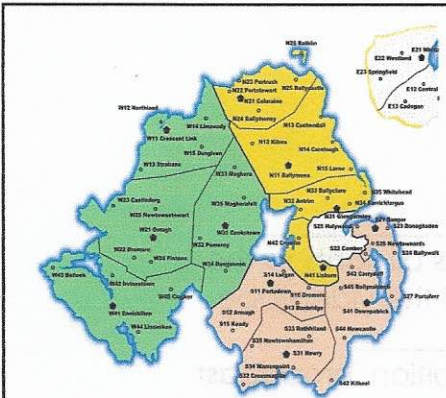


Irish History Course

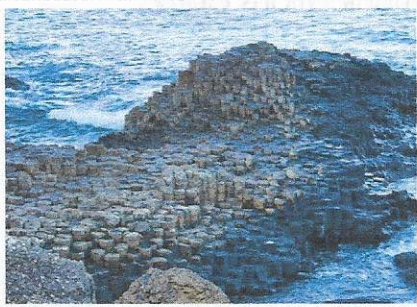
Northern Ireland/6-counties. 1921 - 1968

Wednesdays 7:15 - 8:15 pm - April 15, 22 29, and May 6



Northern Ireland was formed from six of the nine counties of Ulster: four counties with unionist majorities and two counties, Fermanagh and Tyrone, which had slight Irish nationalist majorities. It was created as a separate legal entity on 3 May 1921, under the Government of Ireland Act 1920.

The first years of the new autonomous region were marked by bitter violence, particularly in Belfast. The IRA was determined to oppose the partition of Ireland so the authorities created the Ulster Special Constabulary to aid the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) and introduced emergency powers to combat the IRA. Many died in political violence between 1920 and 1923, during which Belfast experienced the worst violence in its history.



The origin of the partition of Ireland lies in English colonial policy and activity in Ireland. It can be traced back to plantations of settlers in Ireland, in particular the Plantation of Ulster in 1609. The defeat of the ancient Gaelic aristocracy was followed by a political and economic transformation of Ireland. Confiscation of land and property was followed by laws to restrict and control the indigenous economy and the emergence of a Protestant ascendancy to rule Ireland. The Act of Union in 1800 resulted in capital migration from southern Ireland to Northern Ireland further damaging the Irish economy. In the 1880's the British Conservative party allied with Ulster Unionists and promised that in return for their support in Parliament they would make sure that there would not be a separatist independent Ireland. This commitment was fulfilled in the Government of Ireland Act 1920 which gave them their own Parliament and autonomy from the rest of Ireland. The result of this was continued persecution of a nationalist and Catholic population of the 6-counties and the eventual rebellion in the 1960's that led to a 30 year war ending in 1998.

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