sale in Ireland. This lasted for six years and became known as the Economic War. In 1938 talks began in London to end it. Ireland agreed to make a one-off payment of £10 million to cover the cost of the Land Annuities. More importantly Dev demanded and got the three ports in Ireland still used by the Royal Navy. The importance of this was seen when WW II broke out the following year.

## **The Emergency 1939 – 1945.**

This is the name given to WW II in Ireland, because Ireland remained neutral for the war.



In September 1939, **The Emergency Powers Act** was introduced. This gave the govt almost limitless power to deal with any situation that might arise.

- The media was strictly controlled so as not to offend either side during the conflict.
- A Department of Supplies was set up to control the purchase and distribution of fuel and food while the war lasted.
- I.R.A. leaders were rounded up. Some were shot while others were imprisoned for the duration of the war to stop them working with the Germans.
- Rationing of food and fuel and clothing was introduced.
- Farmers were ordered to increase the amount of land under tillage. By 1945 this had increased by 150% on its pre-war level.
- The Phoenix Park was turned into a garden producing potatoes and vegetables to feed the population.
- The army was doubled in size and a Local Defence Force, LDF, was set up consisting of 250,000 members.

There was widespread concern that either Britain or Germany would invade. These fears were heightened in May 1941 when the Luftwaffe bombed the North Strand in Dublin, in which 29 people died. The bombing turned out to be a mistake for which Hitler apologised and paid for the rebuilding of the North Strand.

In practice Ireland's neutrality was very one sided, leaning towards the allies.

- 50,000 Irish served in the British Army.
- 100,000 Irish moved to Britain to work in the factories.
- The RAF was permitted to use Irish air space. The Luftwaffe was not.
- RAF pilots who crash-landed in Ireland were sent back to Britain. German pilots were imprisoned.
- Weather reports were secretly given to Britain.

### **The Effects of The War on Ireland.**

- It deepened the division between North and South.
- It helped heal some of the bitterness of the Civil War as people had to work together to make the country operate as the war progressed.
- Ireland was refused US money from the Marshall Plan in 1947.
- Ireland was not allowed join the UN until 1955.
- Neutrality convinced Irish people that they really were independent.

By 1948 the country had been ruled by Fianna Fáil for sixteen years and most people wanted a change.

The opposition parties in the Dáil came together to form **Coalition Government** after the election in 1948.

### **The First Inter-Party Government 1948 – 1951.**

The main parties in the new govt. were Fine Gael, Labour and a new party, Clann na Poblachta. The Taoiseach was **John Costello**, leader of Fine Gael. The Inter-Party govt is remembered for the following achievements,

- 1949, **Republic Of Ireland Act**, which took Ireland out of the British Commonwealth.
- It set up the **IDA** and **Córas Tráchtála** to promote Irish Industry.
- A massive programme of new house building was embarked upon to clear the slums of Dublin
- Health Minister, **Noel Browne**, introduced a scheme to wipe out the killer disease **TB**.

In 1951, Noel Browne also proposed to introduce a **Mother and Child Scheme**, guaranteeing free medical care to all pregnant women and their babies. Doctors and the Church demanded that the scheme be dropped. When the Taoiseach agreed, Noel Browne resigned. Several of his party members resigned with him and the govt lost its majority in the Dáil. An election was called and Fianna Fáil returned to power.

### **Ireland in the 1950's.**

Throughout the 1950's Ireland remained a country with poor living standards. Unemployment was high and school leavers had no option but to emigrate to either Britain or America to find work. Many people began to wonder if independence was worth the price. In 1954 another Coalition was in power to be replaced by Fianna Fáil again in 1957. In 1959, 77-year-old de Valera resigned as Taoiseach and was elected President of Ireland. The new Taoiseach, **Sean Lemass** brought great energy to Ireland in the 1960's.

### **Ireland in the 1960's.**

Lemass, Taoiseach from 1959 – 1966 saw a great need for Ireland to become more industrialised so that employment could be created for people. He put into practice an **Economic Plan** to draw foreign money to be spent here. Generous tax breaks were given to foreign companies if they would set up business in Ireland. Farmers were offered grants to grow more food to be sold abroad. Emigration declined as people stayed home to take the new jobs being created in **Industrial Estates** all over the country. These were not the only changes that came to Ireland in the 1960's.

### **Education.**

An industrialised economy needs an educated population. In Ireland only Primary Education was free. The children of the rich were the only ones who went on to secondary school, as all secondary schools were private. If Ireland's progress were to continue, then educational opportunity would have to improve.

In 1966 **Donagh O Malley** the Minister for Education introduced **free secondary school** for all and free transport to and from school for children in rural areas.

New third Level Colleges were also introduced, called **Regional Technical Colleges**.

By the end of the decade the school population had soared.

## **Ireland in the 1970's.**

In 1966 **Jack Lynch** became Taoiseach and leader of Fianna Fáil. Ireland's prosperity continued to improve. However events in Northern Ireland were to dominate the political scene in Ireland for the next thirty years.

Serious unrest broke out in the North in August 1969. Since 1968 members of the Catholic Community had been demanding equal rights with Protestants. This was known as the **Civil Rights Association**. Some extreme Protestants were prepared to use violence to stop this and peaceful Civil Rights marches were attacked. In August 1969 violence erupted in Belfast and Derry as Catholics were attacked and driven from their homes.

In Dublin, Jack Lynch said that his govt. could no longer stand by and watch. Despite these threatening words Lynch did nothing. Some members of his party held strong views about the North and were frustrated by the Taoiseach's lack of action. In May 1970 these divisions in the Cabinet became public when Lynch sacked two of his Ministers – **Neil Blaney** and **Charles Haughey**. Another Minister, **Kevin Boland** resigned in support. On 28 May 1970 both Blaney and Haughey were arrested and charged with attempting to import weapons for the IRA in the North. At the **Arms Trial** both were found not guilty. Of the three ex-ministers only Haughey remained in Fianna Fáil and spent the next decade rebuilding his shattered political career.

## **Ireland Joins the EEC, 1973.**

In 1969 Ireland applied for membership of the **European Economic Community**. Membership of the Community would allow Irish farmers and businessmen to sell their goods in Europe and lead to increased number of jobs in Ireland. A referendum was held in 1972 and 83% voted YES to membership. On January 1 1973 Ireland became a full member of the EEC.

Shortly after, Lynch called an election. The Arms Trial had damaged Fianna Fáil and people were tired of them as they had been in power since 1959. Fine Gael and Labour agreed to work together and won an overall majority. **Liam Cosgrave** became Taoiseach. The Coalition had two major issues to deal with,

- **The Oil Crisis** – War in the Middle East in 1973 caused the price of oil to soar on the international market. Inflation shot up and the govt borrowed huge sums of money. Unemployment rose sharply and the Irish economy went into recession.
- **Violence in Northern Ireland** – IRA bombing campaign was widespread, killing thousands of innocent people. In 1974 Loyalists brought the “Troubles” into the South when they bombed Dublin and Monaghan, killing 33 people.

Cosgrave signed **The Sunningdale Agreement**, which allowed Catholics and Protestants to share power. However extreme Protestants led by Ian Paisley organised a general strike and the Agreement collapsed. In 1977 Cosgrave called an election, which returned Fianna Fáil to power in a landslide.

The Party had made rash promises to the electorate, which the economy could not afford to pay for. Once in power Fianna Fáil borrowed heavily to pay for their election promises. As the countries financial situation worsened public confidence in Fianna Fáil dropped sharply.

Fearing that they would lose their seats in the next election, Fianna Fáil turned on Jack Lynch and **Charles Haughey** became leader of the party and Taoiseach.

### **Ireland in the 1980's**

In January 1980 Haughey addressed the nation on television and said the country was living beyond its means and that cutbacks would have to be made. He did little however as there was an election due the following year. Fianna Fáil lost that election and a coalition govt under **Garret Fitzgerald** took power. As the size of the National Debt became clear, foreign investors pulled money out of the country. Unemployment rose, the tax take fell and inflation threatened to send the economy into meltdown. It became almost automatic for people to move to America as soon as the Leaving Cert was over, many did not even wait for their results.

In 1985 Fitzgerald negotiated **The Anglo-Irish Agreement** with British Prime Minister, **Margaret Thatcher**. The Agreement gave Ireland the right to be consulted about the affairs of Northern Ireland. It also established the right of the people of the North to decide their own future.

Meanwhile in Fianna Fáil, Charles Haughey's leadership was deeply divisive and a breakaway group formed a new political party the **Progressive Democrats**. In 1987 Fianna Fáil were returned to power with the support of the P.D's. To help the country recover from the appalling financial situation, Haughey developed **Social Partnership** between govt., employers and Trade Unions. In return for tax reform the unions agreed not to strike over pay for three years.

In 1990, Ireland elected its female President, **Mary Robnison**. **Mary McAleese** followed her in 1997.

In 1992 Haughey was forced to resign following continued scandal. **Albert Reynolds**, who helped negotiate an I.R.A ceasefire two years later, which allowed the **Peace Process** to take shape, succeeded him.

### **NORTHERN IRELAND 1920 – 1990's**

**The Government of Ireland Act 1920** established six of the counties of Ulster as an independent state from the rest of the island of Ireland. It remained as part of Great Britain and sent 13 MP's to Westminster, although it had control of its own internal affairs. The Protestants had complete control of government, which met at Stormont. **James Craig**, leader of the **Ulster Unionists** was Prime Minister from 1921 until his death in 1940.

Catholics made up a third of the population, but they were given no say in the running of the North. Most Catholics wanted to be part of a United Ireland and were deeply mistrusted by the Unionists.

Because they had no fears of ever losing power the Unionists saw no need to listen to the complaints made by Catholics about how Northern Ireland was run. Indeed they used that power to make sure that the Catholics knew who was in control.

A new police force called **The Royal Ulster Constabulary** RUC was set up along with a reserve force called **The B Specials**. Catholics never saw this force as a fair upholder of Law and Order.

From the outset Catholics were treated with **Discrimination** in the North in the following ways,

- **Housing** – When it came to getting government housing Catholics were always bottom of the list. If a Protestant came along he was moved straight to the top of the list.
- **Employment** – In interviews people were asked their Religion and a Protestant was always given a job ahead of a Catholic.
- **Civil Service** – Catholics were given the lower paid jobs and almost never promoted no matter what their ability.
- **Elections** – Unionists preserved their control by abolishing Proportional Representation, which would have given Catholics more seats in Stormont. Also a practice called **Gerrymandering** went on where constituency boundaries were rigged so that a Unionist always won.

Northern Ireland took part in WW II. At various times during the war, both American and British troops were stationed in Ulster. Because of the shipbuilding works in Belfast the Ulster was considered to be strategically important. It was used as a base for aircraft to seek and destroy German submarines in the North Atlantic. Belfast was repeatedly bombed during the war and was heavily damaged. During one raid in 1941 over 700 people were killed. Fire brigade units were sent from the South to help put out the fires on many occasions.

The economy grew rapidly during the war. Britain basically bought everything that the North could produce. 170 ships were built in Belfast from 1939 – 1945. Unemployment fell from 25% in 1939 to 4% at the end of the war.

## **The North after World War II.**

In 1945 the first Labour Govt. came to power. They introduced the Welfare State, which also came into effect in Ulster. **The Welfare State** had the following provisions,

- An insurance scheme covering sickness and unemployment.
- A free health service for all.
- A programme of house building.
- Free education and grants for university education.

The free education was to have a major impact on the Catholic community in the North. In time to come well-educated young Catholics would not accept the status, of second-class citizens. For the moment Northern Ireland remained a deeply divided society. In 1943 **Lord Brookeborough** had become Prime Minister and as long as he remained in office there was no possibility of change.

In 1963 he retired and was replaced by a moderate Unionist, **Captain Terence O'Neill**. With the election of O'Neill as leader of the Ulster Unionists it seemed as if there might be some thaw in the frozen relationship of Catholics and Protestants.

## “The Troubles”

In the 1960's a young educated leadership emerged from the Catholic community. Among them **Gerry Fitt, John Hume, Bernadette Devlin and Austin Currie**. Inspired by the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, in 1967, they set up the **Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association [NICRA]**. They organised peaceful marches to demand equal rights for Catholics. Fearful of this, some extreme Protestants led by **Reverend Ian Paisley** and aided by **The Orange Order**, organised demonstrations to counter the Civil Rights marches. Riots often resulted and when the police intervened they only attacked and arrested Catholics. As the riots increased in number they attracted the attention of the world's media and images of the discriminatory methods of the RUC and the B Specials were relayed across the globe.

Embarrassed, the British Government was forced to recognise that they had been wrong to allow Unionists to rule Ulster as they pleased since 1920. Downing Street now intervened and the B Specials were abolished, legislation was introduced to give Catholics equality in employment and at last many of the demands of **NICRA** were granted.

Ian Paisley's support was growing and in 1969 Captain Terence O'Neill was forced to resign. In August, Catholic areas in Derry and Belfast were invaded and attacked by loyalists. 30,000 fled to the Republic for refuge. To protect the Catholics the British Govt. sent the army into Northern Ireland. At the same time the IRA had been re-established as the **Provisional IRA** – the old idea of gaining independence by violence became popular again.

In 1970 moderate Nationalists, **Gerry Fitt** and **John Hume** set up a new political party, the **SDLP**. At the same time **Ian Paisley** broke away from the Unionist Party to set up the **DUP**.

The IRA began to arm itself and to try to stop this the British army embarked on a search policy of Catholic homes. Many innocent families had homes destroyed in these searches and when Britain refused to pay for the cost of repairs the army were no longer seen as protectors. Many young Catholics now joined the Provisional IRA or “**Provos**”, whom they saw as the only defenders of their community.

The IRA began a sustained campaign of attacks on the security forces and car bombs in town centres. In retaliation the **Ulster Volunteer Force [UVF]**, began to murder Catholics and a “**Tit-for Tat**” cycle began that was to last for nearly 30 years.

In August 1971 **Internment** [arrest and imprisonment without trial] was introduced. On the first day 337 people were arrested. Once again the mistake of only applying the law to Catholics was made and membership of the IRA soared.

### **Bloody Sunday 30 January 1972.**

During a march to protest against Internment, the British army opened fire on the marchers. 13 peaceful demonstrators were killed. Journalists captured the event on film and the world was outraged. **Edward Heath**, the British Prime Minister abolished self-rule and introduced **Direct Rule** from London, saying the Unionists could no longer be trusted to run Northern Ireland. From now on a **Secretary of State** would govern Ulster.

The British and Irish Governments now sat down to try to find a solution to the violence. In December 1973 the **Sunningdale Agreement** was signed. This allowed for a new power-

sharing govt. to rule Ulster. On January 1, 1974 this new govt. took office. Ian Paisley and the **Ulster Defence Association [UDA]** refused to recognise the new arrangements and decided to make Ulster ungovernable. They called on all Protestants to join a **General Strike**. In May the new govt. collapsed and Direct Rule was restored.

The IRA moved its bombing campaign to mainland Britain. Northern Ireland descended into incredible savagery with both communities apparently intent on destroying each other.

In 1981, IRA prisoners in the **Maze Prison** began a hunger strike to protest against having to wear prison uniforms and their status in prison. British Prime Minister **Margaret Thatcher** refused to give in, even when ten prisoners died on hunger strike. Once again membership of the IRA soared. One of the hunger strikers, **Bobby Sands** had been elected as an MP, while two others had been elected as members of the Dáil. This electoral success convinced **Sinn Féin** to use politics instead of violence as way of getting what they wanted.

### **The Anglo – Irish Agreement 1985.**

This was the next step in the British and Irish Governments attempts to find a solution to Northern Ireland's problems. Margaret Thatcher and Taoiseach Garret Fitzgerald signed this in Hillsborough Castle. It contained the following,

- An **Intergovernmental Conference**, which encouraged Cross-Border co-operation in areas such as the economy, tourism and security.
- A **Permanent Secretariat**, which allowed the Republic a say in the internal affairs of Northern Ireland.
- A confirmation that no change in the status of Northern Ireland could take place without the consent of the majority of the people there.

Unionists were outraged and organised mass protests with the phrase "**Ulster Says No!**" However the days when the British govt. would allow itself to be blackmailed by the Unionists were over. Margaret Thatcher refused to budge and the Agreement became a fixture of life in Ulster.

### **The Peace Process.**

In 1988 John Hume and Gerry Adams began secret talks to explore ways of ending the violence.

In 1993 Taoiseach, **Albert Reynolds** and Prime Minister **John Major** negotiated the **Downing Street Declaration**. Britain declared that she had no strategic reason for remaining in the North. This was a great help to the talks going on between Hume and Adams.

In August 1994, the IRA announced it was going on **ceasefire** to allow peace talks to take place. Two months later the loyalists also went on ceasefire. However John Major's hold on power depended on the support of the Unionists and they slowed the process down so much that no progress was made.

In February 1996, a frustrated IRA announced that it was breaking its ceasefire and exploded a huge bomb in London.

In 1997 General elections were held in Ireland and Britain. **Tony Blair** came to power in a govt. that did not need the support of the Unionists. **Bertie Aherne**, a skilled negotiator became Taoiseach. Both men were determined to finally solve the situation in the North. The IRA went back on ceasefire and peace talks began.

**Senator George Mitchell** from the United States chaired the talks and **President Bill Clinton** used his influence to move both side towards an agreement.

On 10 April 1998, **The Good Friday Agreement** was signed. It proposed to set up,

- An Assembly in the North.
- A power-sharing govt. with ministers from UUP, DUP, SDLP and Sinn Féin.
- Cross-border bodies to promote North and South to work together.

In return the Republic agreed to give up its constitutional claim to the North. In a joint referendum the voters in the Republic and in Northern Ireland approved the Agreement.