

VoV 2: The Sunningdale Agreement

The Sunningdale Agreement (9 December 1973) – A Failed Attempt to Resolve the Border Issue

VoV / Perspective 1

Context: On the 9 December 1973 the *Sunningdale Agreement* was published. It attempted to establish a power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive and a cross-border Council of Ireland. The Sunningdale agreement proved very controversial, not least among Unionists. A strike was called by the Unionists Ulster Workers Council who were opposed to the Sunningdale Agreement.

Press statement from the Ulster Workers Council, 15 May 1974

The Ulster Workers Council are determined that the Government shall not ignore the will of the majority of the people as to the form of Government or the Sunningdale Agreement.

Source: Northern Ireland Political Collection of the Linen Hall Library, Belfast Available at <http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/uwc/uwc-pdfs/uwcpres.pdf>

The Sunningdale Agreement

On day 4 of the strike (17 May 1974) Loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) paramilitaries* exploded four car bombs in the Republic of Ireland. 33 people were killed and almost 300 wounded - the highest number of casualties in any single day during The Troubles. No warnings were given before the bombs were detonated. Sammy Smyth, press officer of the UWC Strike Committee, said “I am very happy about the bombings in Dublin. There is a war with the [Republic of Ireland] and now we are laughing at them” (Source: <https://cain.ulster.ac.uk/othelem/chron/ch74.htm>).

There was widespread anger at this and many people began to argue for a peaceful compromise. The following source makes this plea for compromise.

An Irish Times columnist reflects on the prospects for the Council of Ireland, 25th May, 1974

Last week, while you were still shocked and horrified at the carnage of Dublin and Monaghan ... The North came to its knees because politicians could not compromise: it has over 1,000 corpses today who were the victims of the politics of “No Surrender”. You cannot ever build a political society on a policy of No Surrender: you must build it on compromise.

Source: ‘Learning to Live with Murder’ by ‘Backbencher’, The Irish Times, 25th May 1974; from The Irish Times digital archive [<http://www.irishtimes.com/search/index.html>]

*** Note:**
Paramilitaries are unofficial armed forces that operate much like an army. The UVF was an Ulster loyalist paramilitary group that fought against nationalists like the IRA (Irish Republican Army).

Consequences of the failed agreement on young generations



STIFF LITTLE FINGERS – ALTERNATIVE ULSTER (1979)

The song is a protest against the fact that kids in Northern Ireland were being denied what was available to their peers in the rest of the UK. Freedom to enjoy the freedom of lifestyle choice that was available elsewhere. This song has nothing to do with supporting the Nationalists, or the Unionists. It was about seeing beyond the divisions.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/alternative-ulster-how-punk-took-on-the-troubles-1.2890644>

Take a look where you're livin'
You got the army on the street
And the R-U-C dog of repression
Is barking at your feet
Is this the kind of place you want to live?
Is this where you want to be?
Is this the only life we're gonna have?
What we need
Is an Alternative Ulster

<https://songmeanings.com/songs/view/40984/>



The Warrington Bombing (1993) – The Cranberries “Zombie”

"Zombie" is a protest song by Irish rock band The Cranberries, written about the 1993 IRA bombing in Warrington, and in memory of two young victims, Johnathan Ball (3 years old) and Tim Parry (12 years old) . They were killed when two IRA bombs were detonated in the Cheshire town. 54 people were also injured. The song was released in September 1994 as the lead single from their second studio album, *No Need to Argue* (1994).

The song was written by the band's lead singer Dolores O'Riordan, and reached No. 1 on the charts in, Australia, Belgium, France, Denmark, Germany and Ireland.

DOLORES O’RIORDAN’S ‘MAJESTIC’ ZOMBIE LYRICS HAILED BY FATHER OF IRA BOMB VICTIM

The father of an IRA bomb victim has paid tribute to The Cranberries’ Dolores O’Riordan after discovering that the singer wrote ‘Zombie’ in tribute to his son.

Colin Parry, whose son died in the 1993 Warrington attack, hailed the “majestic” lyrics of ‘Zombie’ after O’Riordan’s death was announced yesterday (15 January 2018).

“Only yesterday did I discover that her group, or she herself, had composed the song in memory of the event in Warrington in which my son Tim and young Jonathan Ball died”, Parry said during his appearance on Good Morning Ulster.

“The event at Warrington, like the many events that happened all over Ireland and Great Britain, affected families in a very real way and many people have become immune to the pain and suffering hat so many people experienced during that armed campaign.”