



CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Complete History

HAVE THE ACTIONS OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT BEEN THE ROOT CAUSE OF CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND?





Britain introduced the sectarian divide

Source 1: English anti-Catholic propaganda from 1667 showing the Jesuits (Catholics) throwing grenades at the world, the Pope fanning the flames of the 1666 Great Fire of London, and Guy Fawkes entering the vault underneath Parliament. Frontispiece to 'Pyrotechnica Loyalana, Ignatian Fire-Works'





Britain introduced the sectarian divide

Source 2: Anglo-Irish MP Edmund Burke commenting on the Penal Laws passed in 1792

'a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.'



The Catholics were the aggressors

Source 3: Woodcut print from 'The Teares of Ireland' by James Cranford, 1642, an account of the cruelties inflicted on the Protestants in Ireland in the Irish Rebellion of 1641





The Catholics were the aggressors

Source 4: Deposition of Elizabeth Price, Eyewitness to the massacres of Protestants during the 1641 rebellion, 26 June 1643

The Rebels (in scornfull manner would delight much to imitate & bragg of to others, And a great number of other protestants especially women and children whom the Rebels could take they pricked and stabbed with their pitchforks skeanes & swords and would slash mangle and cutt them in their heades breasts faces Armes hands and other parts of their bodies, but not kill them outright, but leave them wallowing in their bloods to languish, pine and starve to death, And whenas those soe mangled people desired them to kill them out of their paine, they would deny it but somtymes (after a day or twoe) they would dash their braines out with stones, or by some other cruell way kill them out, which they accounted done as a great favour.



Britain callously disregarded Irish lives



Source 5: A sketch of a woman and children during the Famine, Illustrated London News, 22 December 1849



Britain callously disregarded Irish lives

Source 6: Extract from a letter from Lord Clarendon, Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to Prime Minister John Russell, 26 April 1849

I don't think there is another legislature in Europe that would disregard such suffering as now exists in the west of Ireland, or coldly persist in a policy of extermination



Catholics colluded with foreign powers

Source 7: End of the Irish Invasion ; — or — the Destruction of the French Armada, 20 January 1797, James Gillray. The image depicts the failure of the French fleet aiming to land a large expeditionary force in Ireland during the winter of 1796–1797 which would join with the United Irishmen and drive the British out of Ireland.





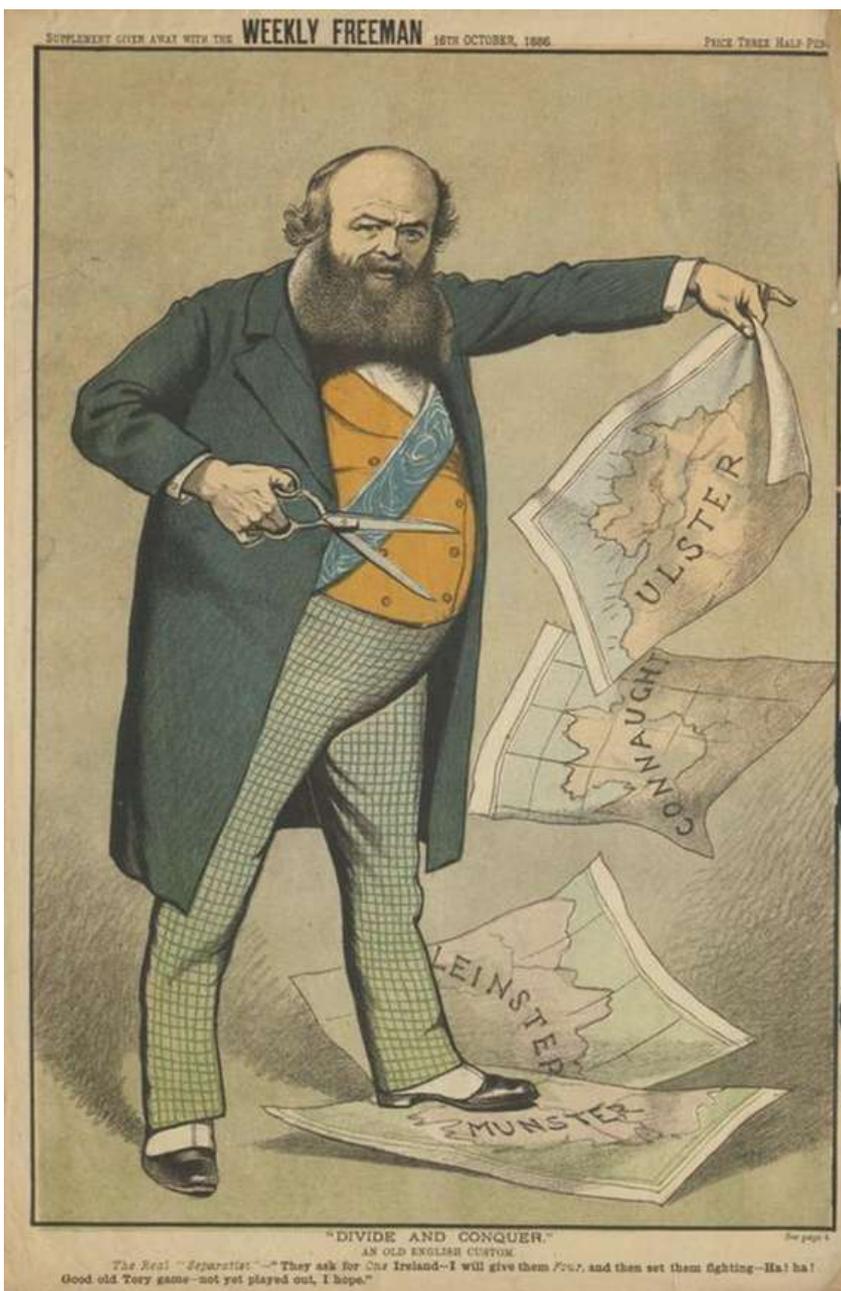
Catholics colluded with foreign powers

Source 8: Extract from 'The Long Peace Process: The United States of America and Northern Ireland, 1960-2008', by Andrew Sanders, 2019

Barrett was one of a handful of Irish natives in the United States who were both active and supportive of the IRA's armed campaign. Another, and perhaps the most famous, was Mayo native George Harrison, who migrated to New York in 1938 where he joined Clan Na Gael.³¹ There he met Liam Cotter who became the IRA's representative in New York during the 1950s. The two men, working with local gun dealer George De Meo, began to supply weapons to Ireland using Irish sailors stopped off at Brooklyn docks. By the late 1950s, they had sourced and supplied machine guns to the IRA. When Brendan Behan visited New York in 1960, he was reported to have met the two men who sent him back to Ireland with guns and ammunition.³² Harrison became so prolific that at his 1982 weapons trial he took objection to the prosecution's assertion that he had been running guns for six months: his lawyer protested to the court 'Mr Harrison is insulted ... he wants the court to know that there has not been a weapon sent to Northern Ireland in the last 25 years without Mr. Harrison'.³³



Britain used the colonial method of 'divide and rule'



Source 9: "Divide and Conquer." An Old English Custom. The Weekly Freeman, 1886. Caption reads: "The Real 'Separatist.' - 'They ask for One Ireland-I will give them Four, and then set them fighting-Ha! ha! Good old Tory game-not yet played out, I hope.'"



Britain used the colonial method of 'divide and rule'

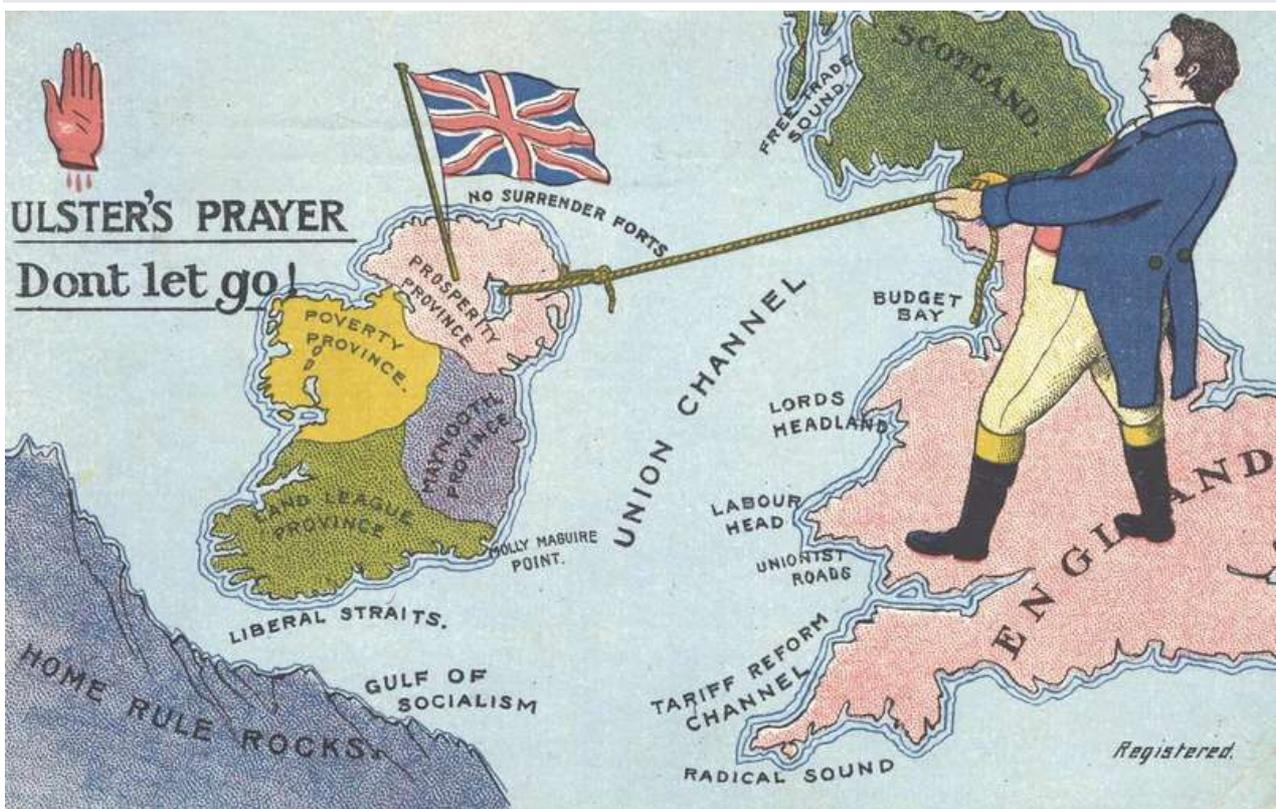
Source 10: Extract from 'Ireland and the British Empire', by K. Kenny, 2004

Assertions that Ireland's place in the Empire was unique or anomalous merely reiterate the shopworn theme of exceptionalism. Such claims are no more or less true of Ireland than of any other part of the Empire. Each of Britain's many possessions was distinctive; none was anomalous. All of them shared a common history as parts of a larger entity, the British Empire. Ireland's defining peculiarity was that it stood at the world's metropolitan centre; but it was no less a British possession for that. If, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, India represented one form of colony, Nigeria a second, and Australia a third, then Ireland represented yet another, combining some aspects of these three with highly particular characteristics of its own.



Catholics envied Protestant success and caused their own problems

Source 11: Ulster Unionist Postcard, 1912, Ulster is labelled as Ireland's 'Prosperity Province'





Catholics envied Protestant success and caused their own problems

Source 12: Extract from 'The History of Economic Development in Ireland, North and South' by John Bradley, 1999

The Act of Union ensured continued access for Irish agricultural goods to the expanding British market and a sector- by- sector examination of the performance of Irish industry shows up the weakness of the nationalist case in blaming the Union.

...Johnson and Kennedy's conclusion is difficult to fault on strictly economic grounds in the context of the nineteenth century environment: "Economic conditions for the exercise of autonomy in the first half of the nineteenth century were far less favourable (than the second half). Being a region of the UK economy was then, perhaps, the optimal arrangement for Ireland." (1991: 28)



British misrule caused the radicalisation of Irish politics

Source 13: Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 24 April 1916. Issued by the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army during the Easter Rising in Ireland

POBLACHT NA h-EIREANN. THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

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. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE.

SEAN Mac DIARMADA,

P. H. PEARSE,

JAMES CONNOLLY.

THOMAS MacDONAGH,

EAMONN CEANNT,

JOSEPH PLUNKETT.



British misrule caused the radicalisation of Irish politics

Source 14: Mural on the Ballymurphy Road, Belfast that calls the Great Famine 'Ireland's Holocaust', 6 April 2007





Catholics have always insisted on having their own way

Source 15: Recollections of Padraig O’Kelly, cited in ‘The Rising : Ireland : Easter 1916’ by Fearghal McGarry, 2010

Most rebels accepted that public opinion was strongly against them. One Volunteer, returning from the races at Fairyhouse as news of the Rising began to spread, observed: “In the railway carriage on the way back there was a good deal of violent criticism of the Volunteers for provoking a hopeless conflict and endangering the lives and property of citizens. The criticism . . . could, I think, be taken as a fair cross-section of feeling among the big majority of the populace.



Catholics have always insisted on having their own way

Source 16: Decree of the Bishop of Cork in reference to ambushes, kidnapping and murder, debated in the House of Commons on 21 February 1921

Beside the guilt involved in these acts by reason of their opposition to the law of God, anyone who shall within this Diocese of Cork, organise to take part in an ambush or in kidnapping or otherwise shall be guilty of murder or attempted murder, shall incur by the very fact the censure of excommunication.



Rejection of British rule is a legacy of centuries of persecution

Source 17: Families of Bloody Sunday victims demand that the soldiers involved in the massacre be prosecuted, 2019





Rejection of British rule is a legacy of centuries of persecution

Source 18: Extract from the Special Powers Act (Northern Ireland), 1922, otherwise known as ‘the flogging Act.’ The Act was not repealed until 1973

No person shall by word of mouth or in writing, or in any newspaper, periodical, book, circular, or other printed publication

b) spread reports or make statements intended or likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty, or to interfere with the success of any police or other force acting for the preservation of the peace or maintenance of order in Northern Ireland;

c)...and no person shall produce any performance on any stage, or exhibit any picture or cinematograph film, or commit any act which is intended or likely to cause any disaffection, ...he shall be guilty of an offence against these regulations.

If any person without lawful authority or excuse has in his possession...any document containing a report or statement the publication of which would be a contravention of the foregoing provisions of this regulation, he shall be guilty of an offence against these regulations, unless he proves that he did not know...



British rule was a stabilising and a positive influence on Ireland

Source 19: Table comparing five indicators of Economic progress in Ireland, North and South, from 'Nationalism and Unionism in Ireland: Economic Perspectives' by Liam Kennedy, Queen's University, Belfast, 2015

Nationalist Ireland (South)

		1800-50		1850-80		1880-1914
1	Living Standards	0		1		1
2	Economic crises	0		0?		1
3	Industrialisation	0		0		0
4	Emigration	0		0		1
5	Economic Justice	0		1		1
		0		2		4

Unionist Ireland (North)

		1800-50		1850-80		1880-1914
1	Living Standards	0		1		1
2	Economic crises	0		1		1
3	Industrialisation	1		1		1
4	Emigration	0		0		1
5	Economic Justice	1		1		1
		2		4		5



British rule was a stabilising and a positive influence on Ireland

Source 20: Barricades blocking main roads in Dublin erected by rebels in the Easter Rising, April 1916

