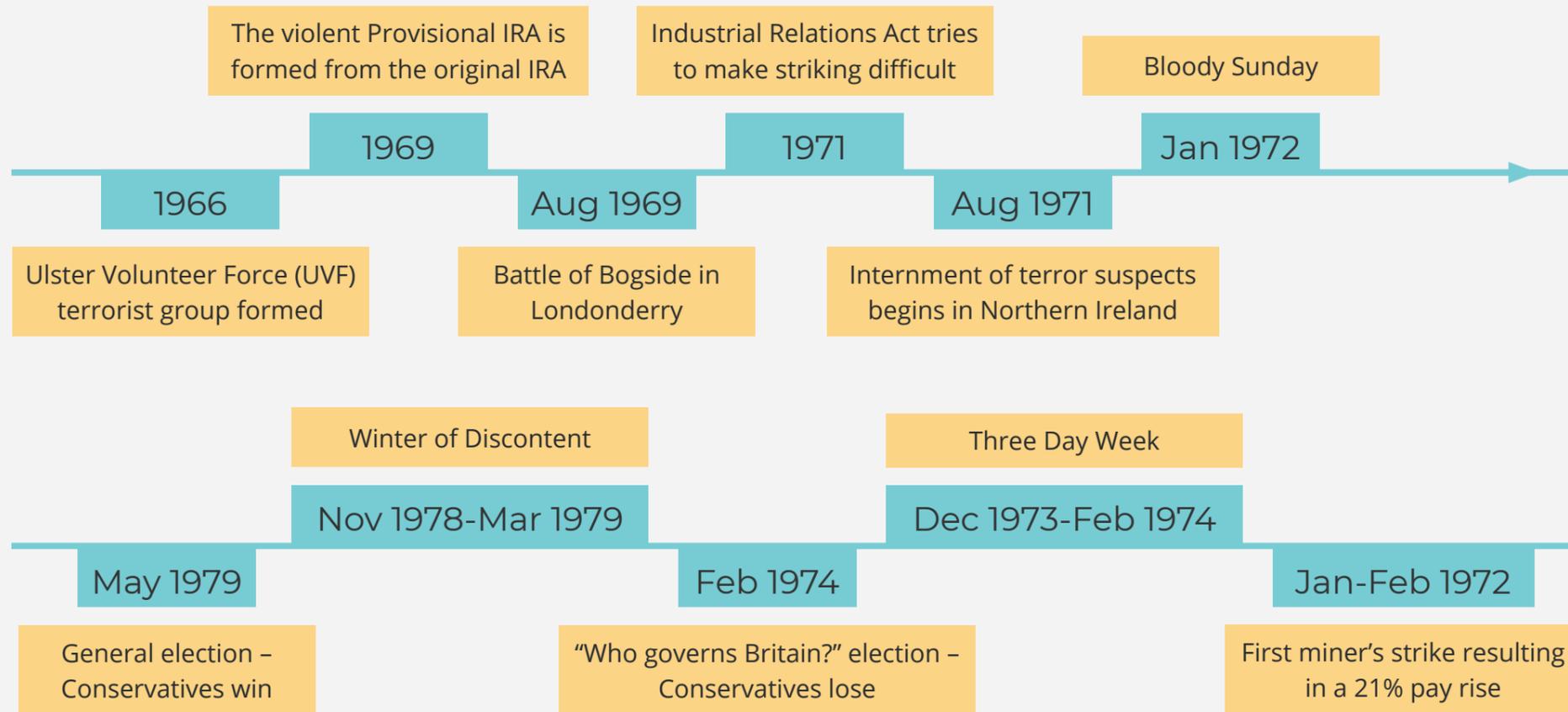


Key Question 7 : What were the main political and economic issues in the 1970s?

Timeline of events



"Crisis? What crisis?" Prime Minister James Callaghan 1979

Important concept

Civil unrest - when people in a country protest about an important issue, or against how their country is being run. This could be workers going on strike to get more pay, or it could be protests, sometimes peaceful, sometimes violent, against the government.

Key words

Productivity	The amount made by each worker in an industry
Inflation	When prices rise, often faster than wages
Trade union	Represent the worker's interest to employers
Strike	Workers refuse to work to influence employers
General election	An election for all MPs in Parliament
Unionists	Wanted Northern Ireland to stay in the UK
Nationalists	Wanted to join the Irish Republic
Civil rights	How people expect their government to treat them
Internment	Imprisoning suspects without trial
Paramilitaries	Violent groups who act like unofficial armies

Economic decline

Three problems that hit the UK economy at the same time in the 1970s:

- PROBLEM 1: The UK's share of world trade quickly declined.
- PROBLEM 2: UK productivity began to fall behind other countries .
- PROBLEM 3: Inflation was making prices rise faster than wages

Why there were more strikes in the 1970s than before:

- 1971 Industrial Relations Act - Conservatives tried to control the trade unions by saying you could not strike without talks first - unions ignored it.
- The general public supported strikes for higher wages as rising inflation meant that prices were rapidly rising in the early 1970s.

Key Question 7 : What were the main political and economic issues in the 1970s?

The miners and the Three Day Week

The 1972 miner's strike

- The strike caused power cuts as power stations ran out of coal – they asked for a 47% pay rise, got 21% after the government offered them 8%.
- The general public supported some strikes for higher wages as rising inflation meant that prices were rapidly rising in the early 1970s.

By the end of 1973:

- miners, electricity engineers, train drivers began overtime bans
- power blackouts as coal was not getting to power stations.

Three-Day Week meant electricity would only be provided for 3 specific days each week. The Conservatives called an election over this and lost. Pay rises agreed by new Labour government eventually stopped the strikes.

Winter of Discontent 1978-9 and the 1979 election

- To limit inflation the Labour wanted 5% pay increases but prices were rising by 10%. Parliament allowed employers to break the 5% limit.
- Lorry drivers on strike - petrol shortages, medicines not delivered.
- Public employees strike - rubbish piled up, bodies went unburied.
- 30 million working days were lost.
- Conservatives took advantage of this and ran a campaign blaming the Labour government for lack of control over the unions.
- Labour lost a vote of confidence in the Commons so an election was called.
- Conservatives got a clear majority in the House of Commons with 339 seats out of 650.
- Conservative leader Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister.

Civil unrest in Northern Ireland

- Northern Ireland was separated from the rest of Ireland in 1922.
- Two thirds of people in Northern Ireland were Protestant/Unionist, wanting to stay in the UK. They controlled elections and the police.
- Many of the rest were Catholic/Nationalists who wanted to re-join the rest of Ireland but they were excluded from politics by the Unionists.
- Attempts at improving the lives of the Catholic communities caused a violent reaction from Unionists.
- The UVF terrorist group was formed in 1966 to attack Catholics.
- A civil rights movement began to protest for improving the lives of the Catholic communities in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s.

THE TROUBLES

- 1969 civil rights march to Londonderry attacked by a Protestant mob.
- Bogside area of Londonderry built barricades to keep police out.
- Police brutality resulted in riots known as 'Battle of the Bogside'.
- UK Army sent to keep the peace – IRA attacked the Army and Police.
- Violent clashes between the paramilitaries like UVF and the IRA in Catholic areas.
- UK government introduces internment and direct rule to end violence.
- Violence and civil rights campaigns continued.

BLOODY SUNDAY

- 30 January 1972 civil rights protest march in Londonderry.
- Soldiers went into the crowd to make arrests and began shooting.
- Army claimed that the IRA had started shooting at them first.
- 13 unarmed civilians killed, 13 more were wounded.
- Resulted in rioting in Londonderry and Belfast, led to IRA bombings.

IRA BOMBING CAMPAIGN

The IRA targeted:

- crowded public places e.g. London's King's Cross Station 1973
- crowded pubs e.g. in Guildford and Birmingham 1974
- tourist attractions e.g. Madame Tussauds waxworks museum 1974
- the Army e.g. coach exploded on the M62 motorway 1974
- prominent public figures e.g. Lord Mountbatten, Airey Neve MP 1979.