

*The Secretariat of the Fifteenth
Annual Virginia International Crisis
Simulation Presents:*



**The Anglo-Irish Treaty of
1921**

Chaired by Katy Egan

VICS XV

Welcome to VICS and the Anglo-Irish Treaty committee!

My name is Katy Egan and I will be the chair for this committee. I am a second year in the College, majoring in Foreign Affairs. I have staffed other UVA model UN conferences and I am looking forward chairing this committee.

I am very interested in English and Irish history especially at the beginning of the 20th century. The Anglo-Irish Treaty was chosen because of the important role the treaty played in the circumstances which lead to the Irish Civil War and the Troubles in Northern Ireland, in addition to influencing how the English Empire was able to interact with its other colonies. The purpose of the committee will be to write a treaty acceptable to both the English and Irish delegations.

This committee will be set in 1921 and will write a new Anglo-Irish Treaty. Every person has been assigned to either the English or Irish delegation and has a specific position within the delegation. Because the delegations will be working so close together, it will be important for all the delegates to be familiar with both sides of the issues. The topics will cover political, social and economic issues. These issues will be discussed both among the nation delegations and in the larger committee.

The following guide is broken up into three parts. The first is an overview of the situation in Ireland and England and the history leading up to the Treaty. Following this, there are a few sample issues. These are only samples and it will be very helpful for committee if you have looked into other possible issues especially which directly relate to your position or you feel are likely to be contested either within the delegation or by the other delegation. After this is some information about the structure of the committee.

If you have any questions, please e-mail me.

Katy Egan



VICS XV



Background

Ireland came under British dominion in 1649 when the Lord Protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, brought the nation fully under British rule³. This rule lasted for several centuries, during which a majority of the land was owned by English land owners, many of whom received their land because of their support of the English government during the Cromwell program.

Around the 1890's there was a cultural revival of Irish culture especially language, arts and sports⁴. This cultural movement was then turned into a nationalism movement which resulted in the Easter Uprising and the Proclamation of the Irish Republic by rebel forces on April 24, 1916 which was then followed the Anglo-Irish War.

Prior to the Easter Uprising and the use of force to push for greater Irish Independence, legislative means were used to try to establish an independent Irish government. The Irish members of Parliament agreed to back the Liberal party in the British Parliament and support the Parliament Act in 1911, which diminished the power of the House of Lords in favor of the House of Commons and removing the veto power of the House Lords over legislations passed by the House of Commons. In exchange for this, the Liberal party agreed to pass a Home Rule bill for Ireland⁵. The bill passed the House of Commons, but was delayed in the House of Lords for the two year period the House of Lords was allowed to hold bills as it could no longer veto, before being suspended due

¹ https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_uk.html

² https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/maps/maptemplate_ei.html

³ T.W Moody and F. X. Martin, *The Course of Irish History* (Niwot, Colorado: 1994) 121-123

⁴ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Montreal, Canada: 2002) 11-12

⁵ Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland's Heroes* (Chicago, Illinois: 2006) 212- 213

to the outbreak of World War I. This bill would have granted the Irish government more autonomy in the day to day affairs, but would have maintained the supremacy of the British government.

Though the effect of the Home Rule bill was to be mainly nominal, the outcry that was raised against it both in England and Ireland and for the dual reasons of not conceding enough and conceding too much, foreshadowed the coming hostilities. In England, there were concerns over the effects this Bill would have especially in Northern Ireland, and in how the British Empire would be able to deal with other nations. Northern Ireland is made up of the nine counties in Ulster, which is the north east. Here there was, and remains today, a large pro English Protestant middle class who held a majority of the skilled jobs and who feared that the passing of the Home Rule bill would endanger their social position and their livelihood. The wealthy business owners, especially ship builders, were concerned about the economic impact of the passing of the Home Rule bill and possible laws that could have been passed by the Irish government their power. There were even rumors that if the bill passed, some wealthy shipbuilders would leave Northern Ireland, moving their businesses to England, which would decimate the economy⁶. Many English also

feared what the impact of the bill would be on the dealings of the British Empire with other colonies, including India who had begun to push for their own Home Rule bill⁷. These fears pushed for the delay of the enactment of the Home Rule bill until the conclusion of World War I, by which time the Easter Uprising had already taken place

and many Irish were claiming that the provisions of Home Rule were not enough.

In addition to the British and Northern Irish dislike of the Home Rule Bill, there were some Southern Irish who felt that the provisions in the Bill were not enough. At the time that the Bill was introduced, this group was a small minority, seen by many as extremists. These extremists decided to further push for their beliefs and stage an uprising to gain support and further inconvenience the English. This uprising became the Easter Uprising.



Placement of Rebel forces and British troops around the River Liffey in Dublin⁸.

The Easter Uprising was a turning point in Irish English relations as the change from merely pushing for increased autonomy to a cry for full independence. The Uprising consisted of a several pronged attack beginning on April 24, 1916, which was Easter Monday, and continued for almost a week. During the Uprising, Irish forces took control of several prominent buildings in Dublin, including the General Post Office, which became the headquarters for the rebellion leaders and the focus of much of the fighting. The Post Office was chosen because of this was the place where many Irish went to work and was where the wives of the soldiers who were off fighting in

⁶ Ibid, 212

⁷ T.O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558-1995* (Oxford, New York: 1996) 213

⁸ <http://www.historyempire.com/ireland/easter-rising>

World War I in the British army went to received their separation money. In addition to this, the Post Office was a symbol of the British government and British influence in Ireland.

As the Post Office was the headquarters of the Uprising, it was there that The Proclamation of the Irish Republic was read. Though carrying little political force as the government was illegal, the document declared that Ireland should be free and independent of England and called for the support of rebellion⁹. The Proclamation was originally not well received especially due to the high cost in both damages to several buildings in Dublin and several dead including civilians not involved in the Uprising^{10 11}. At this point most people still felt some loyalty to England and considered the rebels to be causing problems and endangering civilians.

The rebel forces were able to relatively easily take control of their targets and establish some fortifications prior to the British counter attack. This strong position did not last and once the British forces assembled and began the use of heavy firepower, the Irish forces were under heavy fire and eventually were forced to either fight to the last man, or surrender. The majority of the fighters surrendered on April 29 with the rest surrendering the next day. Following the surrenders, the rebels were arrested and the people began to assess the damages which were extensive.

In response to the rebellion, the British government imprisoned many of the men involved and conducted raids to find

additional fighters and prevent an additional uprising, though there was never any evidence that one was planned. Fifteen men were arrested and tried in military court as leaders of the Uprising and were sentenced to death¹². They were executed by firing squad over a period of three days beginning on May 3, 1916. While the reaction to the Uprising had been in support of the English the reaction to the executions was an outcry against the English¹³. Many Irish now disapproved of the British, even if they did not support the rebels either. This changed what was originally a minor concern for England into a major problem.

The British government reacted harshly partly because they saw this as a major threat not only to their position in Ireland, but also as a threat to England. While the rebels were pushing for an Irish Republic, England was embroiled in World War I. During the Irish preparations, the rebels began to work with the German government to get arms and men for the Uprising¹⁴. They succeeded in negotiating for the weapons, but were unable to convince the Germans to provide troops. Because the British knew of the communications between Ireland and Germany, they were able to intercept the arms shipment and were able to capture the person who had organized the shipment, Sir Rodger Casement¹⁵.

By allying with the enemy during a time of war, the rebels made themselves a more dangerous threat in the eyes of the British government both to the government itself

⁹<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ira/readings/easter.html>

¹⁰ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 1-2

¹¹ Mick O'Farrell, *A Walk Through Rebel Dublin 1916* (Dublin, Ireland: 1999)

¹² Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland's Heroes* (Chicago, Illinois: 2006) 222

¹³ A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians* (New York, New York: 2005) 111

¹⁴ A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians* (New York, New York: 2005) 108-109

¹⁵ Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland's Heroes* (Chicago, Illinois: 2006) 218

and to the people. The rebels also alienated many of the Irish people who knew men serving on the front for England. Because they felt that the rebels were so dangerous, but were only a small disgruntled minority, the British attempted to remove the threat, but with disastrous results.

Though the execution of political enemies is fairly common, there were several reasons for the swing in public opinion. The first reason was the remnants of the Irish resistance were able to use propaganda against the English, highlighting those actions which angered the Irish people and painting the leaders as martyrs. They were further aided unintentionally by the English who in an attempt to make an example of all the leaders and acted quickly to prevent another rising or an attempt to free the prisoners. The Irish propagandists used this arguing that the British were acting hastily and harshly. This was furthered by the execution of James Connolly who had been wounded in the battle and was near death. The execution of a dying man, they argued, was uncalled for. Finally as the British attempted to avoid making martyrs of the leaders and allowing the remaining Irish rebels glorify their bodies, they refused to return the bodies of the men to their families instead burying them in a mass grave. The result of this was an outcry from Catholics over the desecration of the bodies and the improper burial without a Catholic funeral. This was seen by Southern Irish as an attack on their culture as a large majority of the population was, and is today, Catholic. This alienated the people and they became more willing to listen to the propaganda produced by the Irish rebels.

After the Uprising, the remains of the rebel force joined together to form a provisional government separate from England called the Dáil Éireann and continued to push for the Irish Republic.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921

Eamon de Valera, who was elected to the position of president of the Dáil, believed that by gaining support for the Irish independence movement through protest and international pressure, the English would have to surrender and grant the Irish independence. To do this he went to America to try to solicit help. There he managed to gain support and money from the Irish-Americans, though he was not able to gain the support of either the Republican or the Democratic presidential candidates in the 1920 election or the Wilson administration.

Back in Ireland, a large part of the fighting was urban guerrilla small scale attacks carried out mainly by the Irish Republican Army (IRA). This group of mainly men fought in the name of the defense of Southern Ireland and carried out raids against British strong holds and generally harassed the Royal Irish Constabulary who were the division of the British police in Ireland. Many of the fighters in the Easter Uprising were either members of this group or had connections to it.

In addition to dealing with the IRA, there were several assassinations carried out by a group known as the Squad or the Twelve Apostles. These were men trained by a man named Michael Collins to target of the upper level workers from the Castle, which was the central office for the English intelligence agency and represented English dominance in Ireland¹⁶.

The Castle and its workers were the main source of information for British intelligence. They included many Irish informants and had previously been successful at preventing separatist movements from gaining much ground,

¹⁶ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 116

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however partly because of the shift in public support and because any agent who was seen leaving the Castle was usually shot, the British intelligence agency now had greater difficulty countering the rebels and learning their movements. The Castle was also unable to prevent the development of an Irish intelligence network which was able to prevent a large number of arrests by forewarning the intended targets and compromising large amounts of British intelligence.

In an attempt to counter these fighters, the British government created a group of guerrilla fighters called the Auxiliaries or the Black and Tans who reported to the Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC)¹⁷. The Black and Tans units were often made up of former soldiers who were having trouble readjusting to civilian life. They got their names from the temporary uniforms they wore while waiting for their RIC uniforms. These men were not received well and subjected to harassment. In trying to counter the IRA, however, the Black and Tans acquired a reputation for brutality which further animated many from the British government.

During Southern Ireland's attempt at revolution for independence, the north began their own crusade to oppose them¹⁸. During this time, the northerners created an army to defend their right to be English citizens and fight to remain within the British Empire. The Northern Irish created a group known as the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), or the Orange, to protect the northern providences. Though they did not play a major role in the Anglo Irish War, taking part in only a few skirmishes in Northern Ireland against the IRA, the Orange carried a great deal of

¹⁷ Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland's Heroes* (Chicago, Illinois: 2006) 233

¹⁸ T.W Moody and F. X. Martin, *The Course of Irish History* (Niwt, Colorado: 1994) 305, 312

weight. These forces were not created by the British government, who at one time ordered their disbanding, but when the debate over Irish Home Rule came up in the British Parliament, those opposed to the Bill would cite this group as an example of the strength of the loyalty in Northern Ireland, that they would die to remain within the empire.

As the violence escalated, the British government and the provisional Irish government began talking first through a good will meeting then correspondences between Eamon de Valera, who was the acting President of Ireland, and David Lloyd George, who was the Prime Minister of England¹⁹. The result of these discussions was the meeting of delegations from England and Ireland in London and is where our committee will begin.

Possible Issues for the Committee

This committee will firstly deal with the type of government that will be established or that will remain in Ireland. In addition to this topic, there are several other issues that will need to be discussed which are semi-independent from the decision on the governmental status of Ireland and will be discussed no matter the type of government chosen. The topics will deal with political, social and economic issues. Some examples of possible topics follow, though during committee, delegates will be introducing topics which they feel need to be discussed and possibly be included in the Treaty. Therefore these should just be seen as a starting point.

1. Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland managed to remain largely separated from the fighting in the Anglo-Irish War; however they have made

¹⁹ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 221-226

clear that they will oppose a degree of Home Rule which would include the full Republic. Internal factions within Northern Ireland, Southern Ireland and England split over the issue, some in all locations arguing for Northern Ireland to remain in Great Britain, for Northern Ireland to become a part of the Republic Southern Ireland is pushing for, or, in extreme cases, for Northern Ireland to become independent.

Some Irish and British argue that Northern Ireland should be a part of the proposed Republic because the two Irelands share the same land and, in general, a majority of the people shares a common culture. Also as Northern Ireland has a more solidly established industrial economy than Southern Ireland, this would be beneficial to the Southern Ireland economy, and encourage the Irish delegation to support keeping the two Irelands together to form the Republic. This is the stance taken by many of the hardliner members of the Dáil Éireann, but it is not the only opinion. The British delegates have the incentive of wanting to be completely removed from Ireland if the decision is made to grant Southern Ireland greater autonomy²⁰. The fighting in Ireland has been costly and as the government has lost control to the point that during the conflict orders to disarm the Ulster Volunteer Force went unheeded. As a result, some in Parliament have begun to argue that Great Britain should not withdraw from Southern Ireland without withdrawing completely from Ireland.

Others argue for the maintaining of Northern Ireland in Great Britain, no matter the outcome of the talks with Southern Ireland. Some Irish feel that it would be easier and necessary to agree to the separation to assure the success of the push

for the Republic, which remains a contested there²¹. If Southern Ireland gains the autonomy that it seeks and Northern Ireland is grouped with it, then Southern Ireland would face the threat of action by the UVF. Those in England and Parliament also have argued that no country should be forcibly removed from the British Empire²². Also British business interest as well as those in Northern Irish would be better protected if Northern Ireland remained in the British Empire.

The last option would be to grant Northern Ireland greater autonomy, separating it slightly from England, but not granting the region full independence. This is mainly supported by those in England. They feel that this solution would allow England to separate somewhat from some of the issues in Ireland, while allowing the nation to remain in the empire. Also this could be done without necessarily granting the same degree of freedom to Southern Ireland. In this, Northern Ireland would remain in the British Empire, but more of the day to day affairs would be in the hands of the government of Ulster.

2. International Pressure

Most of the international pressure was felt by the English government as they had better established relations with other countries. Such countries as Germany and the United States, however, exerted pressure on both nations.

Germany was seen as a potential ally to Ireland partly because they had opposed the British in World War I. Germany has fostered this idea as they supported, to some degree, the establishment of an independent

²⁰ A.N. Wilson, *After the Victorians* (New York, New York: 2005) 105

²¹ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 224

²² T.O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558-1995* (Oxford, New York) 213

Irish state prior to the Easter Uprising. Though Germany currently is not in a position to ally with Ireland, the possibility of a future alliance is there.

In addition, the government faced pressure as the interactions with Ireland set the president for dealing with other nations in the British Empire. At roughly the same time as Ireland was debating Home Rule, India was as well. India was a much richer asset to the British government than Ireland and Parliament was anxious about how a treaty with Ireland would impact relations with India²³.

Both governments faced indirect pressures from other countries. Because of the strong alliance between Great Britain and the United States, especially remaining from World War I, and the strong cultural connection between Ireland and the United States, both parties needed to reach an agreement to maintain good relations with their ally²⁴. Both states also faced pressure from other nations for religious reasons. The English had, over the years, pushed to make Ireland more Protestant, though had not succeeded. Both sides faced concern from other nations that whichever country gained control would not continue to allow the other religion to practice freely, either in an attempt to more fully gain control, or in retaliation for past actions²⁵.

3. Civilian Safety

During the Anglo-Irish War, the tactics taken by fighter on both sides were extremely costly to both sides both in terms of destruction of property, but also in loss of life.

²³ T.O. Lloyd, *The British Empire 1558-1995* (Oxford, New York: 1996) 213

²⁴ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 188- 189

²⁵ Kenneth O. Morgan, *The Oxford History of Britain* (Oxford, England: 1999) 556- 557

The Irish fighters inflicted extremely costly injuries on the English and were in many regards considered terrorism. This was based on the use of bombings and targeted shooting especially of police and members of the intelligence community²⁶. In contrast to this, the Irish community considered the Black and Tans as terrorizing the community. The raids conducted by them were considered brutal and unprovoked shootings were also reported²⁷.

As the delegates assemble for the meeting, the question of adherence to the ceasefire among the groups is greatly in question by the public as is both governments' ability to protect them from the other. This is also a concern for both governments as the people begin to lose faith in them. The British government also must consider the best way to maintain peace within its own borders and ensure that if the fighting continues it is protected.

Both sides maintain that their force was necessary to ensure public safety and in the course of the war, a feeling of distrust has developed between the two forces. The treaty will provide a chance for each side to express their opinion and creates a chance at partial to full disarmament. The extent that each group will be affected by the treaty will depend on the positions of the delegates.

Another concern is that though open hostilities are ending those people supporting the side that does not maintain control will be persecuted by the other. Whichever group controls the government in Ireland will be forced to deal with this minority who may be willing to continue the conflict through force.

²⁶ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins* (New York, New York: 1990) 125-126

²⁷ Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland's Heroes* (Chicago, Illinois: 2006) 211

4. Military and Police Control

The British military currently maintains a strong presence in Ireland, particularly in Dublin at the Castle, including regular troops and the Royal Irish Constabulary along with the Black and Tan Auxiliary group. These troops represent the British interest and, in the British view, prevent an attack on England or the invasion of another hostile country. To the Irish they are a symbol of domination, though some acknowledge the protective value of the soldiers.

Whichever group maintains control of the government in Ireland will need to maintain a police and military. This can be seen as either a strength or weakness for the proposed Irish government in that they would be controlling a mainly native population as oppose to the continuation of the British government and assumedly would be better able to keep order. The counter to this is that a separate Irish government would be a new government who has not had the experience in maintaining order and has recently been advancing its bid for independence through the very means that it would then have to control. This carries considerable weight especially for the English delegation due to how close the nations are to each other and the possible implications of continued violence.

The treaty, or at least the delegations, may also need to entertain a discussion on the presence of the British troops as well as the possibility of an Irish military. The British and Irish positions vary between those who would approve of the British involvement in Ireland and those who do not.

Structure of the Committee

As stated in the letter at the beginning of this background guide, the committee will be broken up into English and Irish sub delegations who will discuss certain issues before discussing them in the larger committee. Within these delegations, each person will be assigned a specific position and will be expected to have some knowledge of how this position will affect their opinion on certain topics and be prepared to assume some responsibility when a topic which falls under their jurisdiction comes up. There are a few positions which do not have clear biases for these positions, delegates have some freedom to take what position they chose, but they should also be prepared to respond to the dossier they will receive when they arrive for committee.

In addition to an understanding of their positions, delegates should have an understanding of the events leading up to the Treaty and the context that the issues the Treaty.

Because a large part of the committee will be discussing contested issues, and delegates will need to present topics they wish to be discussed, delegates should prepare a policy paper dealing with the main issues they feel need to be included in the Treaty or issues that they feel it would be in their delegation's best interest not to discuss and why. The paper should follow a standard format for font, spacing and margins and should include proper citation. The paper will be turned in at the beginning of the first committee session.

Due to the nature of the committee and the crisis, delegates should also have a basic knowledge of parliamentary procedure. A majority of the committee will take place in either moderated or unmoderated caucus, and delegates should be comfortable acting in this format.

Prior to the first committee session, I also highly encourage all the delegates to look at the original treaty. The original treaty will not be taken as the foundation of the committee, in that the committee will not simply discuss the old treaty, but it will be very useful for delegates to have read the document. The committee will take points raised by the committee members to write a new treaty and though the old treaty will not be directly discussed it will still be helpful for all members to have read it. It is also a great resource for finding possible discussion topics.

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Additional Resources-

Note- some of these documents have a bias towards a side and should be read with this in mind.

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