

The Irish Question



The Irish Parliament comes to a close

- 1801

The government in London brings Ireland under its direct control. It persuaded the Irish Parliament to pass the 1800 Act of Union, effectively voting itself out of existence.

The two parliaments were amalgamated. Irish Members of Parliament and peers now took their seats in the Palace of Westminster and Parliament House was sold to the Bank of Ireland.



Becoming a Minority



- Despite the fact that **Catholics** formed the majority of the Irish population, they **could not become MPs**.
- Nationalist leader **Daniel O'Connell** forced the Government to pass **the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829**, which allowed Catholics to sit as MPs and take public office, but reduced the number of Irish peasants entitled to vote.
- With **100 seats** in the **House of Commons** and **28** in the **House of Lords**, Irish elected representatives were very much in the **minority**. The day-to-day administration of Ireland was in the hands of **the Lord Lieutenant**, who was the King's representative, nominated by the United Kingdom Government.



Life in Ireland

- In **1845**, over eight million people lived in Ireland.
- More than half the population lived on small lands in mud cabins.
- Society relied on agriculture to survive and people were most dependent on potatoes.
- Landlords owned the land and many lived in Britain. These were known as **absentee landlords**.



Relying on Potatoes

- The potato proved to be a popular crop as it needed little soil to grow and required very little equipment to harvest.
- An average man could eat up to 70 potatoes a day.
- Back in the mid 1800s, potatoes were often eaten up to three times a day.
- More than 3 million people would have lived on a diet of only potatoes, meaning it was a vital crop for Ireland.



Corn Laws

- Relying on potatoes became essential after the Corn Laws passed.
- Irish people could not afford buying corn as these laws placed **tariffs on cereal grain imported from other countries** such as wheat and maize to favour **domestic agriculture**.



The Blight Strikes

- The blight' was a disease which affected the potato crop in 1845.
- It was a fungus which spread by wind. It turned potatoes soft and black.
- Potatoes hit by 'the blight' were rotten and smelled very bad.
- With their main source of food destroyed, over 1 million people in Ireland died.
- The British government tried to ignore the problem in Ireland.
- In **1846** The Corn Laws were repealed

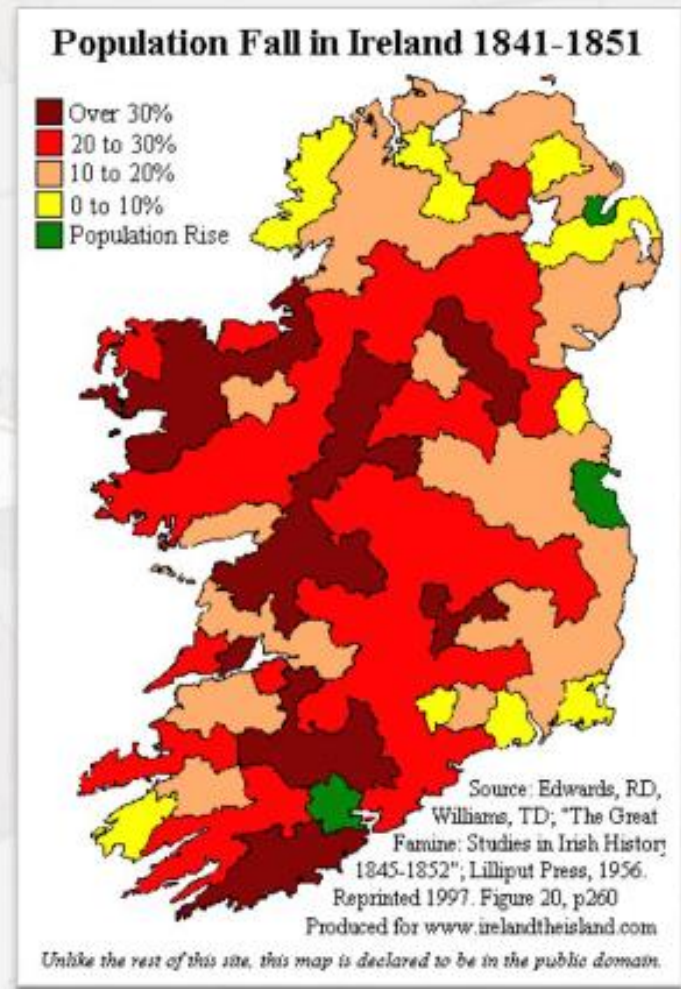


Emigration

- For many people, the only way to escape from the famine was emigration.
- Huge numbers of people fled to Britain but were encouraged to return by British government in May 1847.
- America and Canada became the focus for many Irish
- Many people chose to emigrate to America on dangerous ships
- They were called coffin ships for the amount of people who died onboard



How Did the Population Change?



Home Rule

- The Irish would have their own parliament for domestic affairs
- The Bill did not pass for three times:
 1. First Home Rule Bill 1886
 2. Second Home Rule Bill 1892
 3. Third Home Rule Bill 1914
 4. Fourth Home Rule Bill 1920



The **Government of Ireland Act** was passed in December 1920, but was not received well by either side in Ireland. **Unionists** preferred to remain a **part of the United Kingdom**, but were prepared to accept a northern Home Rule Parliament. **In the south**, the political landscape had changed dramatically since 1916 and there was no longer an appetite for Home Rule, but for **full independence**. Sinn Féin - the largest party in Ireland - rejected the Act.

Easter Rising

- The Easter Rising was a rebellion against British rule in Ireland. It took place in the capital city, Dublin. It began on April 24, 1916, which was the day after Easter that year, and lasted five days.
- In 1915, some groups of men—including Patrick Pearse and James Connolly—decided to rebel against the British. In the end, the rebels were beaten.



Dublin Rises

- Plans for the rebellion continued in Dublin. On **Easter Monday, April 24**, a group of about 1,800 people, including some women, took over key buildings in Dublin. The **General Post Office (GPO)** became their headquarters. On the steps of the GPO, **Patrick Pearse** read aloud a statement. He **declared that Ireland was a free country**. He said Irish men and women would rule themselves.
- The British army was taken by surprise, but it soon reacted to the rebellion. Within a few days, extra troops had arrived in Ireland. Fighting broke out on the streets of Dublin.



Defeat

- The British used heavy guns (artillery) against the Irish all over Dublin. Within a week, **the leaders** of the rising realized they would not be able to beat the army. They **surrendered and were arrested by the British**.
- The trials of the leaders of the Easter Rising were held in secret. **Pearse and 14 other leaders were sentenced to death**. More than 500 people had died in the rising, including many ordinary citizens.



Legacy

- At first, the Easter Rising had little support in Ireland. After its leaders were executed, though, people began to respect what they had tried to do. The rising came to be admired, and its leaders became heroes.
- **Eamon De Valeira** was one of those leaders. He survived the uprising and later became a leader of Ireland after it finally achieved independence.



Easter 1916 William Butler Yeats

- *I have met them at close of day*
- *Coming with vivid faces*
- *From counter or desk among grey*
- *Eighteenth-century houses.*
- *I have passed with a nod of the head*
- *Or polite meaningless words,*
- *Or have lingered awhile and said*
- *Polite meaningless words,*
- *And thought before I had done*
- *Of a mocking tale or a gibe*
- *To please a companion*
- *Around the fire at the club,*
- *Being certain that they and I*
- *But lived where motley is worn:*
- *All changed, changed utterly:*
- *A terrible beauty is born.*



- *That woman's days were spent*
- *In ignorant good-will,*
- *Her nights in argument*
- *Until her voice grew shrill.*
- *What voice more sweet than hers*
- *When, young and beautiful,*
- *She rode to harriers?*
- *This man had kept a school*
- *And rode our wingèd horse;*
- *This other his helper and friend*
- *Was coming into his force;*
- *He might have won fame in the end,*
- *So sensitive his nature seemed,*
- *So daring and sweet his thought.*
- *This other man I had dreamed*
- *A drunken, vainglorious lout.*
- *He had done most bitter wrong*
- *To some who are near my heart,*
- *Yet I number him in the song;*
- *He, too, has resigned his part*
- *In the casual comedy;*
- *He, too, has been changed in his turn,*
- *Transformed utterly:*
- *A terrible beauty is born.*



- *Hearts with one purpose alone*
- *Through summer and winter seem*
- *Enchanted to a stone*
- *To trouble the living stream.*
- *The horse that comes from the road,*
- *The rider, the birds that range*
- *From cloud to tumbling cloud,*
- *Minute by minute they change;*
- *A shadow of cloud on the stream*
- *Changes minute by minute;*
- *A horse-hoof slides on the brim,*
- *And a horse plashes within it;*
- *The long-legged moor-hens dive,*
- *And hens to moor-cocks call;*
- *Minute by minute they live:*
- *The stone's in the midst of all.*
- *Too long a sacrifice*
- *Can make a stone of the heart.*
- *O when may it suffice?*
- *That is Heaven's part, our part*
- *To murmur name upon name,*
- *As a mother names her child*
- *When sleep at last has come*
- *On limbs that had run wild.*
- *What is it but nightfall?*

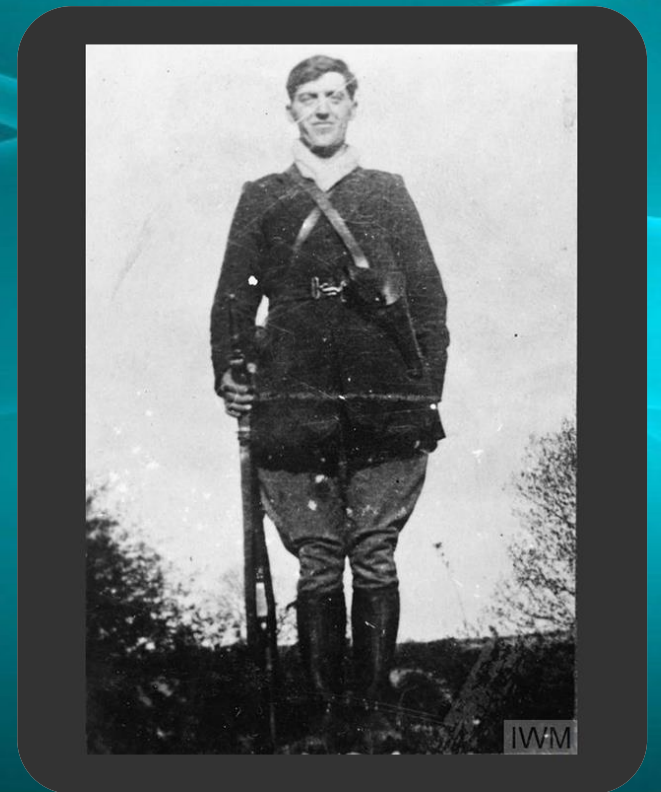


- *No, no, not night but death;*
- *Was it needless death after all?*
- *For England may keep faith*
- *For all that is done and said.*
- *We know their dream; enough*
- *To know they dreamed and are dead;*
- *And what if excess of love*
- *Bewildered them till they died?*
- *I write it out in a verse—*
- *Mac Donagh and MacBride*
- *And Connolly and Pearse*
- *Now and in time to be,*
- *Wherever green is worn,*
- *Are changed, changed utterly:*
- *A terrible beauty is born.*



Dáil Éireann

- To achieve their goal of an independent Ireland, **Sinn Féin** sought to unilaterally break away from Britain. The newly-elected representatives refused to take up their seats in **Westminster**. Instead, on 21 January 1919, they assembled the first Irish Assembly, the **Dáil Éireann**, in Dublin.



End of the War of Independence



- The War of Independence ended with the Anglo-Irish Treaty, signed on 6 December 1921 and narrowly approved by Dáil Eireann on 7 January 1922. A Provisional Government was set up under the terms of the treaty, but the Irish Republic nominally remained in existence until 6 December 1922, when 26 of the island's 32 counties became a self-governing British dominion called the **IRISH FREE STATE**. The island had been partitioned by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, and the six counties of Northern Ireland, remained in the United Kingdom.



