

### The End of the Strike

By the middle of 1974 17,500 soldiers were based in

Despite their strength, the Army was reluctant to use force to end the strike, arguing that it was a political protect and not a terrorist action

Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister, was rapidly ing patience with the continuation of the strike and he lowed his anger in a television speech on 25th May.

He condemned the UWC's actions and described those olved in the strike as 'spongers

Northern Ireland's unionist population saw Wilson's words as an attack on all of them rather than just a condemnation of the UWC.

As a result, support for the strike increased.

Realising this, the British Government ordered the Army to take control of Northern Ireland's fuel supplies

This was so that petrol supplies could be maintained for

The UWC responded by ordering its supporters to bring Northern Ireland to a complete shutdown

#### The UWC Strike

Anti-power sharing Unionist politicians, trade unio and paramilitaries therefore decided to set up the **Ulster** Workers' Council (UWC).

On 14th May the UWC began a general strike as a way of

t first the strike looked as if it might not be getting much

Indeed only 200 people turned up to support a back to

Tensions across Northern Ireland were further increased on 17th May 1974 when bombs – believed to have been planted by loyalists - exploded in Dublin and Monaghan.

27 people died immediately while five of the injured died later of their wounds.

The Executive takes power

Assembly took power.

bleak. This was because:

opposed power sharing.

Wilson.

# **UWC ULSTER WORKERS COUNCIL STRIKE**

1974

On 1st January 1974 the power sharing Executive and

Before long, though, the future of power sharing looked

At the end of February 1974 a General Election for the

seats in Northern Ireland was won by UUUC MPs who

Westminster Parliament was held. All but one of the

The election also resulted in a change in government in

**EXECUTIVE TAKES OVER** 

London, with Labour returning to power under Harold

On 4th January the ruling committee of the Ulster

Unionist Party voted to reject the Sunningdale Agreement. In response Brian Faulkner resigned as leader of the Party; 19 of the 21 Ulster Unionist

Assembly members resigned with him.

On 28th May 1974 Brian Faulkner resigned as Chief Executive; the other unionists in the Executive did the

Faulkner took this action because of the refusal of the British Government (and the SDLP) to negotiate with the

Power sharing was, therefore, brought to an end.

On 29th May the UWC declared its strike was over; the ext day, the power sharing Assembly was suspended and



FAULKNER

The Executive members would come from both unionist and nationalist political parties.

After the British Government closed Stormont, they

decided to replace it with a new **Assembly** and **Executive** 

There were a number of new elements to this new system:

The members of the Assembly would be elected using

proportional representation.

■ There would be an Irish Dimension in the form of a Council of Ireland that would allow politicians from North and South to meet and discuss issues relevant to both parts of the island.

In addition, the British government would keep power over security and justice in Northern Ireland.

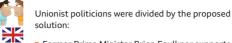


### Reactions

2) FIRST STEPS

UUUC

As usual, there were very different reactions to the British government's plans.



Former Prime Minister Brian Faulkner supported the plans and some of his party members agreed with his

■ Many unionists – including the rest of Faulkner's party, the DUP and the new Vanguard Unionist Progressive Party (set up by William Craig to oppose power-sharing) - were angry at the plans. These different groups came together to form the United Ulster Unionist Council (UUUC). The plan was to oppose the plans for power sharing and an Irish Dimension.

Nationalist politicians were generally happy with the plans for a power sharing Assembly and Executive.

**REACTIONS TO PROPOSALS** 

THE IRISH

1973

Elections

(The first

The NEW

EXECUTIVE



## **Election results**

The first elections for the new power sharing Assembl

The results were as follows

	Party	Pro- or Anti- Power- sharing	Percentage of vote (%)	Number of seats won
	Faulkner Unionists	Pro	29.3	24
	UUUC Unionists	Anti	32.1	26
	SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour Party)	Pro	22.1	19
	APNI (Alliance Party of Northern Ireland)	Pro	9.2	8
	NILP (Northern Ireland Labour Party)	Pro	2.6	1

- The parties in favour of power sharing had won the most
- The number of unionists elected who were against power sharing was greater than the number of pro-power sharing unionists elected.



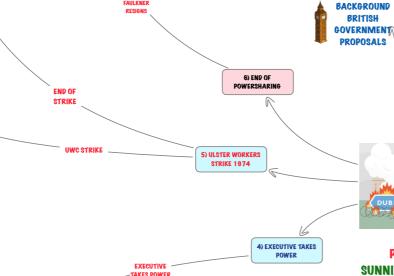


Despite calls for its removal, the power sharing Executive

bringing the power sharing Go

This changed, however, as a result of UDA members

By the end of the week Northern Ireland was more or less



1973-74: POWERSHARING:

) BACKGROUN

SUNNINGDALE AGREEMENT

3) EARLY

**PROBLEMS** EMERGE

The Sunningdale Agreement looked like a real breakthrough; however it later became clear that unionist and nationalist leaders believed that they had agreed to different things:

Brian Faulkner did not believe the Sunningdale Agreement was very important or had changed very much. He later explained that he had only agreed to sign it to get the Irish Government to accept that Northern Ireland was part of the UK.

■ The SDLP believed that the Agreement would be a major part in helping to create much closer ties between Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic.

Sunningdale was opposed by paramilitaries from both

■ The day after the Sunningdale Agreement was signed loyalists announced that they were setting up an Ulster Army Council. It would resist any significant 'Irish

■ The PIRA showed its disapproval by exploding a number of bombs in London just before Christmas.



- The British Government agreed not to oppose Irish unification if a majority of the people of Northern Ireland wanted it.
- The Irish Government accepted that Irish unity could only ever be achieved peacefully and with the consent of the majority of the people of the North.
- Also at some future date control over internal security issues would be returned to the Stormont Assembly.
- Approval of the decisions made at Sunningdale was to take place at a future conference.

# The New Executive

In late November 1973, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, William Whitelaw, announced the make-up of the new power sharing Executive.

The Chief Executive was to be Brian Faulkner; his Deputy was to be SDLP Leader Gerry Fitt.

The numbers of ministries to be held by the different parties were as follows:

	Unionists	Six ministries
	SDLP	Four ministries
	Alliance party	One ministry

The Executive was also to have an additional four members but they would not have the right to vote.

Two of these non-voting members were to be from the  $\,$ SDLP, one from the Faulkner Unionists and one Alliance Party membe

THE NEW EXECUTIVE



The Irish Dir

On 9th December 1973 the Sunningdale Agreement was

With the plans for power sharing in place, attention

turned to agreeing how the Irish Dimension would work

Northern Ireland's political leaders joined with leading politicians from Britain and Ireland at Sunningdale in England to work out their plans.

At first Ian Paisley and William Craia, the leaders of the anti-power sharing unionists were not invited to attend

although at one point they were invited to join the

It set out plans for the creation of a two part Council of

- Δ Council of Ministers with 14 members (seven from the power sharing Executive, seven from the Irish vernment). The Council would help with the development of North-South co-operation and would eventually be given decision-making powers.
- A 60-member Consultative Assembly (30 from the power sharing Assembly, 30 from Dáil Éireann). It was to have 'advisory and review functions' only

**IRISH DIMENSION** 



