

## Have the actions of the British government been the root cause of conflict?

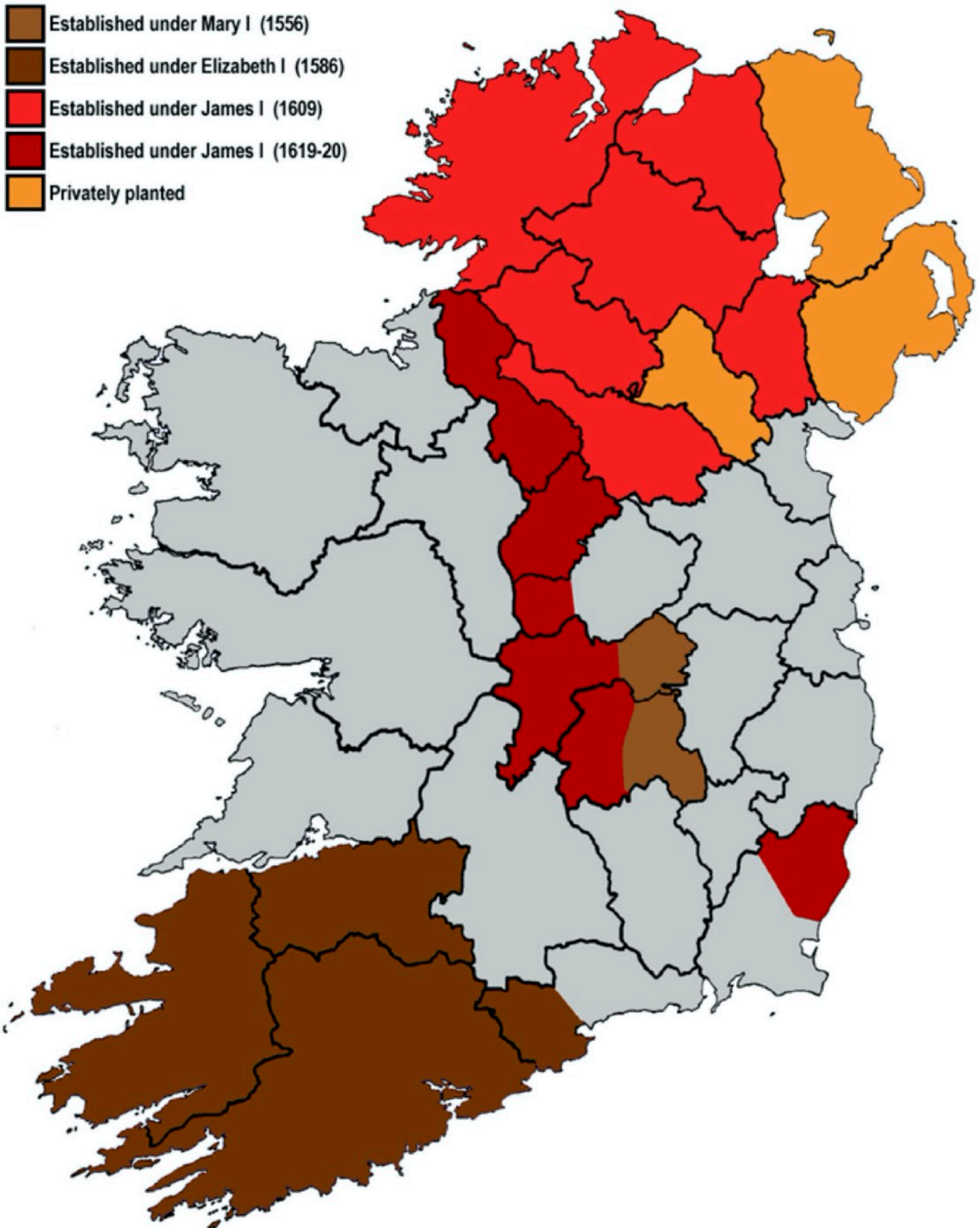
### Yes

- The British government created conflict between Catholics and Protestants in the north of Ireland through favouring Protestants. The British government introduced the Protestant-Catholic sectarian divide by encouraging English and Scottish Protestants to settle on Irish land in the Plantations. The British government then passed the penal laws which oppressed Catholics and favoured Protestants. The government has continued to favour the Protestants ever since and so this inequality has been a constant cause of conflict.
- The British government has consistently used a classic 'divide and rule' strategy in the north of Ireland. The British government has fostered conflict between Protestants and Catholics to protect its own interests. The Partition of Ireland in 1921 is the paramount example of this strategy. The British government encouraged the Protestants to discriminate against Catholics in the new state of Northern Ireland, in order to keep Northern Ireland under British control.
- The British government's incompetent ruling of Ireland caused conflict through allowing huge economic inequalities to develop. During the Famine, 1 million Irish perished after the British government allowed a potato blight to become a tragedy. Meanwhile, the British government ignored the economic inequalities being created by economic growth for Protestants. It was in the interests of Protestants to fight to protect their privileges.
- The British government caused conflict by opposing political and social reform. Such obstinance in the face of demands for democracy and respect for rights built up into frustration. In 1916, protestors were forced to use force to achieve their demands. Political frustration has often erupted into violence.

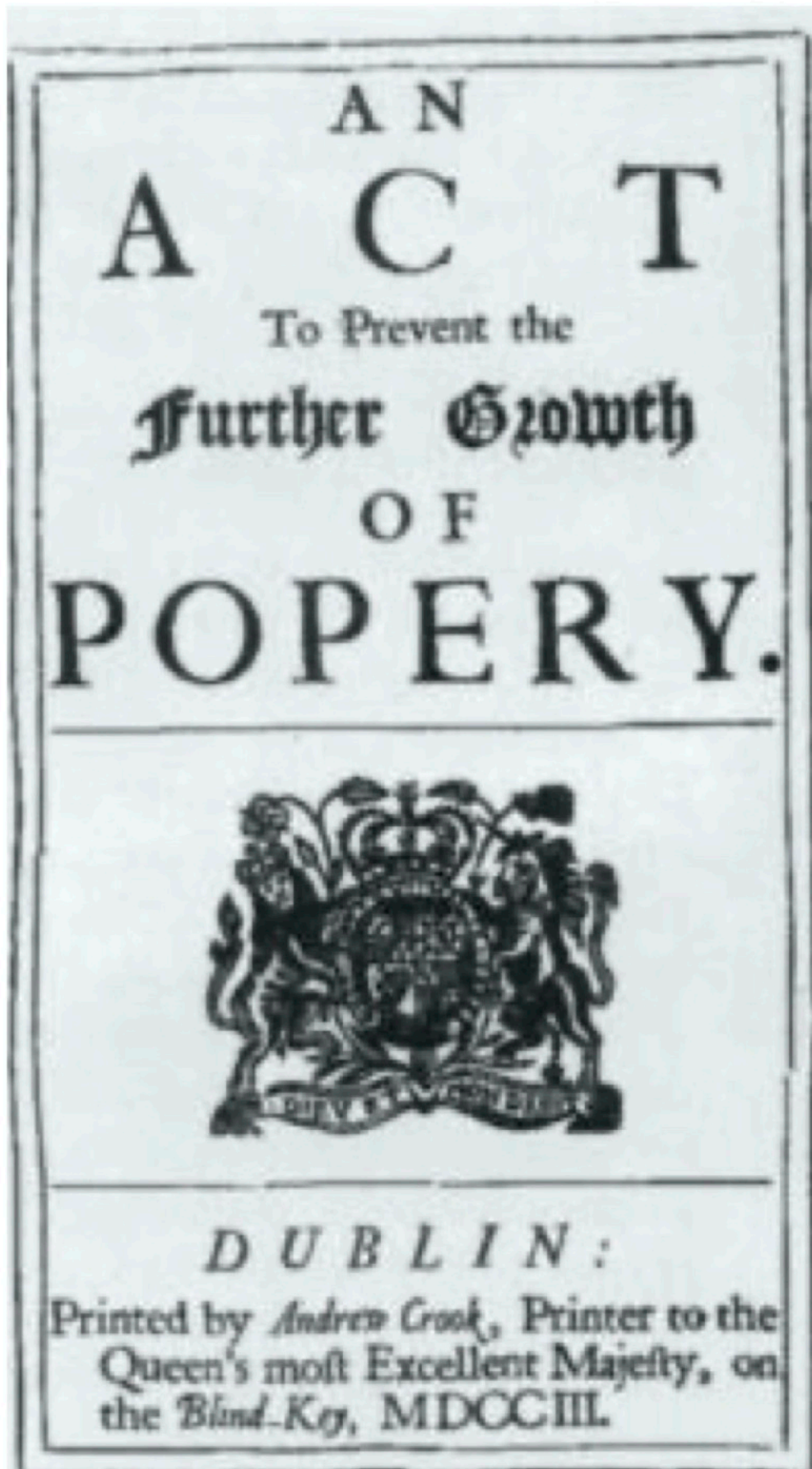
### Plantations in Ireland

The English Crown 'planted' English and Scottish settlers on land confiscated from the Irish population.

Map based on The Open University- BBC Civil War programme



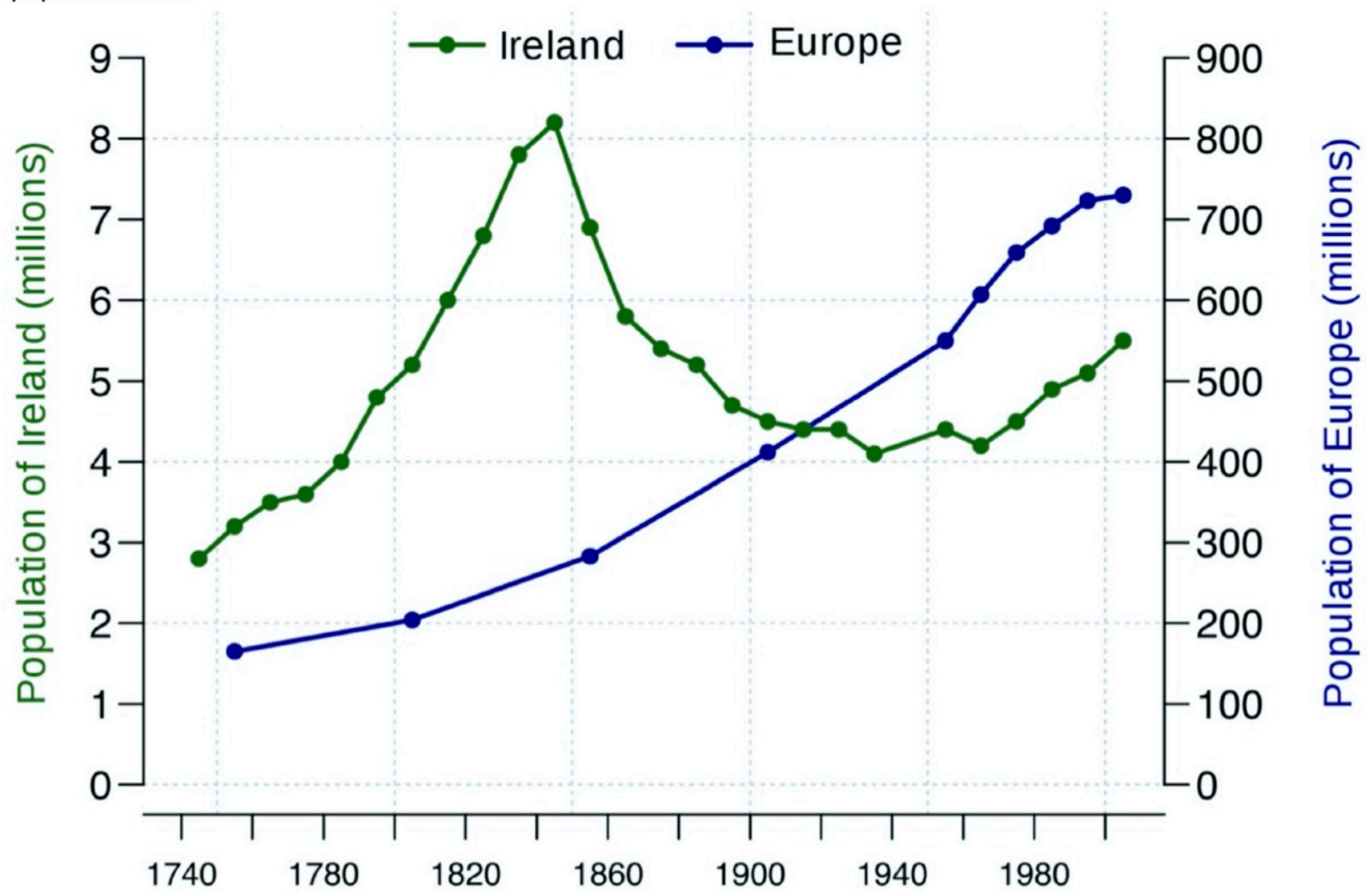
'An Act to prevent the further growth of Popery'  
was one of the Penal Laws against Roman Catholics.  
This Act was passed in 1703 and repealed in 1878



Arthur Young, an early travel writer about political and social conditions, made this sketch showing the importance of the potato crop for the Irish. Young toured Ireland in 1776-1777 and published this sketch in his *Tour in Ireland*, published in 1780 for a British audience.



Population of Ireland compared to populations of Europe as a whole. Graph produced using publicly available population data



John Fergus O'Hea was an Irish cartoonist, known by his signature 'Spex'. This cartoon is from 1912



On 24th April 1916, Irish republicans launched the Easter Rising against British rule and proclaimed Irish independence:

**“We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty; six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms...we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State”**

**Table 2.1: Under-representation of Nationalists at all levels of Local Government**

	Seats per Party		Population per Seat	
	Unionist	Nationalist	Unionist	Nationalist
Derry Corporation	12	8	1541	3665
Armagh County Council	23	5	1638	7098
Lurgan Borough Council	15	0	551	5449*
Omagh Urban Council	12	9	180	397
Irvinestown Rural Council	14	8	424	851

\* In Lurgan Borough Council, the gerrymander was such that just 551 Unionist votes secured 15 seats while 5499 Nationalist votes were unable to secure even one seat.

Source: All-party Anti-Partition Conference, *One Vote Equals Two: A study in the Practice and Purpose of Boundary Manipulation*, (Dublin, 1950).<sup>22</sup>



Photograph of Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association protest outside of the Home Office,  
London on 8th August 1969



Interview with Martin McGuinness, a Provisional IRA leader, in April 1972 with the *Irish Times*:

**“The worst I ever felt was Bloody Sunday. I wandered about stunned, with people crying and looking for their relatives and I thought of all that guff about honour between soldiers. The British army knew right well we wouldn’t fight them with all those thousands of people there, so they came in and murdered the innocent. I used to worry about being killed before that day, but now I don’t think about death at all.”**

Photo of Bobby Sands' funeral, 7th May 1981. Bobby Sands was a member of the Provisional IRA who died on hunger strike while in prison. The individuals wearing balaclavas form an IRA escort. One of the pallbearers is Gerry Adams



Polling undertaken by a research team led by Dr Colin Irwin, Queen's University Belfast

Per cent	Date	All NI	Protestant	Catholic
Want Belfast Agreement to work	February 1999	93	89	97
Want Belfast Agreement to work	October 1999	83	72	98
Want Belfast Agreement to work	May 2000	85	74	98
Want Belfast Agreement to work	February 2003	75	60	92

A mural on a house near the Falls road, Belfast. 'An gorta mór' = the Great Famine in Gaelic

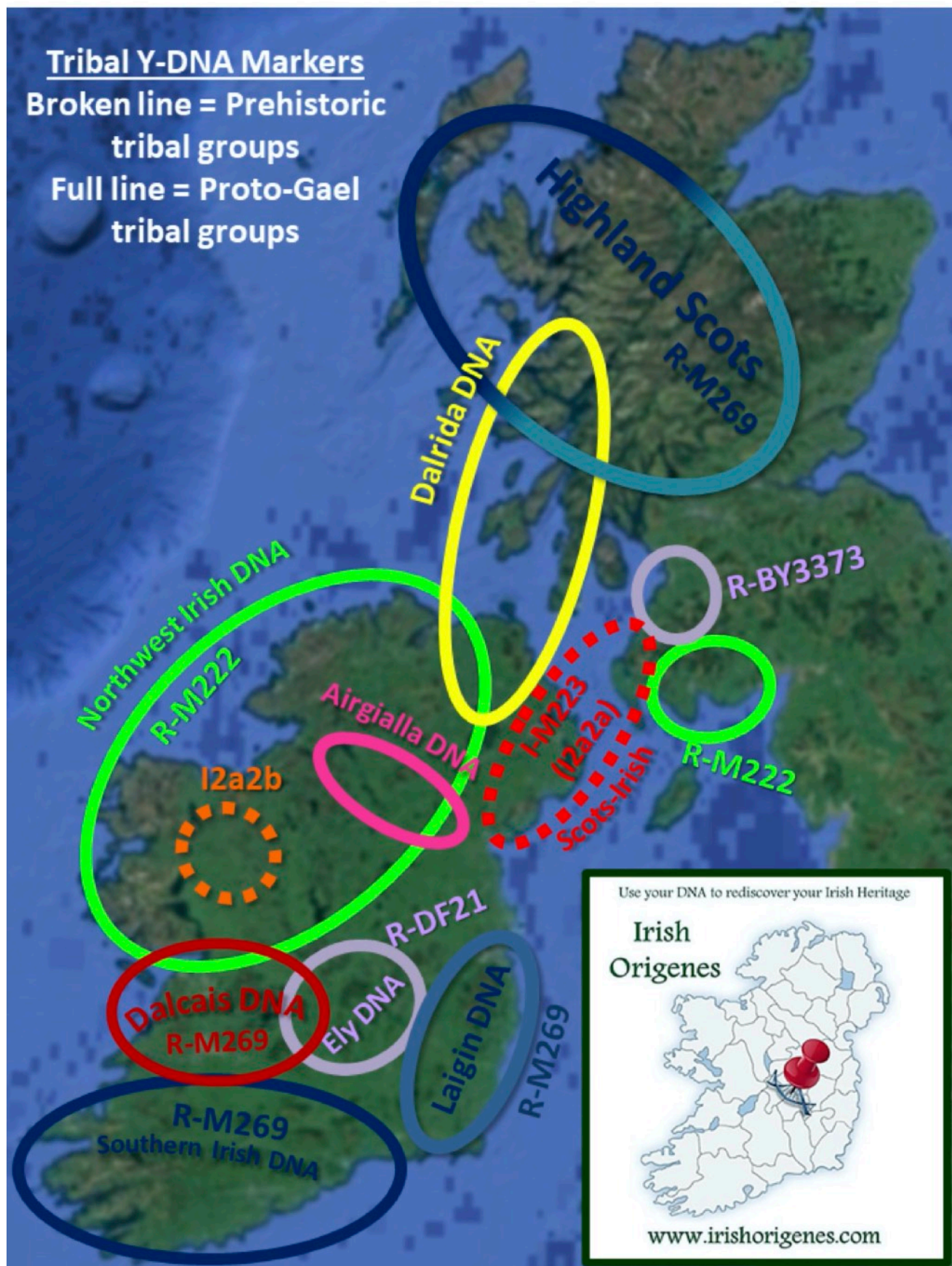


## Have the actions of the British government been the root cause of conflict?

### No

- The Catholics have always insisted on having their own way. When they were in a majority in pre-partition Ireland they asserted their rights over the pro-British Protestant minority and demanded independence. But after partition the Catholic minority living in the Protestant majority Northern Ireland have been unwilling to accept majority rule and it was that which started the conflict.
- Catholics have caused conflict through sectarian hatred of Protestants. Religious hatred led to massacres of Protestants during the 17th century. Envious of Protestant success in both farming and trade and industry, one of the reasons Catholics demanded independence was to seize Protestant land and assets. The Protestant population of the south was largely driven out after independence whereas the Catholic population of the North has flourished.
- Catholics have often been quick to use violence to achieve their ends and the British government has been reluctantly forced to intervene to restore law and order. This Catholic use of violence was the root cause of conflict. In the 1640s, 1867, 1916, 1919-21, and during the Troubles, Catholics sparked conflict by using violence to achieve political goals. And even when they didn't use violence they kept the threat of violence live in the background.
- Outside actors and enemies of the United Kingdom have encouraged Catholics to use violence in order to weaken the United Kingdom. French troops supported the Catholic army at the Battle of the Boyne. American support for radical groups, such as the Fenians and the IRA has enabled such radical groups to launch armed uprisings. Germany offered weapons to the nationalists in 1916. Libya supplied the IRA with weapons during the Troubles. Foreigners have consistently exploited Irish Catholics to attack the British state.

This map is based on the analysis of hundreds of DNA case studies by Dr Tyrone Bowers for the website Irish Origenes. These studies examined which prehistoric tribal group modern-day Irish and Scottish individuals. The analysis revealed the ancestral links between Ireland and Scotland



Dr Mary O'Dowd, of Queen's University Belfast, outlined the economic background of migrants to Ulster. Dr O'Dowd was speaking to BBC History:

**“The Scottish economy was in decline in the 1630s in particular. Very poor people from rural Scotland felt that Ireland offered them more prospects for improving their economic condition. But they came over to Ireland with very little: they came over from rural backgrounds where they were probably used to a pastoral form of farming. So when they came onto the Plantation lands, they had very few resources to exploit the land in any innovative way: they simply want to continue on the same pastoral form of agriculture that they had done in their own home areas back in Scotland. So they continue in some ways the same fairly low level of subsistence in Ireland as they had had in Scotland. ”**



## Testimony from the 1641 Rebellion

Francis Leiland, a Protestant living in County Armagh, recorded this testimony on 19 July 1643:

### **Original:**

“This deponent hath lived within the parrish & Countie of Armaghe for the space of thirty yeres together last past [i.e. since 1613] and above & by that meanes very well knew the Cuntry & many of the Cuntry people thereabouts: And is verely perswaded that when the present Rebellion begun there were of the English and Scotts protestants dwelling within the two parrishes of Armagh and Logghall the number of eight thowsand at the Least men women and children protestants the most of which the deponent is verely perswaded were murthered & putt to death by the Rebels, by drowning burning hanging starveing the sword & by other cruell deaths and torments; & that but a very few escaped’... distrucion & the burning of the Churches of Armagh & towne & of Castle dillon & other howses Castles & buildinges most of which this deponent saw on fyre by the Rebels those braue Rojall [royal] plantacions there are quite demolished wasted & of all the former Inhabitants (saveing the base irish) depopulated”

### **In Modern English:**

“This witness has lived in the parish and county of Armagh for thirty years and knew very well the country and many of the country people thereabouts. He is persuaded that, when the present Rebellion began, there were at least 8000 English and Scottish Protestants- men, women and children- living in the two parishes of Armagh and Logghall. The witness is persuaded that most of these Protestants were murdered and put to death by the rebels, by drowning, burning, hanging, starving, the sword and by other cruel deaths and torments; and that very few escaped... The witness reported the destruction and burning of the churches of Armagh, the town, Castle Dillon and other houses, castles and buildings. The witness saw the rebels setting on fire most of these buildings. Those royal plantations are quite demolished and the former inhabitants have fled, except for the base, native Irish.”

This testimony is taken from the archives of the 1641 Depositions Project, Trinity College Library, Dublin. The testimony has been reworded into Modern English as well.

An Act for Better Securing the Government by Disarming Papists, passed in  
1695

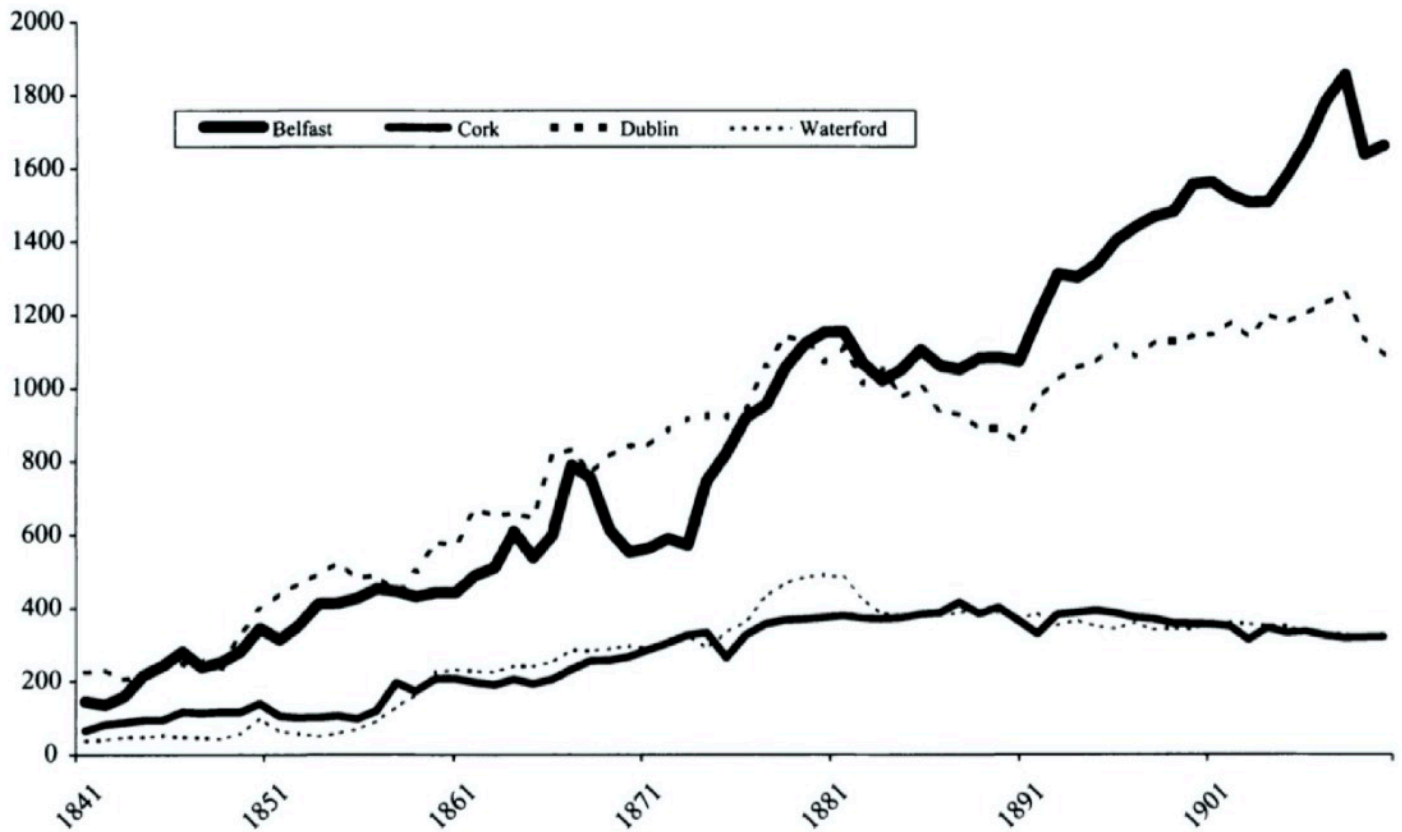
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A N  
A C T  
For the Better Securing the Govern-  
ment by Disarming  
P A P I S T S.



D U B L I N,  
Printed by Andrew Crook, Printer to the Kings Most  
Excellent Majesty, on Ormonde-Key. 1695.

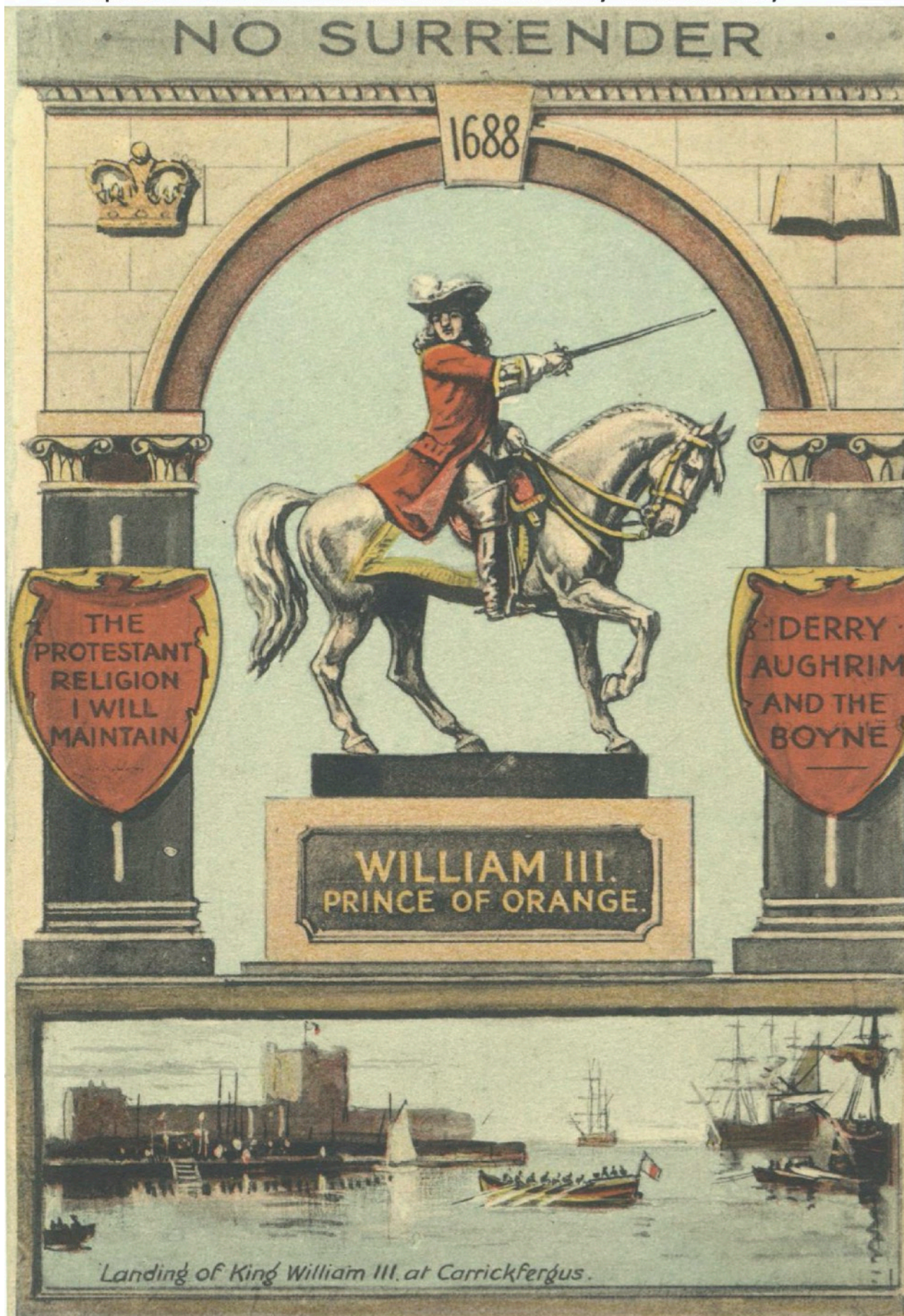
Volume of Trade from Irish ports (1000 tons) taken from P.Solar's article in the The Economic History Review November 2006



Knocking-off time at the Harland & Wolff shipyard, 1910. The ship in the background is *The Titanic* being built. Harland & Wolff was the most prolific builder of ocean liners in the world. The workforce was overwhelmingly Protestant



A postcard circulated in Ulster in the early 20th century



Shall Ulster freemen e'er be slaves?  
No! Rather be its soil their graves.

Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant was signed by 471,000 people in September 1912 during the Home Rule crisis



## Ulster's Solemn League and Covenant.

**B**eing convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as of the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are under-written, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George V., humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant throughout this our time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished position of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland. ¶ And in the event of such a Parliament being forced upon us we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognise its authority. ¶ In sure confidence that God will defend the right we hereto subscribe our names. ¶ And further, we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant.

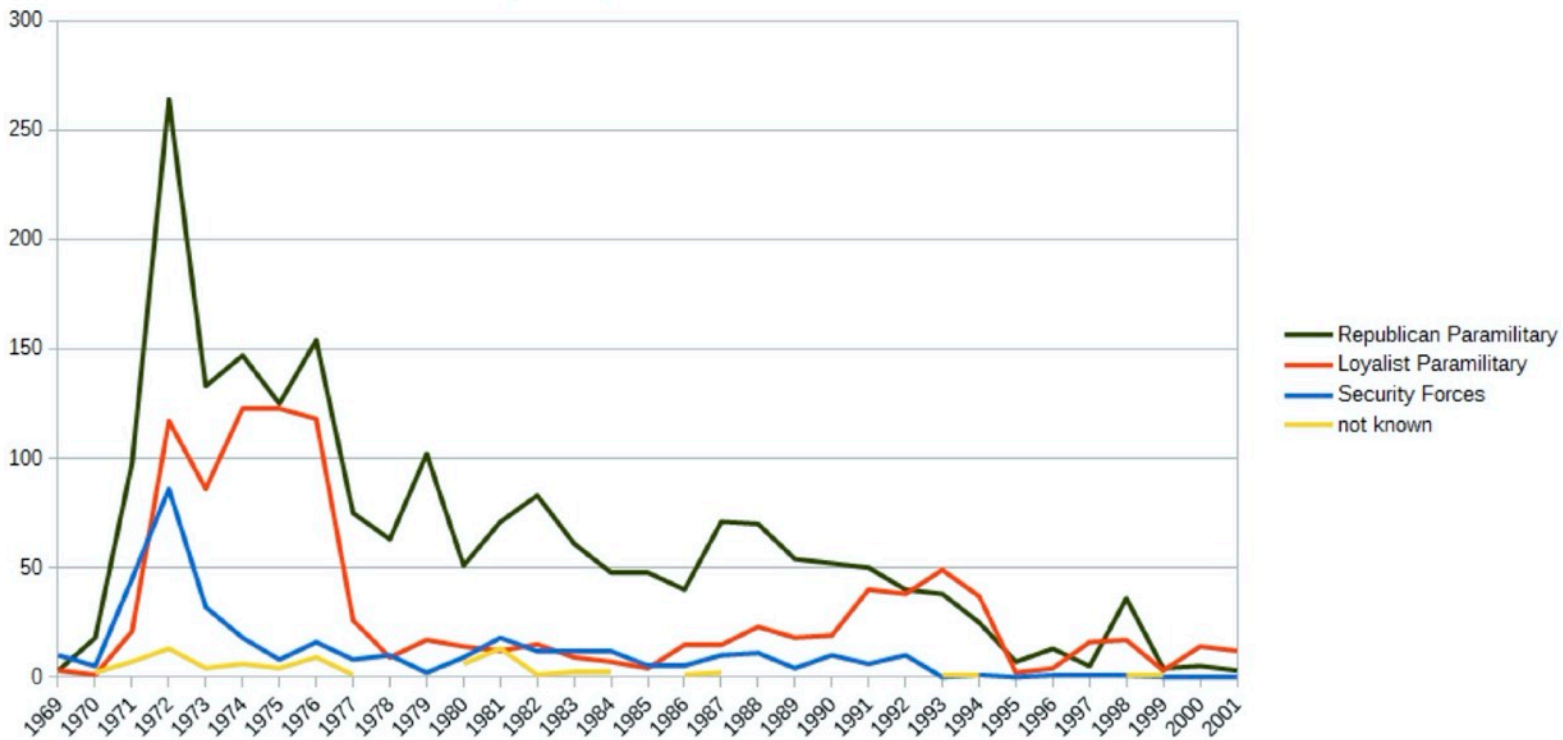
The above was signed by me at \_\_\_\_\_  
"Ulster Day," Saturday, 28th September, 1912.

— God Save the King. —

Photo of the Protestant Sandy Row area of Belfast in 1971. The mural depicts King William III (William of Orange).  
Credit: Getty Images



Responsibility for Troubles-related deaths, 1969-2001



This graph is based on an index of deaths in the Troubles collected by the Conflict Archive on the Internet, at Ulster University



Orange Order march on 12th July 2015- the annual parade to celebrate William's victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690



## 'Catholic majority possible' in NI by 2021

By Gareth Gordon  
BBC News NI Political Correspondent

© 19 April 2018

**It is likely Catholics will outnumber Protestants by 2021 in Northern Ireland, according to a leading academic.**

Dr Paul Nolan, who specialises in monitoring the peace process and social trends, told BBC News NI that there could be more Catholics than Protestants in Northern Ireland by the centenary of the foundation of the state.

However, he says unionists should not be too alarmed because coming from a Catholic or Protestant community background does not necessarily equate with support for a United Ireland or for remaining in the UK.



The last census in 2011 put the Protestant population at 48%, just 3% more than Catholics at 45%.

More recent figures from 2016 show that among those of working age 44% are now Catholic and 40% Protestant.



The difference is even more marked among schoolchildren with 51% Catholic, 37% Protestant.

Only among the over 60s is there a majority of Protestants with 57%, compared to Catholics on 35%.

Dr Nolan said: "Three years from now we will end up, I think, in the ironic situation on the centenary of the state where we actually have a state that has a Catholic majority."