

Depth Study P – Ireland, c.1964-c.1996

SOURCE A: From a school textbook written in the 1990s, this is describing the Sunningdale Agreement

It was a great step forward. One of the leaders said that a ‘new dawn’ was breaking in Northern Ireland. On the way to Sunningdale, Gerry Fitt sang a Protestant ballad, 'The Sash', to the other delegates, Faulkner replied with the Southern Irish song 'Galway Bay'. They weren't the only ones to feel so hopeful. In Britain politicians of every party backed the power-sharing plan. In Ireland bishops as well as politicians gave their full support.

SOURCE B: From a speech about the Sunningdale Agreement made by Bernadette McAliskey, formerly Bernadette Devlin, in December 1973

This is deliberately meaningless. It is an attempt to con Nationalists into thinking they have gained a great victory and Loyalists into believing they have lost nothing. This agreement is doomed.

SOURCE C: From the memoirs of Merlyn Rees, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in May 1974; he was describing an incident during the general strike

As we walked through the lounge of the hotel, which was full of middle-class late night drinkers, the cry of ‘traitors’ came in unison. It was a spontaneous response of anger: we, the British, were the outsiders, always ready to sell good loyalists down that mythical river into the Catholic south.

SOURCE D: Harry Murray, a leader of the strike in May 1974, speaking on Radio 4 Northern Ireland on 24 May 1974

We never attempted to intimidate anybody going to work, definitely not. These people are honest, industrious. It's a constitutional stoppage and we have the backing of I would say 450,000 people.

SOURCE E: A photograph taken in East Belfast on 16 May 1974

This shows masked men threatening the crew of a lorry



SOURCE F: The wife of Brian Faulkner, the Chief Executive of the Power Sharing Agreement, talking in 1983; this was quoted in a book published in 1983

I was actually at the end of a telephone during that strike, and for the first few days the telephone line was constantly occupied by people ringing from housing estates, places in the country, to say, look, we can't get into work, there are people with sticks and staves and masks at the end of our road, and what is the government going to do about it.

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