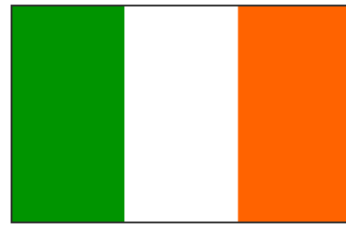


## The Two Sides of the Northern Ireland Conflict

“Following a 1916 uprising and years of guerrilla war led by the legendary Irish nationalist Michael Collins, the British government decided in 1920 to divide Ireland, which it had ruled as a colony for centuries. An independent state, the Republic of Ireland, was created in the island’s predominantly Catholic south, and the six Ulster counties in the north, with a Protestant majority, remained part of the United Kingdom. The conflict is both political and religious: many Catholic “republicans” in Ulster have complained of being treated as second-class citizens, and they seek to unite Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland, but most Protestants want Northern Ireland to remain part of the United Kingdom. Almost 3,500 people on both sides have died since the Troubles began in 1969.” [http://www.terrorismanswers.com/groups/uvf\\_print.html](http://www.terrorismanswers.com/groups/uvf_print.html).



**Unionist**—mostly Protestant; agree with British presence and influence in Northern Ireland; want Northern Ireland to remain part of UK; think Catholic population exaggerates problems; want 6 counties of Northern Ireland to continue as a province of the UK; mostly for BREXIT.

**Nationalist**—mostly Catholic; believe that Ireland belongs to the Irish; see Catholics in Northern Ireland as an oppressed minority who fought for their civil rights (like African Americans in the U.S.) during The Troubles; want the 6 counties of Northern Ireland to be united with the 26 of the Republic of Ireland; mostly against BREXIT since the R. of I. is in the EU.

**Loyalist**—same as above but more extreme; some willing to use force to maintain affiliation with UK and to weaken relations with and influence of the Republic of Ireland; define themselves as enemies of IRA and as loyal to the British crown and royal family.

**Republican**—same as above but more extreme; seek a united Ireland; some willing to use violence to achieve those ends; see the Republic of Ireland as 32 counties only as decreed in 1916.

**Heroes and symbols:** red hand of Ulster; King William of Orange; Battle of the Boyne, Edward Carson, James Craig; Rev. Ian Paisley; David Trimble; Cuchullain (because he defended Ulster against “Ireland” led by Queen Maeve); the Apprentice Boys who saved Londonderry during a siege; Israel (in Israeli-Palestinian conflict); British flag, also called the Union Jack, and its colors red white and blue.

**Heroes and symbols:** figures from Celtic mythology, especially Cuchullain (seen as defender of all Ireland and warrior hero); The Great Potato Famine as rallying point for outrage against British colonizers; Daniel O’Connell, Robert Emmet; Charles Stewart Parnell; Martyrs of 1916 Easter Rising (Patrick Pearse); Michael Collins; Eamon De Valera; hunger striker Bobby Sands and others; Bernadette Devlin; Jerry Adam; Sinn Fein; Palestine (in Israeli-Palestinian conflict); tricolor flag that symbolizes Catholics (green), Protestants (orange), and peace (white).

**Paramilitary groups:** UFF (Ulster Freedom Fighters); UDA (Ulster Defense Association); LVF (Loyalist Volunteer Force); Red Hand Defenders; Orange Volunteers.

**Paramilitary groups:** the IRA (Irish Republican Army); the Real IRA and other splinter groups; Sinn Fein (the political wing of the IRA but no public association) is the chief political representative of republicans.

**Political parties:** Democratic Unionist Party or DUP, Ulster Unionist Party or UUP.

**Political parties:** Sinn Féin, Social Democratic and Labour Party or SDLP.

**National identity:** see themselves as British (extremists see this only), or Irish and British, or British-Irish; loyalty to crown and to British institutions and customs; every town has its marching band with Lambeg drums.

**National identity:** see themselves as Irish and don’t like terms such as “the British Isles”; may prefer “The North” to “Northern Ireland” and some extremists even call Queen Elizabeth II “Mrs. Windsor”; learn Irish language, music, dances.

**What they say:** we are British; our culture (Ulster Scots) is now being suppressed; making the Irish language an official language will be expensive and confusing; if Irish has status alongside English then so should Ulster-Scots.

**What they say:** we want our civil rights; our culture was suppressed for centuries, our land, our religion, and our language were stolen from us during colonization; we are only now beginning to claim our full civil rights; the Irish language—our mother tongue—deserves to be equal to English.

**Sports:** cricket, football (soccer), rugby.

**Sports:** GAA (Gaelic Athletic Association), hurling, Gaelic football, rugby (now).

