

THE POLITICS OF VISUAL CULTURE IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

The case of Northern Ireland

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Class 1: General Introduction

1) Object and objectives of the course

- **Politics and Visual Culture**

Extremely old concept probably used for political purposes from Art exists. Ancient Egypt. Power of Art when pharaohs asked architects of Pyramids. Tool for political communications, propaganda or to manifest domination and power. France was one of the biggest users (Louis XIV Versailles etc).

It's important to remember that nobles are not the only ones to use art as political means: lots of social movements use art to express political ideologies. For example: the US Civil Rights movements (Black Panthers who used drama and theater). In terms of Visual Culture, a very nice example would be the use of posters during May 1968 movements in France or murals in South Africa one strong political expression. In Palestine graffiti on sections of the Israeli wall.

In all these cases we should not reduce Art to a political message, there's always something else that can be perceived. However, for politics students it is very important to become aware of those political messages. Art and images can have a power on viewers. We should learn how to decode pictures and learn the message it carries for viewers and readers and how can Art change the apprehension that we have of some movements.

- Culture can reinforce divisions:

In some cases, it will serve to reinforce divisions in two different places: it will lend symbolical force or emotional energy to an ideology.

Culture may sometimes offer new grounds for old disputes for example in Northern Ireland. Flag disputes and routine of parades. Maintain a certain level of antagonism. The new ground of dispute in Northern Ireland is the question of who can demonstrate, in which places, when, who can the most express their ideas and put flags etc.

- Culture can be used as a tool to achieve reconciliation:

Images can have an impact on society and therefore have an impact on political processes. It maintains, challenge etc.

- **Northern Ireland: Social Divisions and Conflict**

What's the nature of division between the two Irelands? It is difficult to define what Northern Ireland is. Politically Northern Ireland is part of Great Britain but political texts in England contradict themselves on whether Ireland is a country, a region, a province etc.

Geographically Northern Ireland is part of the Island of Ireland. Historically it is basically part of both the history of the Republic of Ireland and the history of the United Kingdom. It is a political entity such as other political entity which are part of the UK.

When was Northern Ireland considered as a political entity? It was not always the case; it was created quite recently through an Act of the British Parliament pass by the Parliament in 1920. The existence of North Ireland as an entity was confirmed one year after in 1921. The creation of Northern Ireland as a political entity is referred as the **Partition**. Ireland was given a large amount of autonomy and Northern Ireland remained part of the UK. The Partition was an attempt to find the least unsatisfying solution when Ireland wanted to be independent and the North wanted to remain part of the UK.

Northern Ireland is a case study of a divided society. Arm conflict that lasted for 40 years and still has remains nowadays.

- The conflict in Northern Ireland

It is referred as "The Troubles" which is an euphemism. It started on the late 60's – early 70's. Over 3,500 people died. Peak of violence during the 70's and 80's. It is very often considered that the conflict ceased with the **Belfast Agreement in 1998** improved by a referendum in Northern Ireland in 1998. However, some violence did continue in a sporadic way. The Belfast Agreement introduced the "devolution" and the transferring of power from London to

- Northern Ireland, a Divided Society

Coexistence of two groups with competitive identity. The majority in the North East province are unionists and form most of the people today such as at the time. The Unionists want the province to stay part of the UK as they tend to see themselves as British. They are mainly protestants. Very often they don't want to be referred as Unionists.

The second group is the Nationalists and they see themselves as Irish. At least they are in favor of the Republic of Ireland playing a bigger role in the administration of Northern Ireland and in the relation between UK and Ireland. They are mainly Catholics.

The two groups assert to fight for their idea of national identity. Which status correspond to the territory of Northern Ireland.

The conflict in Northern Ireland was not essentially because of religion, it is a conflict about national identity, territory, and the religion took a part in consolidating the oppositions between the two groups.

The result of that is that Northern Ireland is a divided society and a fractured society with segregation.

- Political views and religious affiliations in Northern Ireland today

Political views are influenced but religious affiliations but not only. Since the 2000's there has been a growing number of Catholics who no longer want to be part of the Republic of Ireland. In terms of demographic change, the number of Catholics has increased (now they represent 45% when they represented 35% in 1961) and this is essentially due to the birth rate of Catholics which is traditionally higher than Protestant's (they have more babies).

This is creating anxiety in the Unionist population. However, since the Belfast agreement the proportion of Catholics in favor of Northern Ireland being part of the UK improved too. It has been said by several commentators that the Brexit may reverse that. Brexit will have a very important impact on Northern Ireland. Economically the province is more closely dependent to the EU than any other part of the UK. It may lead to a majority in favor of Northern Ireland leaving the UK but we are not here yet.

The term militant in French means someone who is politically active, but in English militant has to do with the military. Very often

- Naming places: a sign of cultural and political divisions:

Northern Ireland is the official name of the province. **Ulster** is also one of its appellations such as the **North of Ireland** and "**the 6 Counties**". Often Unionists prefer one appellation among those three: Ulster, but the Nationalists don't because Ulster nowadays does not refer exactly as the historical county of Ulster was when Ireland was divided in 4 main counties. Now the frontiers of Ulster as Northern Ireland are not the same. Using the term Ulster is a way to suggest that the existence of Northern Ireland is legit because it is the continuation of the county of Ulster.

There is no consensus in Northern Ireland on how to name the county of Derry: Londonderry or just Derry, or Londonderry/Derry.

- **Northern Ireland: The Politics of Visual Culture**

- Murals

Mural paintings can be seen on the wall of working-class places in Londonderry/Derry and Belfast. And we can also see them in some other smaller places. Nowadays there has been re-imagining politics to make them more abstract, peaceful etc.

- Films

Films have been extremely efficient such as Bloody Sunday or Hunger. There are few films that express unionists point of views, most of them express nationalists' views. It is important to think critically about those films.

Murals and Films will be the major content of our examples in this course. We will also analyze a piece of architecture, some posters, stamps, press photographs, postcards and some cartoons, but mainly murals and films. We will not focus on the Fine Arts.

We will try to understand the cultural and historical of those murals and films to raise the questions of identity, ideology, representation of the conflict. Making sense of pictures by analyzing iconography, context(s), function(s), materiality.

2) Practical information

- **Assessment**

Final oral exam in May 2020: pick two topics from a box and choose one of the two topics. Two essay questions, two images analyses or one of each.

30 minutes preparation, 10 minutes presentation and then questions.

- **Personal work**

Oral participation will be put into consideration. Reading learning dates, getting familiar with the methodology of picture analysis, watching the filmography, etc.

- **Bibliography**

Watch the movie by Neil JORDAN "Michael Collins" 1996 (3/3/2020) and the Movie "The Wind That Shakes the Barley" by Ken LOACH

Lesson One: From Divisions in Ireland to a Partitioned Island

1. The Historical Roots of the Northern Irish Question

1.1. *The Conquest of Ireland (12th c-Tudor age)*

1.1.1. *Ireland before the Conquest*

The Conquest of Ireland took place in several stages. A process rather than an isolated event. Before the conquest by the Anglo-Norman in the 12th century, Ireland was politically divided in several different kingdoms. Fragmented island. Still there was many factors of unity despite this political fragmentation. Cultural traits that united the all the island or Ireland:

- *Ethnically the island was inhabited by and essentially Celtic population.*
- *Largely agrarian population (rural society)*

- *Ireland was also a Christian society.* St-Patrick arrived in Ireland to serve as a bishop and is remembered as the major figure of Christianization in Ireland (converged Christians together).

During the early Middle Age there was the development of a very rich culture of monasteries in Ireland and they were very important centers for the diffusion of culture. These monasteries played an important role in the Golden Age of Ireland between the 7 and 10th century: illuminations inside the manuscripts which were the main activity of monks. Illuminations was the main cultural form associated to Ireland during the Middle Age: for example, **the Book of Kells**.

Some of the descriptive patterns are a central element like the Celtic decorative motives which are still a motive used in murals by nationalists nowadays (= *motif de l'entrelas ou noeud celtique*).

1.1.2. *The Anglo-Norman Conquest*

The Anglo-Norman conquest took place in 1165. The Use of "Norman" to call England is used to qualify the new dynasty in England. Dynastic group who arrived from Normandy and conquered England in the 11th century. The conquest was not massive, not centralized and for that matter not complete.

Two contributions by the Anglo-Norman to Ireland:

- Creation of the Parliament in 1297
- Following the conquest, a mixed society has started to emerge with lots of marriage between Anglo-Normans and Irish people. Mixite. Anglo-Irish people coexisting with the Gaelic Irish.

English influence in Ireland remained limited, by the 15th century the English influence was restricted to the "Pale" the region of Dublin. There was lots of agitation and proto powers in the Ireland. The Crown was controlling very little of the territory.

1494 Attempt to exert fuller control upon Ireland with the "**Poynings Law**" → no law could be taken by the Irish Parliament without prior assessment of the British Parliament (subordination of the Irish Parliament).

1.1.3. *The Tudor Conquest (16th c.)*

The Moment of the complete conquest of Ireland by England achieved. Henry the 8th (1509 – 1547).

Establishment of stronger English control on Ireland: in 1541 Henry was officially declared King of Ireland by the Irish Parliament. This conquest also relied the foreign policy of anglicization: generalization of the English language, customs and manners...

Imposition of a new religion:

- SCHISM: In 1534 Henry the VIII declares himself supreme head of the Church of England and head of the Anglican Church of Ireland. Declares that he does not recognize the authority of Rome anymore. Little story: he wanted to remarry, and the Church did not. He seized all the goods of the monasteries and churches in England.
- Anglican Church of Ireland becomes Protestant under Elizabeth I (1558 – 1603). She was a protestant and she managed to reach a settlement with England in order to make people accept Protestants.
- She was faced with a very strong opposition in Ireland both from the Gaelic Irish and the Anglo-Irish who both wanted to remain Catholics.

1.2. ***From Plantation to Penal Laws: Building the Protestant Ascendancy (17th – 18th centuries)***

This notion of a Protestant Ascendancy is that a specific society was introduced in Ireland: society that is based on inequality between Catholics and Protestants.

1.2.1. *Plantation*

Plantation policy: the idea is that whether Anglo-Irish or Gaelic Irish who rebel against the authority of the British Crown would be confiscated of their possessions and those possessions would be redistributed to trustworthy English people. Policy that has a very strong and dramatic effect on land ownership:

- Dramatic change in land ownership
 - o 1603: 90% of the land owned by Catholics (Irish or Anglo-Irish/old English)
 - o At the end of the 17th c. 20% of the land was owned by the Catholics. 70% has been transferred to Protestants (“New English” and Scots).

- ***In Ulster:*** Ireland was already divided before the Conquest in 4 traditional and historical regions. In these regions throughout the Tudor age we had in Ulster a very strong rebellion. In 1609 there was a very important defeat for the Anglo-Irish and many of the rebel leaders decided to flee out of Ulster “*The Flight of the Earls*”. This created an ideal situation from the eyes of the English State: it was easier to control the territory and the place was available for new settlements.

For this reason, the Plantation policy under the Stuarts continued and Ulster saw the most massive inputs of new English settlers. And it was geographically speaking the closest area from England and Scotland. Finally, there was lots of encouragements for new settlers to choose Ulster because to contain any form of rebellion in the future it was a good plan to settle English people. **This is one of the reasons we have such a different balance of Protestants between Ulster and the 3 other regions of Ireland nowadays.**

1.2.2. *Sectarian Tensions*

Tensions between Catholics and Protestants reached a peak in the 1640's and they don't always have to do with faith itself.

This was a time of great tensions not only in Ireland but also in England: tensions between King Charles I and his Parliament. The king was suspicious in the eyes of the Parliament for two reasons: he wanted to rule as an absolutist king without recognizing the authority of Parliament, and because he was thought to be a catholic. Parliament was gaining more power and seemed about to depose the King. Lots of Irish Catholic were afraid of the Parliament and afraid that if the King was deposed by this Parliament it would lead to very strong anti-Catholics politics.

So local rises especially in Ulster by both native-Irish chiefs and new native-Irish chiefs. The objective of this catholic army was to defend the economical and political rights of Catholics in front of the Parliament. In 1641 Protestants were massacred in Catholic rising of Portadown.

The English Civil (1642 – 1649) war was won by Parliamentary forces against the Royalists, and the forces were led by **Oliver Cromwell**. He was an English military and political leader. He was a *Puritan* (not an Anglican) so practiced a form of Protestantism considered for its followers as a “purer” Protestantism. He wanted to extend Protestantism throughout the British Isles. He made England a Republic (short period of time) which he ruled as “Lord Protector”. The hierarchy was restored but, in the meantime, there was a time of important presence of the Parliamentary forces in Ireland to prevent the return of the royalists supposed to have supporters in Ireland.

He landed in Ireland with the objective of restoring full English-control on the Ireland. He triumphed against the rebels and this victory was accompanied by several massacres, especially the massacre of Catholics in Drogheda (which was claimed as the response of the Parliament to the massacre of Portadown).

Therefore, we can see the sectarian tensions as political tensions and not only religion tensions.

The Mural painting painted in the area of Belfast.

Oliver Cromwell remains a very dividing figure, he continues to be perceived by Catholics as a butcher of Catholics, and by Protestants as a Champion of the cause.

1.2.3. The Impact of the Glorious Revolution upon Ireland (1688 – 1690)

The monarchy was restored in England in 1660 with Charles II. Following his death, the throne went to James II who happened to be a Catholic. He was considered in England as a despot, like Charles II before him, he tried to rule without the advice of the Parliament. Therefore, fears appeared in England about the security of Protestants.

Both to protect Protestantism and the prerogative of the Parliament, the Parliament gave an invitation to a protestant Prince (William of Orange) offering him the crown by marrying James II daughter. James II fled to France to avoid facing William of Orange, the Parliament etc. and in February 1689 William of Orange and Mary were crowned after signing the Bill of Rights. This is seen as the Glorious Revolution because it came in England without many violence.

It was not a peaceful revolution everywhere though. The Williamite-Jacobite War happened because James II invaded Ireland in March 1689 in the hope of reconquering the English throne from there.

- **Siege of Derry** broke in July 1689: the Jacobite army assieged the city of Derry but the city did not surrender.
- **12 July 1690: Battle of the Boyne**: decisive victory for William of Orange, and James II fled to France again. This victory is still commemorated on the 12th of July by Protestants in Ulster. **The one most common iconographic subject in Protestants mural art (ex: King Billy Mural in Belfast).**
- **October 1690 Treaty of Limerick**: this Treaty was very important because it was an attempt to pacify the situation by granting lost properties and ancient rights to the Catholics who fought for William. But this treaty was never ratified by the Parliament which is mostly Protestant. It created a bitter resentment in the Catholic population.

1.2.4. *The Penal Laws and the Protestant Ascendancy*

Following the end of the Williamite-Jacobite war penal law were passed to guaranty the position of Protestants. These laws were also passed because there was a very important anxiety at the time that the French might invade Ireland and use Ireland as a stepping point to invade England, supported by Catholic-Irish.

The Penal-Laws is a collective term to speak about laws taken between 1695 and 1728. Some of them were for Ireland only, and some for the entire Catholic community.

- Catholics officially excluded from representation in the Irish Parliament and from participating in government office
- Catholics were barred from becoming lawyers, officers un the army or navy (although they could be conscripted in the army as soldiers)
- Catholic worship officially restricted (not really implemented or very marginate)
- Intermarriages between Catholics and Protestants banned (solidification of two distinct communities)
- Restrictions imposed on Catholics concerning the acquisition or the passing on of property

Some of these restrictions also concerned Non-Conformist Protestants (example: Presbyterians). Most Scottish settlers were indeed Puritans Non-Conformists (important minority in North Ireland).

The Penal Law had major impact on division between the two groups as Protestants won a superior economic, political and social status throughout Ireland. This consolidate the position of the group in opposition to Catholics. Much wider inequalities concerning access to land, political representation etc. This is what is targeted when someone speaks about "*Protestant Ascendancy*" even nowadays.

1.2.5. *The Rebellions of the late 18th century*

Idea in the 1770's that the Penal Laws had gone too far, and it is important to recognize more rights to religious minorities. The process started quite peacefully with some support within the British Parliament, but it came to a brutal end.

This caused frustration among the protesters because the Penal Laws were still in existence. This is the basis on which agitation started in Ireland in the 1790's mainly orchestrated by the group of the **Society of United Irishmen**:

- Group that brought together both Protestant and Catholic Irishmen and non-conformist Protestants (who didn't belong to the Anglican Church of England nor to the Church of Ireland for example Presbyterians).
- Demands for the full repeal of the Penal Law
- Demands for more autonomy for the Irish Parliament (condemnation of corruption inside the Irish Parliament)

Initially the movement was quite pacific, but this changed, and the Society evolved in a more revolutionary organization. Very quick evolution and the Irish Revolution took place in 1798 but failed because crushed by the English forces.

Another movement developed in Ulster: the moderation of the Penal Laws led to a very different type of protest → discontent and fears among the Protestant minority that their status of superiority was going to be threatened. This is the context that saw the creation of the **Orange Order** in **1795**.

The Orange Order: Orange is a direct reference to William of Orange. Quite evokes the Freemasonry, organized in Loges like the Free Masons and as a *Brotherhood*. The essential objective parameter that the potential members need to have is to be Protestant. Most important political leaders in Northern Ireland were part of the Orange Order and this remained very important in terms of protecting the established order. It was very important for the political structuration of Northern Ireland, but also for the culture.

1.2.6. *The Act of Union of 1800*

It is a law which was passed both by Westminster and the Irish Parliament and mark the end of two different kingdoms and the beginning of a new entity called the United Kingdom of Great Britain. It was not the first act of Union as two were already passed to include Scotland and Wales into the entity of Great Britain.

This made Ireland not nearly an occupied territory but a full part of the British State.

It was passed to soothe Irish discontent and put an end to the rebellions of the late 18th (cf. tenses international context: Napoleonic Wars), and to reassure British politicians by bringing Ireland under closer control (and avoid that some factions in Ireland pled allegiance to Napoleon for example).

The Irish Parliament was not at first in favor of that Act because it was going to be dissolved. The Act of Union was passed in the Irish Parliament was passed with lots of bribes and corruption. Numbers of former Irish deputies moved to the British Parliament. 1/5 of the deputies were from constituencies of Ireland in Westminster. On the first of January 1801 the Act became an official reality.

The religious and national affiliation debating for or against the Act at the time is very different than the one nowadays: many Catholic Irish at the time supported the act because they considered that the end of the Penal Law would come directly after the end of the very conservative and Protestant Irish Parliament. On the contrary many members of the Protestant-landed Aristocracy were not so keen on seeing the Act being passed.

2. The Growth of Distinct National Aspirations in 19th - century Ireland

2.1. *Irish nationalism in the early 19th century*

2.1.1. *The Campaign for Catholic Emancipation*

It took nearly 30 years and a lot of public agitation for the Catholic Emancipation to become a reality after the Act of Union. Long campaign that was led by **Daniel O'Connell** who is one of the political fathers of the Republic of Ireland and he is an important figure of the Rep of Ireland imaginary (cf. stamps).

Within the limits of Constitutionality Daniel O'Connell militated in favor of the Catholic Rights. Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 taken by Westminster: finally granted the full emancipation of the Catholics and now they can enter all the political sphere (except the Crown obv.).

The Penal Laws initially also targeted the non-conformist Protestant (remember) and those ones won their emancipation one year before the Catholics.

2.1.2. *The Campaign for the Repeal of the Act of Union*

1831 – 1850's.

Objective: to obtain a new Parliament for Ireland, separated from Westminster.

Shifts in attitudes towards the Union, with increased sectarianisation of the political debate: Catholics in favor of the repeal of the Act of Union, Protestants strongly opposed to the repeal of the Act of Union.

O'Connell did not manage to obtain the repeal of the Act of Union and it led to the creation of a way more radical type of nationalism.

2.1.3. *The Great Irish Famine and the Birth of the Fenians*

1845 – 1851

The Great Irish Famine had one main effect: to cause massive death and massive emigration out of Ireland. Very important demographic impact on Ireland. We are going to focus upon the impact it had on the nationalist

The Great famine essentially fostered nationalists aspirations among the Catholic Irish Population and a long standing resentment towards the British who were blamed for the tragedy (for not deciding to create an exception to economic liberalism within the context of the famine to stop the exportation of good Irish agricultural products to Great Britain – knowing that the Irish were famished).

Lots of Catholics continued to think they were victims of discrimination and thought Protestants were spared from the famine because they were Protestants. The Famine sustained the development of more and more radical nationalists' movements. At the time of the famine, revolutionary movements gained more influence at a rapid state. Those movements referred as "Fenians" movements (means warriors in Gaelic). The term was initially used by a number of revolutionary movements to imply the idea of Irish nationalism which should stop the link with Britain and create a Republic. The adjective "Fenian" became a pejorative way to criticize Republicans.

Examples: Young Ireland (active between 1842 and 1848 – rebellions in 1848) / The Irish Republic in Brotherhood (1858) and the Fenian Brotherhood (1858).

The Great Famine is one of the most important figures in mural paintings as well as in novels and songs, in both communities. It was very effective to depict the Famine to bring the two communities together and reinforcing the "us" against "them" mentality.

In Northern Ireland, Ulster, the famine was a reality but not as severe as in the rest of the Ireland, because Ulster was already industrialized at that time and it had an impact on the economy of the region. Belfast in particular had already become a center for the linen industry. In Ulster there was also the emergence of the "Protestant working-class aristocracy" especially in the ship-building industry. Most of the workers who were employed in the ship building industry were Protestant and it created a lot of inequality in the Ulster working class, moreover because the ship building industry was strongly supported by Britain (because they were made for the navy) so the workers in those industries were mainly in support of the Union between Ireland and UK.

2.2. The Home Rule Movement (1870 – 1912) and the Birth of Political Ulster Unionism

Constitutional movement led by Isaac Butt and then Charles Stewart Parnell. They wanted the Home Rule: campaigned for the restoration of an Irish Parliament within the UK (not for the repeal of the Union). Also campaigned for land reforms: transfer of land ownership to small Catholic farmers who in reason of the former laws couldn't have lands. Alliance with the Liberals one of the two main party in Westminster (the second one is the Conservative Party – Tories), that should have helped the Home Rule movement, but the opposition was very strong.

The first two Bills failed to pass in Westminster and become Laws.

- First Home Rule Bill defeated in the House of Commons in 1886 (because of divisions within the Liberal Party)
- Second Home Rule Bill defeated in the House of Lords in 1893 (because of the Conservative landowners attached to the Union and the defense of Protestants' landed interests in Ireland). The fear of Protestants in Ireland and in Ulster specifically was that the Protestants' advantages would not be existing anymore.

Opposition to the Home Rule:

- Revival of the Orange Order in the late 19th century.
- Creation of the **Ulster Unionist Council in 1905**. This was a very important movement which brought together Protestants of very different social classes, occupations (Anglican landowners, industrialists, members of the Presbyterian working class people – distinction between different "types" of Protestants loses importance btw).
- Cross-class Protestant opposition to Home Rule, particularly in Ulster.

Both Irish nationalists and British liberals tended to underestimate the rejection of the Home Rule project in Northern Ireland.

- **Third Home Rule Bill introduced in 1912** in a very different political context:
 - o Alliance of Liberals and Irish nationalists held a majority of seats in the House of Commons (General Elections of Dec. 1910).
 - o **1911 Parliament Act**: House of Lords lost veto power: delaying power. It very strongly restricted their power as an **unelected** body of the British political system. Even if the House of Lords rejected a Bill this Bill would become a Law after a two-years period.
 - ➔ The Home rule had then a good chance of passing.

Ulster Unionists started to organize themselves. No massive majority against Home Rule in Ulster in 1910 (103 000 votes against vs 94 000 for). Yet, the intensity of the opposition was strong.

Ulster Unionists were led by two charismatic figures: Sir Edward Carson, and Sir James Craig (a Belfast industrialist). Massive demonstrations took place throughout 1912, a show of force intended to put pressure on the British government.

The Third Home Rule Bill passed by the House of Commons in Jan. 1913 but defeated by the House of Lords (so it would not become a law before 2 years).

Agitation increased as Unionists refused to accept this Bill. This is when the intensity of the opposition became very clear as the military process started in Jan. 1913 with the creation of the **Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF)** composed of over 100 000 volunteers, pledged to fight for the “mutual protection of all loyalists”. It shows how intensely people felt concerned about that situation. The term “loyalist” first appears at this moment and it is still used nowadays: the idea behind is that for them the traitors were the Liberals who were ready to get rid of Ireland. Because the unionists were backed by this military force, they were able to not make any compromise.

In November 1913 in Southern Ireland: Nationalists founded their own military force called the **Irish Volunteers**.

This created very soon an inextricable situation for the Liberal Government (a “Catch-22 situation”). The Unionists were in a very strong position, with their militia, the support of the Conservative Party, and the support of important sections of the British Army. It was impossible to enforce Home Rule without military use. Growing fear that Home Rule Bill could not become a Law without a civil war. Then they proposed a solution: temporary exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule Bill and both parties rejected this solution.

The Home Rule Bill was finally given Royal Assent in 18 Sept 1914, but a concession was made to Unionists that its implementation was delayed until the end of the First World War (that started in 4. August).

The Partition seemed almost inevitable but never really considered before 1912-1913 (the Third Home Rule), not enough consideration of the Protestants fears in Northern Ireland.

A variety of causes explain this turn of events:

- Balance of political powers between British political parties
- The radicality of Ulster militancy: they were ready to take arms and consisting a military force

3. Nationalists and Unionists during the Great War

3.1. Fighting alongside Britain – or not

The Great War led to a very important split between Irish Nationalists and also strongly consolidated the position of Unionists in London.

Many Irish men both Unionists and Nationalists decided to fight alongside Great Britain in the Irish Division. This Division was made up from members of the Ulster Division force. They remain associated with some of the most terrible battles of the war for example their fight in the Battle of the Somme (cf. Murals in Belfast).

3.2. The “Easter Rising”

4. The Advent of Republicanism

4.1. Sinn Frein’s victory in the 1918 election

4.2. The establishment of the Irish Republic (1919)

4.3. The Anglo-Irish war (1919 – 1921)

5. Partitioning Ireland

5.1. The Government of Ireland Act 1920

5.2. The Anglo-Irish Treaty (6. December 1921)

5.3. The Irish Civil War (1922 – 1923)