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Play clips of newscasters announcing Brexit, etc.

June 23rd, 2016: following over a year's worth of fierce debate and advertising by every group in the UK political sphere, the British electorate voted to leave the European Union. The controversial referendum had dominated politics and media since the passage of the *European Union Referendum Act 2015* in the UK Parliament, fulfilling the Conservative Party's 2015 election promise.

In discussing Brexit, there is a tendency to focus conversation around Westminster politics: the rise and fall of the UK Independence Party, the complex relationship Labour has with both Leave and Remain camps, the continual intra-party conflict of the Conservative Party under first David Cameron, then Theresa May, and now Boris Johnson. Debates over issues such as the consequences of a soft-Brexit vs. a hard, no-deal Brexit, or the possibility of a second referendum, or even the inability of Westminster to agree on a course of action in the face of looming deadlines *are* all important, but they do tend to overlook the region-specific consequences of Brexit.

Although 54% of *England's* constituents voted to leave, the populace in Scotland and Northern Ireland strongly disagreed. 62% of Scottish voters and 56% of Northern Irish voters cast their ballots for Remain. Ireland, particularly, had a unique worry in the aftermath of Brexit: the border that separates the Republic of Ireland, an independent state, from Northern Ireland, which is still a province of the UK.

In order to understand how Brexit is already reigniting barely dormant tensions across Ireland, we need to go back to 1922. I'm Cameron Lallana, this is the Cycle News Hour, and today, we're going to talk about the long conflict known as—in typical British understatement—The Troubles, along with how its legacy looms ever larger as Brexit deadlines approach.

During the prior section, fade in some kind of Irish music. Using that as a background, play audio clips from various news reports and such. I.e. “There is no border.” “You need to clean it up,” etc.

At risk of being reductive, we're going to begin our story in 1916. After nearly 400 years of English control, replete with legal discrimination against Catholics, harsh penal responses to Irish nationalism, and what can most charitably be called gross mismanagement and negligence during the Irish Potato Famine, Irish republicanism was about to take center stage.

Throughout the 18th and 19th century, the UK-based government undertook some legal reform, making it legal for Catholics to buy land in 1778. Though some felt Home Rule, the term for Irish autonomy under the UK government, was imminent, the British House of Lords obstructed this policy for decades. Even within Ireland, primarily-Protestant Irish who supported the Westminster government, otherwise known as Unionists, also pushed back on Home Rule. At the outset of World War 1, this policy seemed unlikely.

Then, on April 24th, 1916, came the Easter Rising.

[*Reading of the 1916 Proclamation*](#) Play 0.00 to 0.06, 0.53-1.23

These words, from the 1916 Proclamation, were read on the steps of the General Post Office in Dublin by Patrick Pearse, an Irish schoolteacher, as armed militias seized key positions around the city. The uprising, organized by the Irish Republican Brotherhood, aspired to more than Home Rule: they wanted an independent Ireland, a republic. The uprising would ultimately last for six days, as the British army eventually overwhelmed the Republicans with superior numbers and firepower. When the dust settled, nearly 500 people were dead, over 2,500 people were injured, and swaths of Dublin were left in ruins.

Popular Irish opinion was initially *against* the Easter Uprising. For the last century, the main Irish political goal had been autonomy gained through legislation; militant Republicanism existed, but was far from common. What happened after the Easter Rising, though, would quickly turn that tide.

In the following days, British General John Maxwell quickly moved to arrest those who he felt were responsible for the uprising. By the next month, 187 people were being tried in military court-martials. Under General Maxwell's orders, these trials were held in secret and without legal defence for the accused. In total, 90 defendants were sentenced to death. Between May 3rd and May 12th, 15 people, including all of the signatories of the Proclamation, were executed by firing squad. In those same ten days, Irish opinion grew increasingly hostile to the

British as a result of not only the executions, but also retaliatory attacks and murders committed by British soldiers. Though the Dublin public initially reviled the Republicans, the martial occupation of the city caused many to soften their opinions or even support the Irish nationalists. The reaction of the army even persuaded some that politics alone would not be enough to remove external influences.

This, among other moral outrages, contributed to the massive electoral wins in 1918 for the now pro-Republican political party, Sinn Fein, meaning “We ourselves” in Irish. Out of 105 Irish seats, Sinn Fein won 73 of them. Instead of going to Westminster, these MPs congregated in Dublin and declared themselves the parliament of an Independent Ireland. Over the next two years, the newly-formed Irish Republican Army waged a guerilla war against the British army and Irish police forces. In the South, the separatists quickly gained power as pro-Republican candidates took control of many county councils; in the North, however, British power was sustained by the support of the Unionist Protestant majority.

By 1921, long-running peace talks would lead to the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which granted Ireland the status of an independent state in the British commonwealth. One of the stipulations of the treaty, though, was that Northern Ireland would be given the option to opt out of being part of the Free State. The heavily Unionist Northern Parliament would invoke this power only a day after the conclusion of the treaty.

There were members of the IRA, though, who disliked the treaty, broke away from their parliamentary comrades, and continued a guerilla war against British forces. Though the bulk of their attempts would largely die away in late 1922, these battle-hardened men and women, still dedicated to the cause of a united, independent Ireland, did not merely vanish into the night. Almost exactly 50 years later, the IRA would once again be waging a guerilla war against the British. They would call it “The Long War.” Today, it is more popularly known as “the Troubles.”

Use media footage here as a transition and slowly fade in music as a line of demarcation

Between 1922 and 1969, the anti-treaty IRA would be a constant state of flux, a result of it being filled with members of varying ideologies and backgrounds. Filled with Catholics,

atheists, fervent nationalists, Marxist-Leninists, conservatives and so on, the organization would lean in different directions based on the composition of its leadership. Between 1925 and 1931, the IRA would create a secret alliance with the Soviet Union under the direction of IRA Chief of Staff Moss Twomey, though Twomey himself was neither a communist nor a fan of the USSR.

Twomey would later be arrested by the Irish Free State in 1936 after the IRA was banned by the Fianna Fáil-led government, though the IRA had once been allied with the political party. Around this same time, Catholic Church sponsorship of anti-communist legislation and a perceived lack of progress on certain issues led many leftists to leave the IRA, pushing the organization to the right.

During World War 2, the IRA remained active and attempted to make contact with Nazi Germany in order to trade intelligence for supplies. This alliance was unsuccessful, though not for lack of trying on either the part of IRA members or German intelligence. IRA members were interned in both the north and south during the war, and a number of IRA agents, including Chief of Staff Charlie Kerins, would be arrested for crimes committed during the war.

Fortunate son or something 1962: America and the Soviet Union nearly start a nuclear war over missiles in Cuba, France ends its longtime occupation of Algeria, and Cathal Goulding is appointed Chief of Staff of the IRA. A lifelong member of the organization, Goulding became interested in Marxist politics after becoming friends with a pro-Soviet spy when the two were incarcerated together. As Chief of Staff, he began pushing the organization to the left, believing that Irish unity could better be achieved by a non-sectarian workers' movement across the whole of Ireland. Catholics and Protestants together, he believed, would push out the British and form a united, socialist country. Accordingly, IRA leadership began winding down paramilitary activities in order to focus on social and labor organizing.

This direction didn't sit well with many in the IRA, especially anti-Communist Catholics and conservatives. And in 1969, things came to a head.

Civil Rights protests

At the same time that the IRA approaching its identity crisis in the late 60s, a Civil Rights movement was developing in Northern Ireland. Majority-Catholic, the movement sought to challenge inequality and discrimination. The movement was opposed by Unionists and would

often clash with the police. 1967 through 1969 saw a large increase in violence as militants on both sides engaged in shootings and bombings; the police force of Northern Ireland, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, had a much more antagonistic relationship with Republicans and Catholics, deepening the divide between the state and activist. The intervention of the British army only worsened the feelings of resentment, especially due to its heavy-handed tactics.

For the more militant-minded Republicans, there were a thousand straws that broke the Camel's back. Led by Seán Mac Stíofáin, these members would break away to form the Provisional IRA. Shortly thereafter, portions of the political wing also split and formed the Provisional Sinn Féin. In contrast to the Official IRA, the PIRA had little sympathy for left-wing politics or labor-based analyses of oppression. Instead, they held an ideology of action and violent opposition to the British. The PIRA's 1975 training manual for recruits, also known as the Green Book, describes their strategy as five-fold. Quote:

1. A War of attrition against enemy personnel which is aimed at causing as many casualties and deaths as possible so as to create a demand from their people at home for their withdrawal.

2. A bombing campaign aimed at making the enemy's financial interest in our country unprofitable while at the same time curbing long term financial investment in our country.

3. To make the Six Counties as at present and for the past several years ungovernable except by colonial military rule.

4. To sustain the war and gain support for its end by National and International propaganda and publicity campaigns.

5. By defending the war of liberation by punishing criminals, collaborators and informers.

Endquote. The Six Counties mentioned is the nationalist name for Northern Ireland.

Particularly important to note here is that the manual calls the conflict 'a war of attrition.' This language stands in contrast to their own in 1969, when the PIRA sought to make Northern Ireland ungovernable through high-intensity conflict. We'll come back around to that change of tactics in just a moment. After smuggling thousands of Armalite rifles and shoulder-fired

grenade launchers into the country in 1971, PIRA members carried out thousands of shootings and bombings between then and 1974.

(News reel)

The bomb was the IRA's most visible tool, dangerous to both target and user in the early days. As Bowyer Bell observed in his book *The Gun in Politics*, the PIRA's own bombs inflicted more casualties on their organization than the British army did during the high of early bombings. Data compiled by the Conflict Archive on the Internet, also known as CAIN, reports that 6,181 bombs took place between 1969 and 1974. Not all of these attacks can be attributed to the PIRA, but they were undoubtedly responsible for many of them. With help from American technicians and the Libyan government, PIRA bombmakers were quickly able to improve their craft. By the 1980s, they had developed sophisticated remote-detonated IEDs, timed bombs that could be set months in advance, and various features that would prevent their bombs from being defused.

By the mid-1970s, though, necessity brought about another shift in policy. In 1974, after a year of negotiation, the IRA and the British government announced a temporary ceasefire until the 2nd of January, 1975. Although the agreement was initially renewed, the IRA decided not to continue to ceasefire later in the same month.

This period marked the slow change in IRA strategy from a short, high-intensity war to a strategy of attrition, known to them as "The Long War." The PIRA's 1977 Green Book's language reflects this change in their rhetoric. Quote: "By now it is clear that our task is not only to kill as many enemy personnel as possible but of equal importance to create support which will carry us not only through a war of liberation which could last another decade but which will support us past the 'Brits Out' stage to the ultimate aim of a Democratic Socialist Republic." Endquote.

As mentioned briefly above, this edition of the Green Book emphasizes the need for the IRA to build popular backing. As the leadership of the IRA came to understand that the British could not be driven out by sudden and overwhelming force, they began to pivot to the strategies mentioned earlier. In order to sustain their movement, the PIRA needed support and recruits from the populace. They pursued this through propaganda and publicity campaigns, and

developing parallel structures of law to punish, as mentioned before, “criminals, collaborators, and informers.”

As the Long War developed, PIRA strategy grew more cautious—as they had no idea how long the conflict might drag out, they could not not afford to lose many volunteers. Although their rhetoric called for attacks that would undermine the British commitment to remain in Ireland or to damage economic reasoning to do so, analysts argue that the PIRA actually focused on low-risk operations, wherever they saw them. In practice, this translated to plenty of bombing and shootings against military, police, and bank targets. At their most ambitions, they targeted mainland Britain and politicians. Most notable among these events is the Brighton Hotel Bombing.

In 1984, the British Conservative party was having a conference in the Grand Brighton Hotel. Among its attendees was Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. ***Bomb noise*** In the early morning hours of October 12th, a bomb planted by an IRA volunteer went off, which toppled a five-story chimney into the building itself. Although Thatcher herself escaped injury, the explosion left 34 injured and five dead. Among them was a Conservative Member of Parliament, Sir Anthony Berry.

By the time of the 1997 Peace Agreement, the British military and Irish police forces would have lost over 900 people to PIRA attacks.

In the following year, the PIRA and the British government would agree to an on-going ceasefire known as the Good Friday Agreement. The end of wide-spread and active hostilities didn't mean a quick reconciliation, though, and the unaddressed faults in Northern Ireland have laid the faults that threaten to crack with the departure of England from the EU. We'll be back next week to discuss the topic on every concerned citizen's mind: the border. Today non-existent thanks to the European one-market, it may be back tomorrow, bringing with it the Troubles of an older time.

I'm Cameron Lallana and this has been International News. The audio clips used in this report were pulled from “Brexit Breakdown: fear and anger on the Irish Border” by the BBC, “After Brexit, what happens to the Irish Border” by the CBC, “The 1916 Proclamation of the Irish Republic as read by Dr. Conor Mulvagh” by UCD - University College Dublin, and

“Northern Ireland Troubles” by the ThamesTV.

The news never sleeps and frankly, neither do we. We’ll be back next week.