



BHS HISTORY



1972: The Blackest Year

If the London Government hoped to make things better by closing Stormont down, it was to be disappointed.

There were more violent deaths in 1972 than there were during any other year of 'the Troubles'.

Nearly 500 people died in 1972 including:

- Nine people on 21st July 1972 as a result of PIRA bombs in Belfast. This day became known as 'Bloody Friday'.
- Nine people on 31st July when PIRA bombs exploded in the village of Claudy, Co. Londonderry.

1972- THE WORST YEAR



Internment was introduced in order to reduce violence, but ended up having the opposite effect

In the face of continuing violence and under pressure from members of his own party to do something that worked, Prime Minister Brian Faulkner decided to introduce **internment** to deal with those believed to be involved in terrorism.

Internment

On 9th August 1971 Operation Demetrius started and 452 men were arrested.

However those arrested were, by and large, the wrong people.

The information that was used was out of date; those interned were mainly members of the Official IRA (OIRA), ordinary nationalists or civil rights supporters - and not the Provisional IRA.

On top of that no loyalists were among the 452 men arrested even though the loyalist paramilitaries were also involved in killings and bombings.

The first Loyalists were not interned until February 1973.

Reactions

The introduction of internment resulted in a range of reactions:



■ The levels of violence got much worse. In the last 4½ months of the year 143 people were killed and many homes and businesses were destroyed. Before internment was introduced there had been fewer than 30 deaths in 1971.

■ Despite being happy with the introduction of internment at the start, unionist support for the policy began to decline when it did not lead to a drop in the levels of bloodshed and destruction in Northern Ireland.



■ Politicians from the SDLP, Nationalist and Republican Labour Parties urged their supporters to show their opposition to internment by refusing to pay either their **rates** or the rent due on their homes. In addition politicians from these parties stopped attending council meetings.

■ PIRA membership increased.

■ NICRA responded by holding protest marches. However these soon ran into trouble. When NICRA staged a march close to an Internment Camp at Magilligan, Co Londonderry, in January 1972, the army responded by firing **CS gas** and charging the marchers with their **batons** drawn.

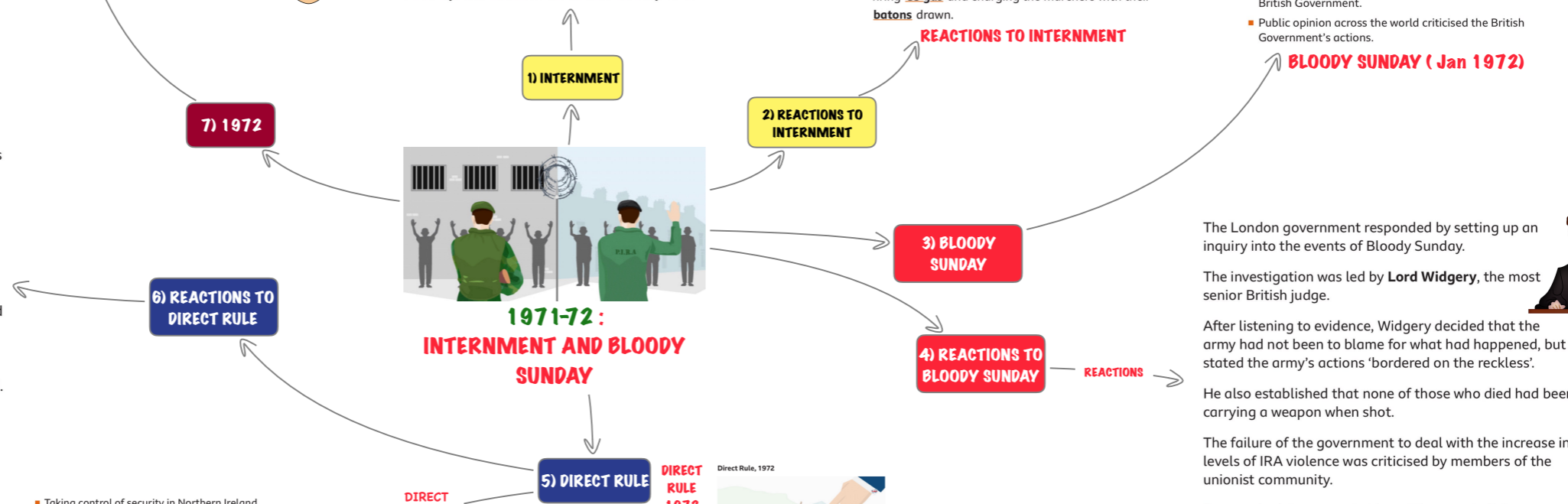
REACTIONS TO INTERNMENT

The end of Stormont: reactions

The closing down of the Northern Ireland Parliament led to the following reactions:

- The Irish Government and the SDLP were delighted. They saw the end of Stormont as providing the opportunity of a new start for Northern Ireland.
- While the IRA welcomed the end of Stormont, it was less than happy at the appointment of a Secretary of State. It saw Direct Rule as evidence of even greater British involvement in the running of Northern Ireland and announced its determination to continue its struggle to achieve a united Ireland.
- Unionist leaders were outraged at the closing down of 'their' Parliament. Massive protests were organised by Ulster Vanguard, but the London Government continued with its plans. There was also an increase in support for loyalist paramilitaries and a spate of sectarian killings. Meanwhile, support for the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and other strongly unionist parties also increased.
- NICRA stated that its campaign for civil rights would continue.

REACTIONS



1971-72 : INTERNMENT AND BLOODY SUNDAY



1) INTERNMENT

2) REACTIONS TO INTERNMENT

3) BLOODY SUNDAY

4) REACTIONS TO BLOODY SUNDAY

5) DIRECT RULE

6) REACTIONS TO DIRECT RULE

7) 1972

DIRECT RULE 1972



DIRECT RULE 1972

- Taking control of security in Northern Ireland.
- Appointing a member of the British Government to take care of the running of Northern Ireland.
- Going to gradually end internment.
- Planning to hold a vote (referendum) on whether or not there should be a border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- Going to talk to Northern Ireland's politicians to see if a government made up of members from all parties could be set up.

Losing control over security was too much for the Stormont Government and so all members decided to resign in protest.

The British Prime Minister, **Edward Heath** then announced that he was going to close the Northern Ireland Government and Parliament down (at first for one year although this was later extended) and start running Northern Ireland directly from London (known as Direct Rule).

Heath appointed **William Whitelaw** as Northern Ireland's first **Secretary of State**.

The end of Stormont: reactions

The closing down of the Northern Ireland Parliament led to the following reactions:



DIRECT RULE 1972

Rather than making things better, the introduction of **internment** had made them much worse.

The events of Bloody Sunday indicated to the London government that Prime Minister Brian Faulkner and his Cabinet were not really able to deal with the deteriorating security situation.

Stormont closed down

Brian Faulkner responded to recent events by asking the British government for permission to bring back the **B Specials** and to allow the **RUC** to carry guns again.

The government in London refused to agree and instead asked the Northern Ireland Government to give up its power over law and order.

Faulkner rejected this request.

London decided to take control of things.

In late March 1972 the British Government announced that it was:

Bloody Sunday

Despite this reaction from the military another anti-internment protest was arranged to take place in Londonderry on 30th January 1972.

As the march ended rioting began in the Bogside; the **Parachute Regiment** moved in and opened fire.

When the shooting ended it became clear that 13 men had been killed.

An additional 13 were wounded and one of these later died from his injuries.

Following the events of what became known as Bloody Sunday a number of things happened:

- The number of PIRA members grew – particularly in Derry/Londonderry - as did the levels of violence.
- While unionists spoke of their regret at the numbers of deaths in Derry, they said that the Civil Rights march had been illegal and so should not have taken place at all.
- The British **Embassy** in Dublin was burned by a crowd of nationalist protesters. This event clearly showed how angry some nationalists were at the actions of the British Government.
- Public opinion across the world criticised the British Government's actions.

BLOODY SUNDAY (Jan 1972)

The London government responded by setting up an inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday.

The investigation was led by **Lord Widgery**, the most senior British judge.

After listening to evidence, Widgery decided that the army had not been to blame for what had happened, but stated the army's actions 'bordered on the reckless'.

He also established that none of those who died had been carrying a weapon when shot.

The failure of the government to deal with the increase in levels of IRA violence was criticised by members of the unionist community.

Some unionists responded by setting up – in February 1972 – of a new political group known as Ulster Vanguard.

Headed by former Minister William Craig, Vanguard was described as a co-ordinating body for traditional loyalist groups.

One of its meetings attracted 70,000 people.

REACTIONS TO BLOODY SUNDAY

