



Northern Ireland, 1922-1990

History – Junior Cert

Quick Notes

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In 1920, the Government of Ireland Act passed which granted Home Rule to all of Ireland. Ulster put this into practice by electing a parliament at Stormont. From 1922 to 1969, the Unionist party was in complete control. The parliament was designed for Unionists to have a majority through gerrymandering and rich Unionists having more than one vote. Craig was Northern Ireland's first Prime Minister. Sir Basil Brooke was prime minister from 1943 to 1963. In 1939, Northern Ireland joined the war on the same side as Britain which meant the economy improved dramatically. Many American troops were based in Derry however, Belfast was also heavily damaged by German bombing. In 1945, the welfare state was introduced, which guaranteed free medical care from birth to death. Despite these improvements, the crisis began in 1969. Sir Basil Brooke was replaced by the more open-minded O'Neill who resigned and was replaced by Major James Chichester-Clark. The riots in Belfast in August 1969 marked the beginning of 'The Troubles'. The British Army went into Belfast to take control. Both Republicans and Loyalists began to organise secret organisations e.g. Social Democratic and Labour party (SDLP), Democratic Unionist Party, Alliance Party. After the events on Bloody Sunday, the British Government introduced direct rule of Northern Ireland, suspended Stormont and appointed Whitelaw as the first secretary of state. In December 1973, Britain and Ireland signed the Sunningdale agreement to support a new fairly-elected assembly. In January 1974, a power-sharing executive came into being, with Faulkner as leader and Fitt of the SDLP as the deputy leader. Loyalists were unhappy with this, so Ian Paisley organised a Loyalist strike and Northern Ireland ground to a halt – causing the Sunningdale agreement to fail. Violence continued in the 1970s, with bombs and killings in particular. IRA prisoners were held at the Maze Prison. They wanted to be given prisoner-of-war status but when the British refused they went on hunger strike, led by Bobby Sands. 10 IRA prisoners died, including Sands. In 1985, Thatcher and Fitzgerald signed the Anglo-Irish agreement, which paved the way for peace.

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