

TIMELINE ACTIVITY

Troubled Images. The Northern Ireland Troubles and the Peace Process 1968-2007 by Gordon Gillespie, Colourpoint, 1-90424-278-9, pp 72-3
<http://www.colourpoint.co.uk/titles/9781904242789-33.html>

Split into groups and match the poster with the appropriate event.

When you have done this, put them in order with the longest ago first and the most recent last.

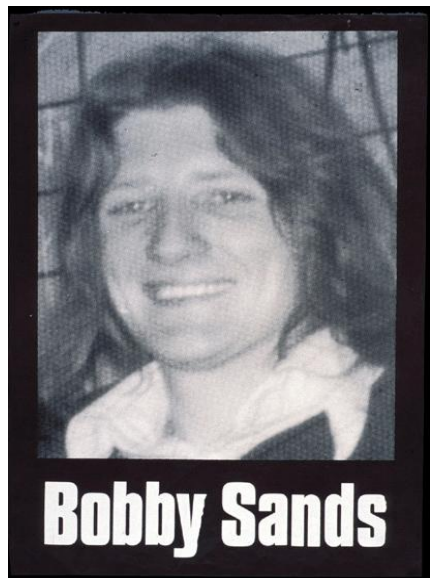
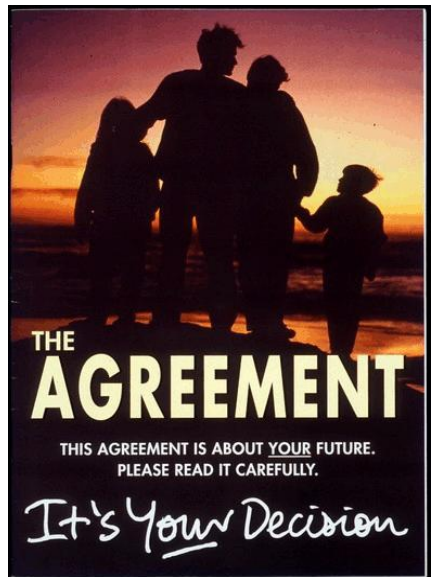
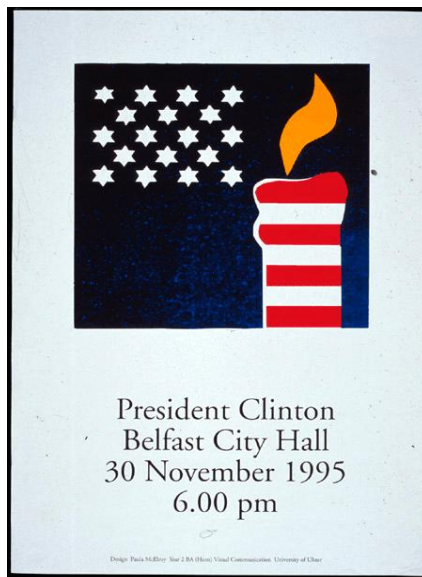
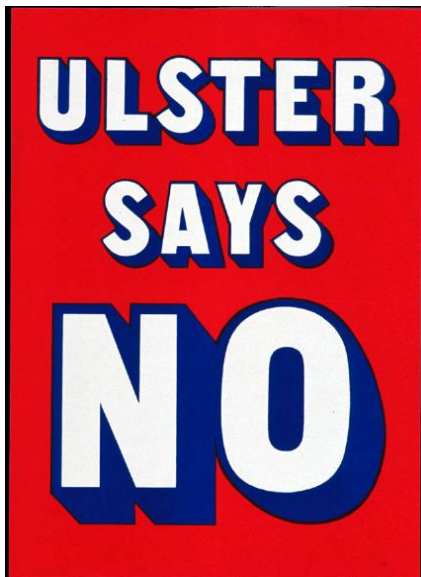
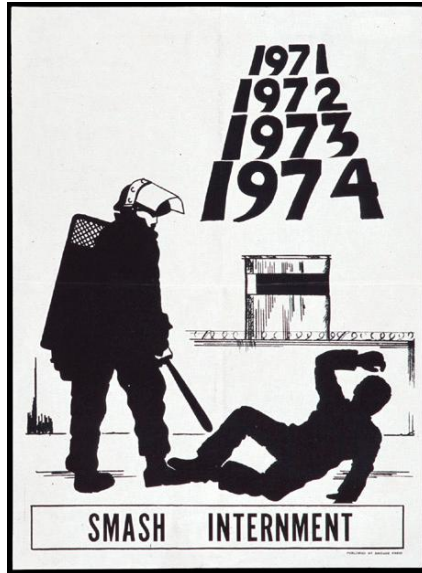
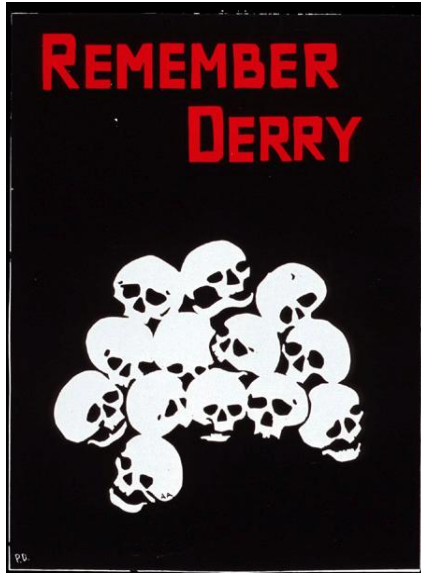
1. President Clinton visits Belfast
2. Bobby Sands dies on hunger strike
3. Bloody Friday
4. Referendum on the Good Friday Agreement
5. The Omagh bomb
6. The Anglo-Irish Agreement
7. Bloody Sunday
8. The Sunningdale Agreement
9. Introduction of internment

The posters are on page 2.

Notes on all posters are on page 3.

Commentaries on selected posters are on pages 4-5.

The posters



<p>Remember Derry* 1974, People's Democracy</p> <p>This haunting image was used to commemorate those shot dead by the British Army, on what became known as Bloody Sunday, on 30 January 1972. The 1972 Widgery tribunal largely exonerated the British Army, though the dissatisfaction felt by many at this verdict eventually led to the announcement, on the twenty-sixth anniversary of Bloody Sunday, that there would be a new inquiry headed by Lord Saville of Newdigate.</p>	<p>Smash internment 1974, Brigade Press</p> <p>This People's Democracy poster was produced to commemorate the third anniversary of internment in 1974. Interestingly this poster also appears as part of Joan Wanklyn's poster of British army life in 1974, 'Ulster Impressions'. The artist for this particular poster is believed to be Sean McDermott.</p>	<p>Dublin is just a Sunningdale away* 1974, Ulster Unionist Council</p> <p>The slogan 'Dublin is just a Sunningdale away' was coined by John Laird, now Lord Laird, for the February 1974 Westminster General Election. Anti-Sunningdale unionists, operating together in the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC) took 51 per cent of the vote and won 11 of the 12 Northern Ireland seats. The result effectively undermined the entire Sunningdale Agreement plan for a political settlement based on power-sharing allied to a Council of Ireland.</p>
<p>Ulster says No 1985, Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland</p> <p>This poster appeared shortly after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in November 1985. The Unionist reaction to the Agreement, which gave a consultative role to the Irish government in Northern Ireland affairs, is spelled out clearly in the words, 'Ulster Says No.' Points of interest in the poster are the use of the traditional Unionist colours of red, white and blue and the association of 'Ulster' (a term often used by unionists to refer to the six counties of Northern Ireland but more properly referring to the nine counties of the province of Ulster) with Unionist opinion.</p>	<p>President Clinton, Belfast City Hall, 30 November 1995, 6.00 pm* 1995, Paula McElroy</p> <p>This poster was created to mark President Clinton's first visit to Northern Ireland. In his keynote speech, at Mackie's engineering factory in Belfast, the President stated; 'you, the vast majority, Protestant and Catholic alike, must not allow the ship of peace to sink on the rocks of old habits and hard grudges. You must stand firm against terror. You must say to those who would still use violence for political objectives--you are the past; your day is over.'</p>	<p>The Agreement 1998</p> <p>This 'feel good' image was used as the cover of the Belfast Agreement, which was widely circulated in April 1998. Much parodied by opponents of the Agreement, the photograph was actually taken in South Africa by a German photographer.</p>
<p>Murder Omagh - Saturday 15th August 1998* 1998, Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)</p> <p>This RUC poster was produced in the wake of the Omagh bomb which killed 29 men, women and children. The photograph on the left was taken by one of those killed in the explosion. The white outlines in the centre of the photograph are of others killed in the blast. The car on the right is of the same type as that which carried the bomb.</p>	<p>Reject the IRA now!* 1972, Great Britain, Northern Ireland Office (NIO)</p> <p>This 1972 poster was issued by the Northern Ireland Office and the Royal Ulster Constabulary following the 'Bloody Friday' bombings in Belfast by the Provisional IRA. The poster style is interesting because of its minimalist form, relying on stark wording and typography, rather than images of bomb victims.</p>	<p>Bobby Sands* 1981, Sinn Fein</p> <p>This photograph of Bobby Sands was taken by his fellow prisoners in 1975. One of a series of posters produced shortly before each prisoner went on hunger strike in 1981. This enabled Republican activists to circulate posters of the new hunger striker as soon as he went on hunger strike.</p>

Notes taken from *Troubled Images. Posters & Images of the Northern Ireland Conflict from the Linen Hall Library*, a CD-ROM of over 3,000 posters and images on the Northern Ireland conflict. Features include descriptive notes for each of the entries, essays on the main events and issues, 1868-2007, and voice recordings of the key players who created posters and used them in major campaigns. Price £25 plus VAT (not £55 as stated on the web page), it is available from Colourpoint Books: <http://www.colourpoint.co.uk/titles/troubledimagescd-33.html>.

Commentaries on selected posters

Remember Derry

1974, People's Democracy

Row 1, column 1

The shooting dead by the Parachute Regiment of thirteen unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry on 30th January 1972 dramatically strengthened opposition to British policy in Northern Ireland, contributed to the rapid growth of the Provisional IRA, and helped precipitate the introduction of direct rule in March. The Widgery Tribunal, which reported in April, largely exonerated the Army and the issue remained an unhealed wound.

This silkscreen poster was designed by Sean O'Toole and produced by a small People's Democracy group in East London with Derry connections. It probably appeared in 1974 to mark the second anniversary of the killings, represented by the thirteen skulls; a fourteenth victim died later. Only two hundred posters were produced, and were largely distributed to students' unions throughout England.

While the poster itself accordingly had insignificant impact, it provides a powerful reflection of continuing outrage at what had happened. The use of red text reflecting blood and the black background indicating mourning is obvious. The use of the skulls as white on black, and hence complete with 1974 hollow eyes, is graphically effective and a leap of the imagination in terms of actual events; after all, the thirteen who died on the day fell at a variety of locations and went to separate graves. Thus Derry became the holocaust, and for many Nationalists it seemed that way.

The protracted campaign for the Bloody Sunday dead eventually led to the setting up of the Saville Inquiry in 1998, which has still not presented its report.

Dublin is just a Sunningdale away

1974, Ulster Unionist Council

Row 1, column 3

The division in the road, and the signposts pointing in diametrically opposite directions, has a long pedigree in British and Irish political posters. Ideologically, it stretches back within a dissenting tradition to John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress and the choices faced by the pilgrim. In Northern Ireland there was this difference; the choices were always diametrically different, and the sensible pilgrim should have had no doubt about which way to go!

This poster was designed by John Laird for the Ulster Unionist Party, in response to the December 1973 Sunningdale Agreement, and for use in the February 1974 Westminster elections. In the Sunningdale Agreement, the then Unionist leader, Brian Faulkner, agreed to enter into a power-sharing Executive. Crucially, the agreement provided for an all-island Council of Ireland, albeit with constrained powers. In January 1974, the United Ulster Unionist Council had rejected the agreement, and Faulkner was forced to resign as Unionist Party leader.

Hence by February the Unionist Party was fighting the Westminster elections on an anti-Sunningdale platform. Meanwhile, the power-sharing Executive was functioning with Faulkner as leader, but the Sunningdale Agreement had never been formally ratified. The poster suggests that ratification means Dublin rule.

The anti-agreement Unionist coalition triumphed, winning eleven of the twelve Westminster seats and over 50% of the vote. Thus, they seriously undermined the authority of Faulkner and pro-Sunningdale Unionists in the Assembly, and helped create the climate in which the power-sharing Executive was destroyed by the Ulster Workers Council strike of May in the same year.

President Clinton, Belfast City Hall, 30 November 1995, 6.00 pm

1995, Paula McElroy

Row 2, column 2

Poster for the switching on of Christmas lights at Belfast City Hall by President Clinton in November 1995. This was student Paula McElroy's winning design in a local competition. The single candle marks the birth of Christ, but enthusiasm for Clinton's visit colonises the Christmas message itself, with the red, white and blue of the US flag and Bethlehem's guiding star replaced by several stars, representing some American states. Appropriately for the occasion, the American five-pointed star becomes six-pointed here, as in the star of the Northern Ireland flag, where each point represents one of its six counties.

For all the non-politics of the occasion, it became a massive demonstration in favour of making the political peace process work, with eighty thousand turning out. Earlier in the day, Clinton had visited both the Shankill Road and the Falls Road, had met Sinn Féin leader, Gerry Adams, and delivered a hard-hitting address at Mackie's Foundry. Now in the evening, he asked two local children, one Catholic and one Protestant, to help him switch on the lights, and the crowd heard him pledge the support of the United States to those taking risks for peace.

Clinton gave greater commitment to Northern Ireland than any previous American president. His 1995 visit came two days after the issuing on 28th November of a communiqué by the British and Irish governments on the way forward for the peace process, one which the Americans helped broker. Unionists in particular had serious reservations about this. Clinton's visit was orchestrated to provide maximum forward impetus.

Clinton remained engaged and visited Northern Ireland twice more as President; in September 1998, following the Belfast Agreement, and in December 2000, in the twilight of his presidency.

Murder Omagh - Saturday 15th August 1998

1998, Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC)

Row 3, column 1

A Royal Ulster Constabulary 'murder' poster for the Omagh bombing of 15th August 1998, the worst single incident in the Troubles, when 29 were killed and 360 wounded. The practicality of the poster is in contrast to more propagandist

responses to earlier mass killings. Poignantly, the blanked out figures include individuals killed and injured by the bomb just minutes after this photograph was taken.

The bomb was planted by the Real IRA, operating from a base in South Armagh. The Real IRA and its associated 32-County Sovereignty Committee emerged in opposition to the main IRA's cease-fires of 1994 and 1997, as well as Sinn Fein's involvement in the negotiations leading to the Belfast Agreement.

The Real IRA claimed that clear warning of the Omagh bomb was given. However, the prescribed location did not match the actual one. In the event, police had shepherded people in the direction of the bomb. In the face of the enormity of the event, excuses and qualifications from the Real IRA cut little ice.

As quoted in *Lost Lives*, one report summarised the dimensions of the tragedy.

'The town they attacked is roughly 60-40 Catholic-Protestant, and the dead consisted of Protestants, Catholics, a Mormon and two Spanish visitors. They killed young, old and middle-aged, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters and grannies. They killed republicans and unionists ... They killed unborn twins, bright students, cheery shop assistants and many young people. They killed three children from the Irish Republic who were up north on a day trip. Everyone they killed was a civilian. The toll of death was thus both extraordinarily high and extraordinarily comprehensive.'

Reject the IRA now!

1972, Great Britain, Northern Ireland Office (NIO)

Row 3, column 2

An understated 'hearts and minds' poster from the Northern Ireland Office in response to Bloody Friday, and one which was used prominently displayed on Army vehicles. Clear typography only is used when bloody photographic images were available and employed in an accompanying leaflet. The black background suggests mourning, against white type, suggesting the innocence of the nine victims, and red type, suggesting murder by the IRA.

The poster added little to the terror and disgust at the events of Friday, 21st July 1972, when the Provisional IRA exploded twenty-two bombs in Belfast in one afternoon. The IRA argued that the security forces failed to respond adequately to telephone warnings, but the extent of the indiscriminate campaign minimised the credibility of such excuses.

The attack followed the failure of negotiations between the British Government and IRA leaders on 7th July, and the ending of a two-week IRA cease-fire on 13th July. This first major offensive of a renewed military campaign was later acknowledged by leading Provisionals to be 'a disaster'.

The labelling of the event by a Northern Ireland Office spokesman as 'Bloody Friday' had enduring effect. Thus Republicans lost the moral high ground of Bloody Sunday in January, when the Army killed fourteen in Derry.

Bloody Friday also cleared the way for Operation Motorman ten days later, when the Army re-established control in Republican 'no-go' areas.

Bobby Sands

1981, Sinn Fein

Row 3, column 3

Robert (Bobby) Sands achieved worldwide attention and iconic status amongst Republicans as leader of the 1981 hunger strike for political status. He was the first of ten to die, after sixty-six days without food.

The prisoners, despite the misgivings of the Republican movement, drove the 1981 hunger strike. An earlier strike in 1980 was called off with protestors close to death, on the understanding that concessions would be made; this had proved not to be the case. Posters of those involved were featured with black type on a white background.

The early stages of the 1981 strike received little support. It was only with Sands's election in April in the Fermanagh-South Tyrone by-election that the mood changed. This foreshadowed the wider Sinn Fein entry into electoral politics. After Sands died on 5th May, 100,000 attended his funeral.

This poster (featuring a 1976 prison snapshot), as well as those of the other hunger strikers, played their part in raising the temperature. The photographs themselves were a counterblast to unflattering mug shots issued by the security forces. The posters were printed as each striker commenced his fast with perhaps two thousand rushed out in a night by a team led by Danny Devenny. Contrasting with the 1980 posters, these used white on black, and with effect - these were the already-dead unless action was taken.

The same technique was used to remember the fourteen dead of Bloody Sunday in 1992. In 2001, the twentieth anniversary of the hunger strike was marked by the reprinting and mass display of the 1981 originals.

These commentaries are taken from *Troubled Images. Posters & Images of the Northern Ireland Conflict from the Linen Hall Library* edited by Yvonne Murphy et al, The Linen Hall Library, 1-90092-120-0, available from Amazon (£8.54):

http://www.amazon.co.uk/Troubled-Images-Posters-Northern-Conflict/dp/1900921200/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=gate way&qid=1201863315&sr=8-1.