

## Great Britain: 20s and 30s:

**Key words:** *Labour Party, Trade Unions, Industrial Decline, The General Strike in 1926, Great Depression in GB, the division of Ireland, Appeasement*

**Dictionary:** *benefit – dávka, príspevok, podpora, pension – dôchodok, penzia, podpora, infirm – slabý, nemohúci, strike – stávka, dole – podpora v nezamestnanosti, the policy of appeasement – politika uzmierňovania*

### Labour Party:

- **Socialist ideas were popular:** socialism says that the businesses should be owned by the ..... and that the society should be organized in a way that deliberately takes care of working-class people.
- **1893:** The **Independent Labour Party** was founded (as **Labour Party** from 1906)

The **Independent Labour Party** wanted:

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

- **1924:** **Ramsay Macdonald** became the **first Labour Prime Minister**. The Government was in a coalition, The Labours were supported by the Liberals. The Government lasted only for 10 months.
- **1945:** The first completely Labour Government was elected. **Clement Atlee** was the Prime Minister.

### Trade Unions:

- **Trade unions<sup>1</sup>:** organizations of workers that argued for better ..... and ..... From 1880s trade unions organized **strikes**.
- Between 1913 and 1919 the trade union membership has almost doubled

### Industrial decline in Great Britain:

- **British industry in trouble:** using old-fashioned and inefficient machinery, suffered from increased competition and more advanced foreign producers from abroad. Even before 1914, Britain had been overtaken by ..... and the .....
- **“Staple industries”:** 1. ...., 2. ...., 3. .... All were in decline.

### Slump and Unemployment:

- **right after WWI:** loss of wartime government contracts and demobilization of army produced a post-war depression

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<sup>1</sup> **A trade union:** is an organization of workers that have united to achieve common goals such as better working conditions. The trade union, through its leadership, bargains with the employer on behalf of union members and negotiates labour contracts (collective bargaining) with employers such as: **wages, work rules, complaint procedures, rules governing hiring, firing and promotion of workers, benefits, workplace safety and policies.**

### Cotton

- The cotton industry lost customers because of the war.
- The mills were outdated, so it was hard to compete with manufacturers abroad.
- Man-made fibres, e.g. rayon, were invented which competed with cotton.

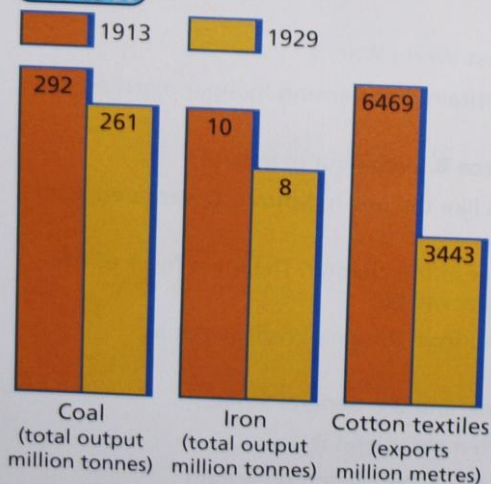
### Shipbuilding & steel

- World trade slumped — so fewer goods needed transporting, and fewer ships needed to be built.
- Because fewer ships were being built less steel was needed too.

### Coal

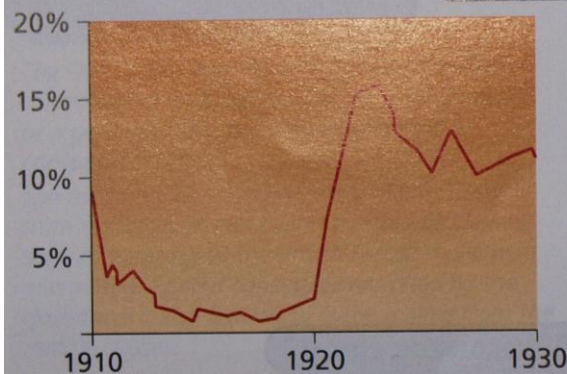
- Ships now ran on fuel oil, not coal.
- British coal was expensive. The stuff near the surface had been dug out and the mines didn't have modern machinery, so it took longer to get the coal to the surface.
- Strikes meant coal production was unreliable so more customers were lost.
- Homes in Britain were switching to gas and electricity and needed less coal.

Source A



The decline of three British staple industries, 1913-29.

Source B



The percentage of workers unemployed in Britain in the years 1910-30.

- Unemployment rates in the 20s: Compare war times and post-war times:

### Problems in the coal industry:

- Government announced the end of government control of coal mines in 1921. This led to a lot of dissatisfaction with the government, because soon after government lost its control over the coal mines, the owners cut the wages of miners drastically.
- In 1925 the prices fell sharply and the owners responded with further wage cuts and increase in the working day of 1 hour.
- In 1925 and 1926 the miners called for the mines to be ..... and opposed wage cuts. When the employers made it clear that the wage cuts would go ahead anyway, the miners persuaded the **Trades Union Congress (TUC)** to agree to a **general strike** in their support.

### General Strike, May 1926:

- **General Strike, May 4 – May 12 1926:** Started with railwaymen, transport workers and printers.

- The strike was remarkably peaceful, however in more than 70 towns, the local strikers went beyond the TUC's instructions.
- TUC called off the strike on May 12, after only **9 days**, saying that they had been told by the government that a solution could be found. The miners, and many of the strikers, were furious when they learned that no definite promises had been received.
- Despite the promises being made that those who supported the General Strike would not be victimized, many strikers were ....., and many employers would only let them return if they signed a pledge to leave their union. By mid-1927, over 250 000 miners were unemployed.

**Women in GB:**

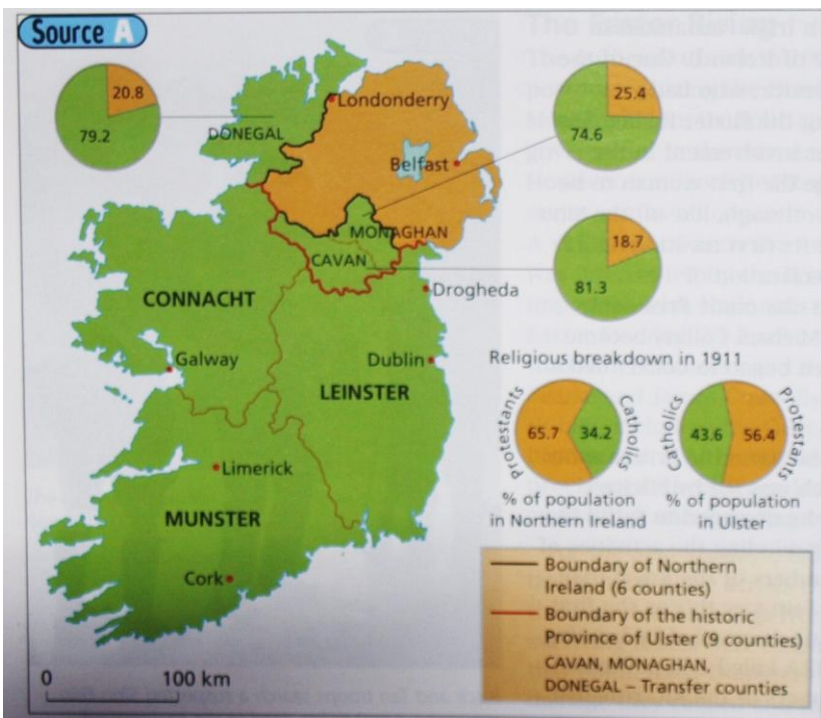
- **1928:** when all the women over 21 got equal rights with men (**recall the movement of Suffragettes**)

**Ireland and the War of Independence: 1919-1921**

- **Sinn Fein** = “.....” (**political party**): by 1917 Sinn Fein was committed to the creation of a **totally independent Ireland**.
- By the end of 1917 Sinn Fein had over 250 000 members.
- In 1918 general election, Sinn Fein won 73 out of Ireland's 105 seats and the Irish Nationalists won 7 seats. Sinn Fein's MPs refused to go to London and, in 1919, set up their own Irish Parliament in Dublin.
- War between **British Army X Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.)** from **January 1919 to 1921 (= War of .....** ): Sinn Fein was banned. In 1920s, the IRA killed 176 policemen and 54 soldiers.
- Government in London passed “**Government of Ireland Act**” in 1921: this set up **two Parliaments for the north and south of Ireland**. Under the act, Ulster would become Northern Ireland. **This was not supported by Sinn Fein, who was not prepared to accept a divided Ireland, so the fighting continued.**

**Ireland after 1921:**

- **Anglo-Irish Partition Treaty signed in December 1921:** from 1922 the south of Ireland became the **Irish Free State**, with its **own parliament**, **but still** .....  
.....  
= **Dominion Status:** the south of Ireland as self-governing territory within the British Empire, like ..... for example, but still loyal to the British Crown.
- **Civil War, 1922-23:** anti-Treaty IRA supporters – were: **1.** against *Anglo-Irish Partition Treaty* from 1921, especially the oath to the British Crown and **2.** The anti-Treaty IRA fought a civil



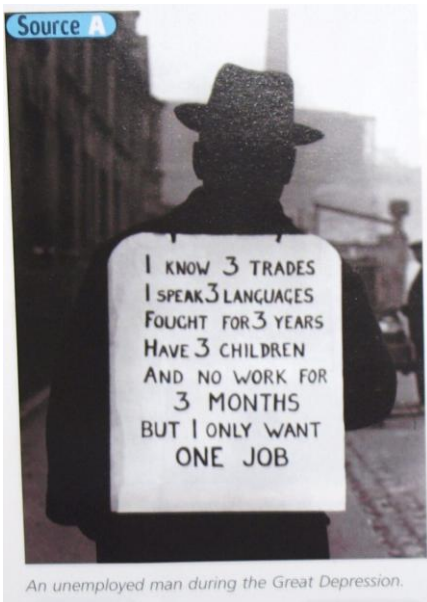
war with the intention of creating a ..... – and took up arms against the new Irish Free State government. During the conflict, the Free State government executed 77 Republicans, and imprisoned almost 12 000.

- After the Civil War, large part of Donegal county was transferred to Northern Ireland. By 1925, the partition of Ireland was firmly established.
- In 1937 the **Irish Free State** was renamed **Eire** and became a **republic**. Leader of the movement for Irish separation was at that time **Eamon de Valera**.

**Írsko – in Irish Éire, in English Ireland**

<i>Ireland</i>	X	<i>Northern Ireland</i>

- In 1949 Eire left the Commonwealth.



**The Great Depression:**

- October 1929 stock market on Wall Street crashes
- **James Ramsay MacDonald** (1924, 1929-1935): Prime Minister from *Labour Party*.

*1929-1931: Macdonald's government in minority*

- Soon the exports fell from £850 million to £460 million between 1929 to 1931 and the unemployment rose to over 3 million.

*1931-1935: Macdonald formed a coalition with the Conservatives*

- Protectionism: against foreign goods
- The unemployment was rising. In the worst hit areas, there were ".....". The most famous was **Jarrow March** in 1936: about 200 unemployed men marched from Jarrow to take a petition to the government in London, they walked over ..... km.

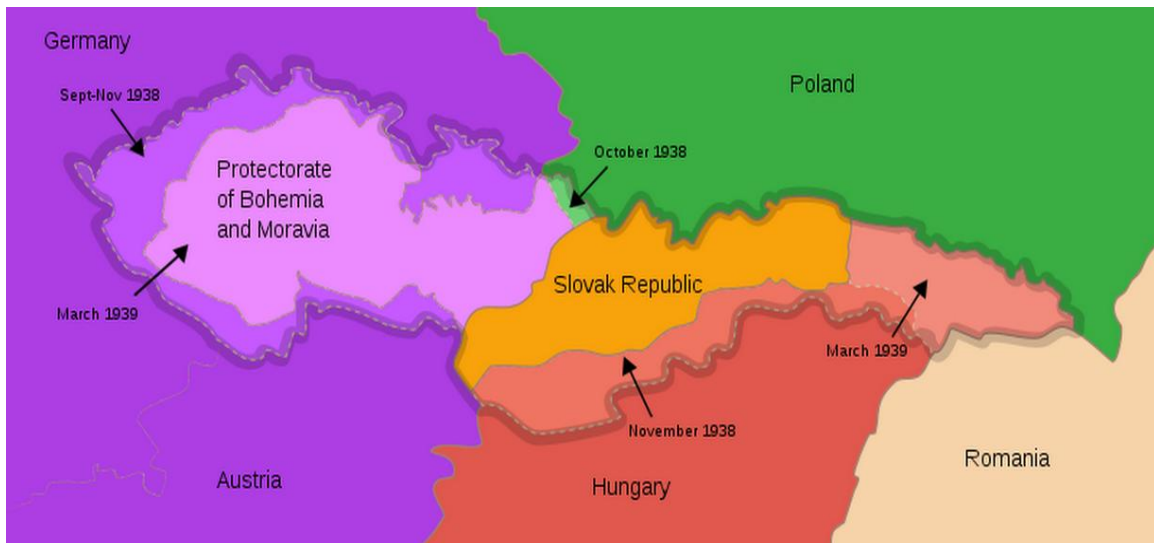
**The Policy of Appeasement:**

- The term **appeasement** is commonly understood to refer to a diplomatic policy aimed at avoiding war by making concessions to another power. It has been described as **"...the policy of settling international quarrels by admitting and satisfying grievances through rational negotiation and compromise, thereby avoiding the resort to an armed conflict which would be expensive, bloody, and possibly dangerous."** (Kennedy, Paul M. (1983). *Strategy and Diplomacy, 1870-1945: Eight Studies*. London: George Allen & Unwin). It was used by European democracies in the 1930s who wished to avoid war with the dictatorships of Germany and Italy, bearing in mind the horrors of the First World War.
- The word "appeasement" has been used as a **synonym for weakness and even cowardice** since the 1930s, and it is still used in that sense today as a justification for firm, often armed, action in international relations.

- The term is **most often** applied to the foreign policy of **British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain (1937-1940)** towards ..... between .....
- Chamberlain's policies of avoiding war with Germany have been the subject of intense debate for seventy years among academics, politicians and diplomats. The historian's assessment of Chamberlain has ranged from condemnation for allowing Hitler to grow too strong, to the judgment that he had no alternative and acted in Britain's best interests.
- **The conduct of appeasement, 1937–39:**

1. .... of **Austria** in 1938

2. **The Munich** ..... in 1938: On 30 September **Chamberlain** spoke to the crowds: *“My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street peace with honour. I believe it is **peace for our time**. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. And now I recommend you to go home and sleep quietly in your beds.”*



**Homework to do: The person of Mahatma Gandhi:**

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