



Online History Course

1981-1998

Six Counties / Northern Ireland



Thursdays 7:30 – 9 pm / March 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2023

In 1983, 38 IRA inmates escaped from the Maze Prison, near Belfast. in the biggest prison break in UK history. "Supergrass trials" began. 22 IRA members received over 4,000 years in sentences. Harrods department store in London was bombed. The IRA bombed the Grand Hotel in Brighton where the Conservative party was having its annual conference.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed in 1985. All fifteen Unionist MPs at Westminster resigned in protest. The unsuccessful Northern Ireland Assembly was officially disbanded in 1986. Sinn Fein voted to end its policy of abstentionism and a section that walked out formed Republican Sinn Fein. Loyalists held a closed meeting at the Ulster Hall in Belfast. During the meeting a new organization, Ulster Resistance, was formed to "take direct action as and when required" to end the Anglo-Irish Agreement. 1987 saw the assassination of eight members of the IRA in the Loughall ambush and later that year the Enniskillen bombings. In 1988 John Hume and Gerry Adams began meeting. In March 1988 three IRA volunteers were assassinated on the streets of Gibraltar. In October the British banned Gerry Adams' voice from the airwaves. In 1989 Pat Finucane, a Republican lawyer, was assassinated. 28 members of the British army were arrested for leaking information to loyalist gangs. This information had been used to target and assassinate republicans.

1990 started with the IRA bombing the London Stock Exchange and later in the year the resignation of Margaret Thatcher. In 1991 the IRA launched three mortar shells at 10 Downing Street during a cabinet meeting there. The loyalist policy of sectarian killings continued apace. A massive bomb placed by the IRA destroyed a police barracks in Armagh. In 1992 a distraught police officer walked into a Sinn Fein office and murdered three people there. The IRA exploded a bomb at the Baltic exchange in London causing \$1 billion damage. In 1993 another bomb in London caused a half billion dollars in damage. In 1994 the IRA carried out mortar bomb attacks on Heathrow Airport, London.

In 1994 the Broadcasting bans on Republicans were lifted. The IRA and most Loyalist groups announced a cessation of all military activities. In 1995 talks were held between Sinn Fein and the Northern Ireland office and later the British and Irish governments released a Joint Framework document. Gerry Adams attended a reception in the White House hosted by Bill Clinton.

In 1996, due to lack of progress in talks, the IRA bombed the London Docklands. In June the IRA destroyed a large part of the center of Manchester city with the largest bomb in Britain since WW2. In 1997 Tony Blair became Prime Minister. Sinn Fein won and took their first seats ever in Dail Eireann. The IRA renewed its ceasefire and Sinn Fein signed the Mitchell Principles as multi-party talks resumed. On the 10th April 1998 the Belfast Agreement or Good Friday Agreement was signed. In May 1998 referendums on the Belfast Agreement were held and passed in both parts of Ireland. In May the first Northern Ireland Assembly elections were held. In July 1998 a dissident IRA campaign, that continues today, began. One of the first actions was the Omagh bombing that resulted in the deaths of 29 civilians.

Course fee is \$90. To enroll please email seanmurphy630@gmail.com