



NATIONALIST ORGANIZATION THE IRA AND SINN FEIN

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Irish Republican Army (IRA), also called Provisional Irish Republican Army, republican paramilitary organization seeking the establishment of a republic, the end of British rule in Northern Ireland, and the reunification of Ireland.



The name IRA has been in use since the organization was founded in 1921. From 1969 through 1997, the IRA splintered into a number of organizations, all called the IRA. They included:

The Official IRA (OIRA).

The Provisional IRA (PIRA).

The Real IRA (RIRA).

Continuity IRA (CIRA).



During the Anglo-Irish War (Irish War of Independence, 1919–21) the IRA, under the leadership of Michael Collins, employed guerrilla tactics—including ambushes, raids, and sabotage—to force the British government to negotiate. The resulting settlement established two new political entities: the Irish Free State, which comprised 26 counties and was granted dominion status within the British Empire; and Northern Ireland, made up of six counties and sometimes called the province of Ulster, which remained part of the United Kingdom.



Recruiting and illegal drilling by the IRA continued, as did intermittent acts of violence. The organization was declared illegal in 1931 and again in 1936. After a series of IRA bombings in England in 1939, Dáil Éireann (the lower house of the Oireachtas, the Irish parliament) took stringent measures against the IRA, including provision for internment without trial.



Conflict over the widespread use of violence quickly led to another split in the IRA. Following a Sinn Féin conference in Dublin in December 1969, the IRA divided into “Official” and “Provisional” wings.



In 1981, after hunger strikes in which 10 republican prisoners died (7 were IRA members), the political aspect of the struggle grew to rival the military one, and Sinn Féin began to play a more prominent role. Sinn Féin leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, together with John Hume, head of the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), sought ways to end the armed struggle and bring republicans into democratic politics.



In April 1998 the participants in the talks approved the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement), which linked a new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland with IRA decommissioning and other steps aimed at normalizing cross-community relations.





Thank you for attention