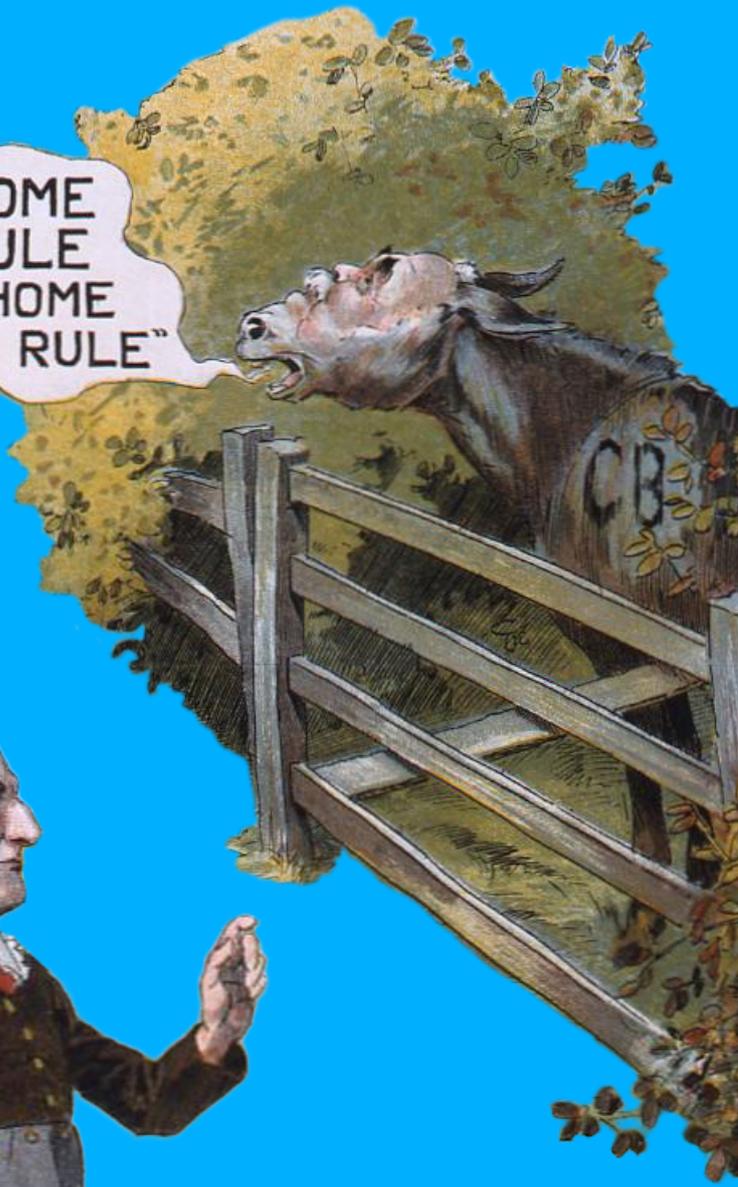


THE
NATIONAL
ARCHIVES



"HOME
RULE
HOME
RULE"



Irish Partition

Why was Ireland divided in 1921?



Key Stage 3 - 5 | Interwar 1918 - 1939

Lesson Pack

Introduction

Resistance to British rule in Ireland had existed for hundreds of years. Irish nationalists, the majority of them Catholic, resisted this rule in a number of peaceful or violent ways up until the start of the First World War. Irish nationalists wanted Ireland to be independent from British control.

At the start of the twentieth century, Irish 'Home Rule', the name given to the process of transferring rule from British to Irish hands seemed likely and, as a result the Unionist minority, a largely Protestant population, loyal to Britain and British rule, began to more actively resist the idea.

Eventually, Irish Home Rule was granted, but it excluded the six mainly Protestant counties of the province of Ulster (one of the four provinces of Ireland) in the north-east corner of the island. This established Northern Ireland in 1920, which continued to be part of the United Kingdom, while the Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed in December 1921, established the Irish Free State as a Dominion of the British Empire. This meant that the Irish Free State was a self-governing nation of the Commonwealth of Nations which recognised the British monarch as head of state.

Use the original sources in this lesson to find out how Ireland was partitioned.

Suitable for:

KS 3 - 5

Time period:

Interwar
1918 - 1939

Connections to the Curriculum:

Key Stage 3

Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world
1901 to the present day:
Ireland and Home Rule

Key Stage 5

AQA GCE History: Challenge and transformation: Britain, c1851–1964: The condition of Ireland and Anglo-Irish relations: the Easter Rising; the Anglo-Irish War; Government of Ireland Act and Anglo-Irish Treaty;

Edexcel GCE A level: Ireland and the Union, c1774–1923

OCR GCE A level: Britain and Ireland 1791–1921

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Teacher's Notes

Irish Partition is a complex subject, especially because the historical background is so important to understand in order to make sense as to what happened in the early 1920s. The first source used in this lesson is a cartoon from 1910, which can be used to set up a discussion around the longer term conflict around Home Rule, in Ireland and the rest of Great Britain, i.e. that this was not a new issue immediately after the First World War, and that there was resistance to it. The second source is an extract from the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which essentially sets up the Irish Free State, and continues down that road leading to partition. The next source discusses some of the concerns around the religious breakdown of Northern Ireland after partition, and some of the problems associated with that, many of which would (and still do) endure. The final source looks at this religious breakdown in more detail, showing some of the complexities associated with attempting to come up with a sustainable solution.

Teacher's Notes

Starter Activity

Teachers could use the lesson 'illustration image' at top as a starter activity to introduce the topic of Home Rule for Ireland, or use it to build an understanding of the struggle for Home Rule before the Irish Treaty and Government of Ireland Act. The cartoon also references John Redmond who features in the cartoon for Source 1. Teachers could discuss with students the meaning of the cartoon.

- What is happening in the cartoon?
- Who are the different people featured?
- What do you think the artist is trying to say about Irish Home Rule?
- What can we infer about Lord Rosebery's attitude to Home Rule?
- What are the advantages / disadvantages of using political cartoons as evidence for the past?

Teachers can explain that the Earl of Rosebery was a staunch upholder of the British Empire. He led the Liberal party until Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took over as Prime Minister in 1905-1908 and was never part of government from then onwards. Sir Edward Grey was Foreign Secretary 1905-1916. The bull is 'labelled' with the letters 'C.B' to represent Henry Campbell-Bannerman who supported Home Rule, the animal has been drawn with his face. The man carrying the basket of feed for the animal, which is labelled 'Irish votes', probably represents John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

All documents are provided with transcripts. Students can work through the questions individually or in pairs and report back to the class. It is worth considering with students what other sources could help us understand the situation in Ireland before, during, and after partition.

Background

Britain ruled over the island of Ireland for hundreds of years and, during that time, there had, to varying degrees, always been some form of resistance to that rule. This was either demonstrated through violence, or through politicians taking up issues in Parliament.

Broadly speaking, there were two political viewpoints in Ireland. Irish nationalists, most of them from the majority Catholic population, had attempted on a number of occasions to bring about Home Rule for Ireland, and this idea started to gain momentum and became a real possibility during the last decades of the 19th century. MPs in the Irish Parliamentary Party, led by John Redmond, had allied themselves with the Liberal Party, who broadly supported the cause of Irish Home Rule. Eventually, after a third attempt to pass through Parliament, Home Rule became law in 1914.

There was also a large Protestant minority in Ireland, located largely in the north-eastern county of Ulster, who believed that Ireland should remain as part of the United Kingdom. These Unionists actively resisted calls for Home Rule, fearful that, as a Protestant minority, should Home Rule be granted, they would be ruled by a Catholic majority.

Both sides reached the brink of civil war in 1914. The question of Home Rule was suspended for the duration of the First World War, but immediately came back on the agenda at the end of hostilities. So called Advanced Nationalists, led by the now dominant Sinn Fein, had won most of the seats at the 1918 General Election and had decided to establish their own Parliament in Dublin.

Conflict once again occurred, the Irish War of Independence lasting over two years, until the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921 which brought it to a close and established the Irish Free State. Not long before this, the Government of Ireland Act 1920, had also allowed for the creation of a separate Parliament in Northern Ireland, which came into being in June 1921, essentially partitioning the island of Ireland.

Poster relating to Irish Home Rule, 1910

Catalogue Ref: COPY 1/353



First page of the Article of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, December 1921

Catalogue Ref: DO 118/51

TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.~~ARTICLES~~ ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT.

1. Ireland shall have the same constitutional status in the community of nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Union of South Africa, with a Parliament having powers to make laws for the peace order and good government of Ireland and an executive responsible to that Parliament, and shall be styled and known as the Irish Free State.

2. Subject to the provisions hereinafter set out the position of the Irish Free State in relation to the Imperial Parliament and Government and otherwise shall be that of the Dominion of Canada, and the law, ~~practiced~~ and constitutional usage governing the relationship of the Crown or the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Parliament to the Dominion of Canada shall govern their relationship to the Irish Free State.

3. The representative of the Crown in Ireland shall be appointed ~~in~~ like manner as the Governor-General of Canada, and in accordance with the practice observed in the making of such appointments. 4. The oath to be taken by members of the

Transcript

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Letter addressed to the British Lord Chancellor from Charles McLorinan, 1 June 1922 Catalogue Ref: HO 45/24812

Daniel O'Rorke & Son,
Chambers, 14, Donegall St.
Belfast.
1st June, 1922.

My Lord,
May I take the liberty of making a suggestion to you - solely in the interest of peace in this part of the world.

The root cause of the trouble here is that the Catholics and the Nationalists feel that Ulster was unfairly divided by the 1920 Act. The opposition of Ulster (all Ulster) was used as an argument against Home Rule, but when it came to forming a separate Government here, all Ulster was not taken as a unit, it was cut up in such a way as to empower 820,000 Protestants to rule over 420,000 Catholics. The result being that Catholics will not enter the Northern Parliament. If all Ulster had been taken as a unit, there would have been 890,000 Protestants as against 690,000 Catholics. This would have enabled Catholics to form a strong minority in the Northern Parliament so strong that they could have protected themselves fairly well and perhaps in the near future,

with

with the aid of liberal minded Protestants, to get into office as happens in England and other civilised countries. As it is Catholics see no hope of anything save being ruled for all time by their hereditary enemies. This to them is an intolerable state of affairs. Sir James Craig told a friend of mine lately that to induce Catholics to enter his Parliament he would be willing to give them representation in proportion to their numbers in the six counties. This is a move in the right direction.

Could you not appoint some outstanding English statesman, in whom both sides would have confidence, as a special commissioner to arrange the matter, just as the British Government appointed Lord Durham in 1867 to settle the Canadian difficulty?

There is no great affection between Northern Catholics and Southern Catholics and if Northern Catholics were treated fairly, they would support the Northern Parliament.

Transcript

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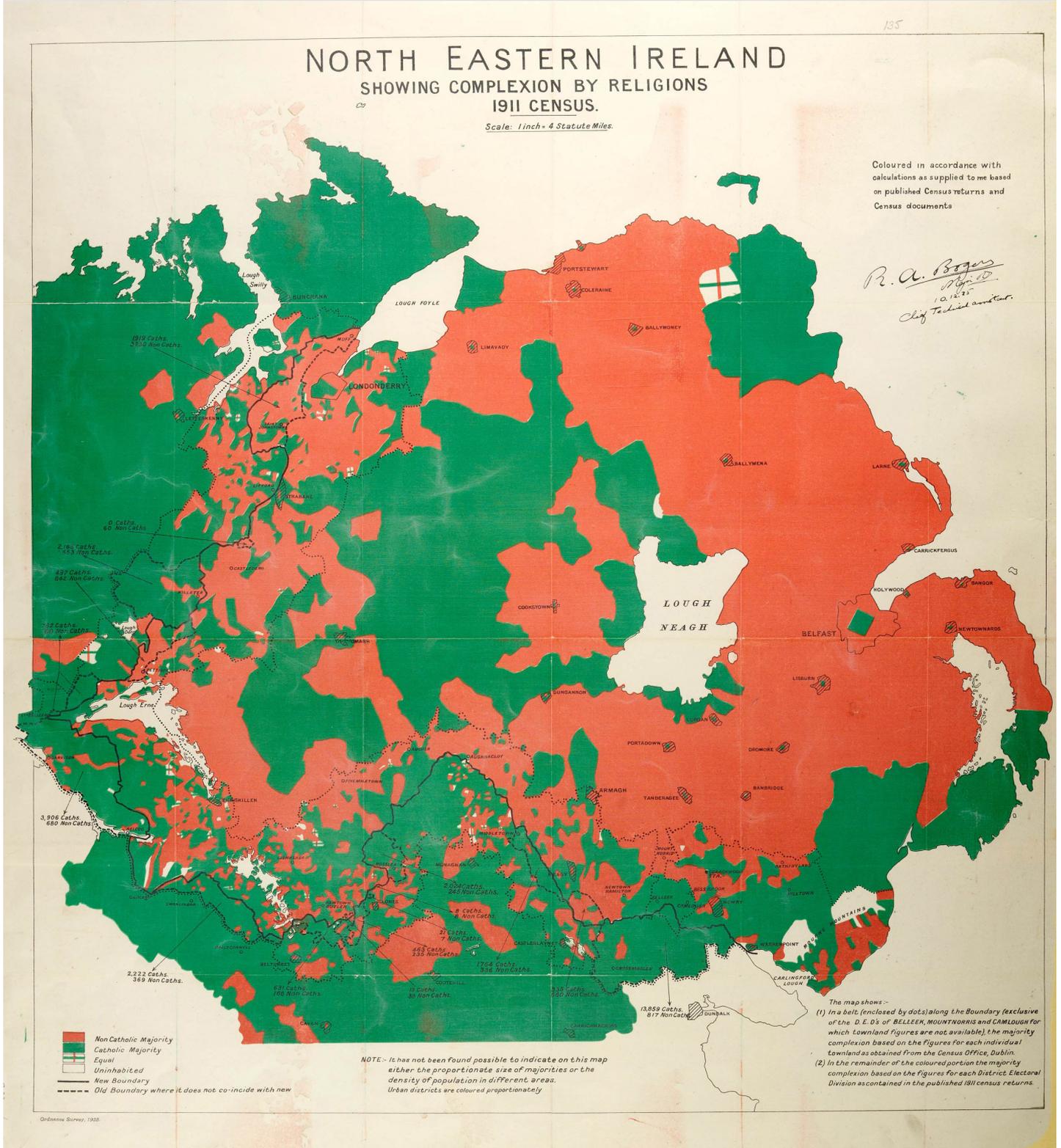
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Map of Northern Ireland with religious breakdown taken from the Irish Boundary Commission Catalogue Ref: MPI 1/402



Transcript

NORTH EASTERN IRELAND
SHOWING COMPLEXION [makeup] BY RELIGIONS
1911 CENSUS

Coloured in accordance with calculations as supplied to me based on published Census returns and Census documents

RED Non Catholic Majority
GREEN Catholic Majority
CROSS Equal
BLANK Uninhabited
LINE New Boundary
DOTTED LINE Old Boundary where it does not coincide with new

NOTE:- It has not been found possible to indicate on this map either the proportionate size of majorities or the density of population in different areas. Urban districts are coloured proportionately

Tasks

Task One

Look at Source 1 - A poster from 1910 which shows the Irish nationalist leader, John Redmond, who had been pressing the Liberal Party Government to pass the Home Rule Bill, giving self-government for Ireland. Catalogue ref: COPY 1/353

Herbert Asquith's Liberal government remained in power after two General Elections in January 1910 and December 1910 with the support of the Irish Parliamentary Party led by John Redmond. Liberals did not have a majority of seats in the House of Commons and the Irish Parliamentary Party held the balance of power in Parliament. They were in a strong position to push for Home Rule.

Irish Home Rule was finally granted in 1914, but was delayed because of the start of the First World War, and partly also because Unionists, especially in the north-eastern province of Ulster, were not happy with this outcome, and continued to threaten civil war.

- What is John Redmond (dressed in green) doing in this image?
- What is John Bull (dressed in red) doing?
- Do you know who John Bull was supposed to represent in political cartoons like this? Can you find out?
- What do you think the artist is trying to say about Irish Home Rule?
- What are the advantages / disadvantages of using political cartoons as evidence for the past?

Task Two

Look at Source 2 - First page of the Article of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, December 1921, Catalogue ref: DO 118/51

Immediately after the First World War, Home Rule was further delayed. Therefore, Irish nationalists led by Sinn Fein, meaning 'we ourselves', an Irish Republican party, took up

Tasks

arms against British rule. This would become the Irish War of Independence.

After over two years of fighting, a treaty was finally signed in late 1921, which set out terms for an Irish Free State, free from direct British rule.

- According to the Treaty, the Irish Free State will have the same status [position] to which other countries? [Point 1]
- What powers will the Irish Free State now have? [Point 1]
- Who does Point 3 say will be the British (Crown) representative in Ireland?
- Do you think that all sides (in Britain and Ireland) found this result acceptable?
- If not, who might still be dissatisfied with these terms and why?

Task Three

Look at Source 3 - Letter addressed to the British Lord Chancellor from Charles McLorinan, a Catholic living in Northern Ireland, 1 June 1922, Catalogue ref: HO 45/24812

When Northern Ireland was formed in 1920, it was decided, partly because of where Catholic and Protestant populations lived, to only include six of the nine counties of Ulster within the new state. Thus, the remaining three counties eventually formed part of the Irish Free State.

- What does the author of the letter say was the main reason for the trouble which still existed in the country?
- What was the result of Ulster being divided like this in terms of the religious makeup of the people living there?
- What does the author of the letter suggest as a possible solution?

Tasks

Task Four

Look at Source 4 - Map of Northern Ireland showing the religious breakdown taken from the Irish Boundary Commission, Catalogue ref: MPI 1/402

The Anglo-Irish Treaty had set out that an Irish Boundary Commission would be formed to finalise the border between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. It did not report until 1925, and recommended only minor changes to the border which had been set out in 1922.

It was feared that the decisions made by the Commission might cause additional unrest and so it was agreed by the Irish Free State, Northern Ireland, and the British Government, that the borders would remain as originally drawn. The Commission's report was not made public until 1969.

- Which areas of Northern Ireland are shown as mainly Protestant?
- Which areas of Northern Ireland are shown as mainly Catholic?
- What was the religious makeup around both the old and new borders of Northern Ireland?
- What problems do you think this makeup could have caused for the Commission as it attempted to finalise the border?



Why do our hyperlinks come with footnotes?

Our resources are designed to be printed and used in classrooms, which means hyperlinks aren't always accessible digitally. We include the full link at the bottom of the page so that you can type in the address without distracting from the main text of the lesson materials.

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Our [Online Workshops](#) allow our Education Officers to teach through your projector, leading discussions and guiding students through activities based around original documents. All you need is a computer with a projector, webcam and microphone. We'll arrange a test call before your session to check the tech is working.

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