



## ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL (UWC) STRIKE 1974 😹

The event which finished Sunningdale once and for all was the ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL STRIKE OF 1974

The **UWC Strike** was called by protestant trade unions, hardline unionist politicians and loyalist groups.

It was not successful at first but intimidation by loyalists brought most of Northern Ireland to a standstill after one week. Industries had to close down, there were regular electricity blackouts, fuel supplies were strictly controlled. Hundreds of road blocks took place.

BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, HAROLD WILSON, was outraged at the loyalist protests and went on TV calling them spongers. (Implying they were lazy and taking money from British taxpayers) This backfired as it made the protestors even more angry! Many wore sponges as a badge of honour. The army refused to intervene to stop the protests calling it a POLITICAL MATTER.



Eventually the UWC ordered a total shutdown when the army was ordered to take over fuel supplies. FAULKNER could no longer withstand the pressure and had to resign. This ended Sunningdale and introduced Direct rule for the next 20 years!

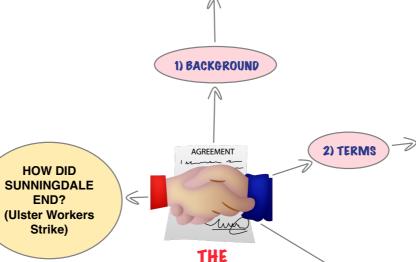
The Sunningdale agreement was one of the earliest attempts at meaningful power sharing between Unionists and Nationalists.

The process towards this agreement came as Northern Ireland was experiencing horrific levels of violence. Internment in 1971 had led to Bloody Sunday, Direct rule and over 450 people dead in 1972 alone.

The British government were determined to try and find a more stable political solution to replace Stormont and create an accepted peace.

They knew to do this they would have to

- 1) Have an agreed form of power sharing to replace Majority rule.
- 2) Have some form of link with the Republic of Ireland [1]



SUNNINGDALE

**AGREEMENT** 

1974

A POWER SHARING ASSEMBLY created

Members elected by PR voting system ( much fairer)

An EXECUTIVE (government) would be based on power sharing and have 11 Ministries - 6 UNIONIST, 5 SDLP (nationalist) and 1 Alliance.

A COUNCIL OF IRELAND was to be created. However, this was very controversial and was vague in detail. It was supposed to deal with areas of cooperation between north and south.

The governments agreed different things to help peace

The **UK Government** 

agreed not to oppose Irish unity if he people of N. Ireland wanted it

The Irish government II promised to accept the idea of CONSENT- that only the people of N. Ireland could decide its future.

VIEWS ON POWERSHARING





## OPPOSITION TO POWER SHARING

Anti-power-sharing unionists (as the UUUC) contested the first Assembly elections and secured the majority of unionist votes

 They disrupted the Power-Sharing Assembly and criticised the Power-Sharing Executive

They contested the 1974 General Election – and won 11 out of the 12 seats

 Loyalist violence increased. An ULSTER ARMY COUNCIL was created to coordinate loyalist activity. Bombs exploded in Dublin and Monaghan

Many unionists were determined to destroy power-sharing because of the "Irish Dimension" – the Council of Ireland, which would allow the Irish Republic a significant contribution into the way Northern Ireland was run

Many unionists did not believe that power should be shared with those who were not loyal to the Union

 There was anger among anti-power-sharing unionists at being left out of the process of setting up power-sharing. They were not included in the Power-Sharing Executive and were not invited to Sunningdale



# SUPPORT FOR POWER SHARING

### MODERATE UNIONISTS.

 Some unionists such as Brian Faulkner and his supported supported power-sharing and took part in the Executive

Faulkner believed power-sharing offered the chance to g rid of Direct Rule and get Stormont back.

 Faulkner believed that the Council of Ireland was merely an advisory body to help improve economic relations in Ireland

 Faulkner saw power-sharing as a tool which he had used to get the Republic of Ireland to accept the position of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom

# NATIONALISTS 🔲

 The SDLP took part in the Executive. Gerry Fitt spoke out against the General Election being held so soon, arguing that people did not yet understand what power-sharing was all about

The SDLP saw the Council of Ireland as a chance to build links with the Republic of Ireland and give it more of a role in Northern Ireland's affairs

### ALLIANCE

•The Alliance Party took part in the Executive. They believed it was a chance for peace and progress.



The IRA opposed power-sharing, believing it fell short of what they wanted, a united Ireland.

They continued their bombing campaign