



The Apprentice Boys
History – Leaving Cert
Quick Notes

The Apprentice Boys

1.1 Unionist Siege Mentality

- They were always aware that although they made up 60% of the population of Northern Ireland, that they were only 25% of the population of the whole island.
- They feared that Catholics would one day outnumber them (partly due to the fact that they had more children) and try and re-join the Republic.
- They also feared Articles 2 and 3 of De Valera's Constitution which claimed to rule the whole island.
- To prevent this they used gerrymandering, the property qualification and preventing them from getting jobs so that they could never gain control.
- For example, Catholics only made up 10% of the RUC.
- They also formed the RUC and the B Specials (armed police) and had a policy of internment in 1922.

1.2 Catholic Cultural Identity

- Very clear cut - GAA (members of RUC and British army excluded).
- They had the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which mirrored the Orange Order with its parades, flags.
- Catholic schools taught Irish language and Irish history.
- Other cultural events such as Irish dancing.

1.3 Protestant Cultural Identity

- Not as clear cut as nationalist as they could only look to Britain.
- One major thing they had was the Loyal Orders (Orange Order and Apprentice Boys) which held parades celebrating Protestant victories over Catholics.
- The Orange Order was massive, had representation on the Ulster Unionist Council and from 1922-1969 all but 3 ministers belonged to the Orange Order.
- Its main parade was 12th July which commemorated the Battle of the Boyne.

1.4 Apprentice Boys of Derry

- Founded to commemorate the Siege of Derry in 1688-1689. This was when King James II tried to take control of Londonderry which was affiliated with William of

Orange, where 13 apprentice boys closed the gates saying 'No Surrender' on 7th December 1688. The city was relieved by Mountjoy on the 20th of July 1689. This was a powerful symbol of Protestant resistance against Catholic domination.

- It is split up into 8 Parent Clubs and over 200 branches.
- Lord Brookeborough, Terence O'Neill and Ian Paisley were all members.
- They have celebrations to commemorate the Shutting of the Gates and the Relief of Derry at which there is a parade, church service, burning of Lundy.
- They parade with their flags, crimson ashes and bowler hats.
- Membership "is open to anyone who professes Christ through the reformed Protestant faith".
- They parade as a celebration of their tradition, bringing together people of their faith and remember to show 'No Surrender' against the Catholics (SIEGE MENTALITY)

1.5 Problems Caused by the Apprentice Boys

- The Catholics resented this as it seemed to rub the Unionist control in their faces and humiliated them.
- Many of the songs sung by the Apprentice Boys were offensive to Catholics and the Apprentice Boys also did things such as throwing coins down onto the Catholics in a form of disrespect.
- In October 1968 there was a civil rights march planned for Derry (NICRA) but the Apprentice Boys planned a march for the same day. This gave the Home Affairs Minister William Craig the excuse to ban both marches. However, as a result, violence followed.
- On 12th August 1969 the Apprentice Boys held a march which sparked off the Battle of the Bogside.
- At the beginning it was non-violent but Apprentice Boys did things such as throwing coins. Although there were barricades up, the Catholic Youths began to throw stones which led to the RUC attacking. The British Army was brought in two days later to stop the violence.
- After this parades were banned for the next 2 years.
- Then a Parades Commission was set up but the Apprentice Boys refused to co-operate. In 1989 the Nationalists won control of Derry and allowed that the parades could be brought back. Although this time with no insulting songs or coin throwing!

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