**Bloody Sunday**

On 30th January, a British paratroop regiment shot dead 14 Catholics at a civil rights march in Derry. Bloody Sunday remains a matter of controversy to this day. Some 10,000 people gathered in Derry to march under the banner of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association against the policy of internment. The march had been banned. Within an hour of the march, 13 protesters were shot dead by members of the 1st Parachute regiment, the final victim died later.

**The civil rights movement**

A year before the Troubles actually started, Catholics complained of unfair treatment at the hands of a largely Protestant political establishment, saying among other things that electoral boundaries were gerrymandered to ensure Protestant majorities. On 5th October, a civil rights march was stopped by the **RUC**. Rioting followed and the province's government agreed to undertake reforms.

**Sunningdale Agreement**

In December, an agreement was signed in Sunningdale by both the British and Irish governments and Brian Faulkner, Prime Minister of the suspended Northern Irish parliament. It proposed that Northern Ireland be governed by an Executive in which power was shared between the elected parties, rather than by majority rule. A Council of Ireland was also proposed to advise on cross-border issues. **Unionist** opposition was widespread and the intention to defy power-sharing was encapsulated in a strike by the Ulster Workers' Council, organised with the direct involvement of **loyalist paramilitaries**. The strike brought Northern Ireland to a standstill for almost two weeks, until the British government capitulated and abandoned the agreement.

**The Downing Street Declaration**

The UK PM John Major and the Irish PM Albert Reynolds delivered the outlines of a plan that both hoped would lead to peace and multi-party talks including **Sinn Fein** and representatives of loyalist paramilitaries. Known as the Downing Street Declaration, it argued for self-determination on the basis of consensus for all the people of Ireland. It argued that any agreement had to be based on the right of people on both parts of the island to "exercise the right of self-determination on the basis of consent freely and concurrently given, North and South, to bring about a united Ireland if that is their wish." It gave vital impetus to the Northern Ireland peace process.

**The Good Friday Agreement**

The Good Friday Agreement brought to an end the thirty years of sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland known as ‘The Troubles’. It was ratified in a referendum in May by British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Irish **Taoiseach** Bertie Ahern and set up a power-sharing assembly to govern Northern Ireland by cross-community consent.

**Direct Rule**

Rather than making things better, the introduction of [internment](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/guides/z8pyvcw/revision#glossary-zgpbgk7) 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. 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).

**The Anglo-Irish Agreement**

Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and her Irish counterpart Dr Garret FitzGerald signed the historic agreement giving the Republic of Ireland a say in Northern Irish affairs for the first time. It also established an intergovernmental conference headed by the UK Northern Ireland secretary and the Irish Foreign Minister. Additionally, it was the first time the British government officially said it would allow a united Ireland, if a majority of the population was is favour. Lastly, the well-known agreement attempted to make a devolved government possible.

**Activation of the internment law**

The Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Brian Faulkner, introduced a new law giving the authorities the power to indefinitely detain suspected terrorists without trial. This governmental decision was made in the wake of escalating violence and increased bombings in the province and the threat to Northern Ireland’s economy. Nearly 2,000 people were arrested and held without trial on suspicion of involvement in terrorism until 1975.

**The** [**Battle of the Bogside**](http://archive.theguardian.com/Repository/ml.asp?Ref=R1VBLzE5NjkvMDgvMTMjQXIwMDEwMA==&Mode=Gif&Locale=english-skin-custom&DCMP=EMC-thewrap08)**.**

 A loyalist parade passing through the nationalist Bogside area of Derry on 12 August sparked two days of rioting. As sporadic violence spread across the province, troops were called in. At first they were welcomed by the Catholic community, but sectarian violence continued. The **Provisional IRA** became more active, and the army increasingly concentrated on fighting it.