

GCSE GUIDANCE

This is an overview of the key steps towards the British troops being sent to Northern Ireland in 1969 and the beginning of the 'Troubles'

There is a lot in this ; each event links into the next so it is well worth knowing

- 1) Look over what happens in the key years 1967;1968 and 1969
- 2) Be able to explain why each event led to the next.
- 3) Work out how tension escalated (increased)

4 Explain how NICRA and the British Government attempted to reduce tensions.

10) DOWNING STREET DECLARATION

The British government had had enough by **AUGUST 1969**.

They demanded reforms and introduced the **DOWNING STREET DECLARATION**- this promised the **same rights for Catholics AND Protestants** . It reassured Unionists by suggesting NI position in U.K. would only change with a vote in NI in favour of a united Ireland.

It also promised reforms with the **HUNT report** looking into the conduct of the RUC (Police).

There were other measures such as bringing in One Man One Vote as soon as possible as well as setting up a Housing authority to hand out housing based on necessity rather than religion.

The **SCARMAN tribunal** also looked into the causes of the recent violence and recommended ways forward.

1) BRITISH TROOPS SENT

Faced with an exhausted police force trying to deal with disorder in Derry and burning in Belfast, the NI Government had to request British troops to stop the violence and mayhem.

The **BRITISH ARMY** were sent over in **August 1969** to maintain peace and essentially to protect catholic areas from attacks.

They were **welcomed by catholic communities with tea and buns** in many areas.

However, this was to be a 'honeymoon' period political solutions were needed and quickly



1) NICRA SET UP

This was a non sectarian organisation devoted to achieving civil rights for all in Northern Ireland and gaining this through peaceful means.

They were inspired by the civil rights movement in the USA. They wanted One Man One Vote ; an end to gerrymandering, fair allocation of housing; no discrimination in jobs, an end to the special powers act and B Specials



2) CALEDON SQUAT

The first key event for NICRA was in the small **County Tyrone** town of **CALEDON**. The issue was housing. A 19year old single Protestant girl was given a house ahead of a Catholic family of five. The Nationalist MP **AUSTIN CURRIE** began a squat in the house. This received media coverage in Britain and was featured on BBC Panorama. The squat was forced to end without result but the **publicity** was highly effective in highlighting discrimination.



3) COALISLAND TO DUNGANNON MARCH

Following the success in publicity terms of CALEDON, NICRA decided to march from The nearby towns of **COALISLAND** to **DUNGANNON**. This march saw hundreds attend, holding banners with **one man one vote** and singing protest songs like **We Shall Overcome**. The RUC (police) **banned** the march from the town square but it passed off **peacefully**- perhaps due to this and world events it also received **little publicity**.. they decided the next march would be bigger and more effective



9) BELFAST BURNS

Meanwhile in Belfast, many unionists look on at the events in Derry and are determined to strike back. Whole streets of houses were burnt out such as **BOMBAY STREET**. **7 people** were killed in the violence and up to **5%** of Catholics lost their homes.

Makeshift barriers were erected to protect communities. The IRA were criticised by Catholics for their inaction and christened **IRA- I Ran Away** in some areas.



8) BATTLE OF THE BOGSIDE

Chichester Clark knew he was in trouble right away. All the tension was building and it was obvious that the marching season would be a real chance for trouble- but he could not ban the marches!

The **APPRENTICE BOYS** march of **August 1969** was a chance for real nationalist protest. A dairy was raided for milk bottles and barricades were built. The protestors when the rioting broke out were very well equipped and had the high ground in the imposing flats. Over **50 HOURS** of rioting took place exhausting the police. The **IRISH GOVERNMENT** threatened to intervene and even sent a **field hospital** to the border. This further enraged unionists. It was only the input of a small **British army** unit that eventually brought the battle of the bogside to an end



1969



The trail to TERROR NI key events 1967-69

7) PEOPLES DEMOCRACY MARCH / BURNTOLLET

A new **younger and radical group** mostly made up of students was set up called **People's Democracy**. They were determined to keep marching and to cause as many problems as possible for Stormont. They announced their plans for a **Belfast to Derry** march from 1st to 4th Jan 1969. This was roundly **condemned** by all sides as provocative. It was at a time of high tension and would pass **Unionist and loyalist areas**.

However, the march went ahead led by **BERNADETTE DEVLIN**.. They felt the **five point programme** did not go far enough and demanded further reform.

Towards the end of their 4 day march PD were attacked at a place called **BURNTOLLET BRIDGE** by loyalist protestors. This was filmed and broadcast. It was noted that the police seemed to do little to offer protection. Indeed off duty **B Specials** were seen in the crowd. To enflame things more that night in Derry the RUC raided homes and damaged nationalist areas of Derry.

Nationalists were **outraged** by this. **NICRA** began to march again and tensions were mounting.

O'Neill was under **intense criticism** now from his own party and nationalists. Faulkner criticised his weakness and ability to lead. **12 other MPs** called for him to resign. Instead he decided to call a **CROSSROAD ELECTION** to demonstrate support he hoped from Catholics and Protestants.

This was not the election he hoped for. The Unionist vote fell, catholic support did not seem to emerge and O'Neill was even nearly defeated by **Ian Paisley!**

He was eventually forced to **RESIGN** in April 1969 following a bomb at a reservoir. This was thought to be the IRA but was in fact the UVF. O'Neill was **replaced by his cousin James Chichester Clark**.



6) CROSSROADS SPEECH

O'Neill was desperate to rescue situation. He made a **direct TV appeal** to the people of Northern Ireland. He claimed Northern. Ireland was at a **CROSSROADS** between peace and prosperity and violence and despair.

It appealed to **NICRA** to stop the marching to allow an opportunity for peace and discussions.

NICRA did accept this and suspended marching in response.

However, O'Neill was under **pressure** from his own party over the problems. They believed he was losing control. His own Minister **WILLIAM CRAIG** openly criticised O'Neill leading to him being **sacked but tensions remained**.



5) FIVE POINT PROGRAMME

The British government were horrified by the situation in N. Ireland. They demanded reforms from O'Neill and the OUP government. As a result the five point programme was promised.

WHAT WAS AGREED?

- Extra votes for business owners to be stopped
- Parts of the Special Powers Act removed.
- Council housing was to be based on a points system
- Londonderry corporation was to be replaced by a development agency
- An Ombudsman was to be appointed to look at complaints to ensure fairness.

O'Neill felt these reforms did not go far enough. Other unionists argued that they had been achieved by force and condemned O'Neill for being **weak** alone allowing the situation to develop to this point. He was under severe pressure from people in his own party- many wanted him to resign.

