

# The Sunningdale Agreement

1 In December 1973 an agreement was reached which, it was hoped, would bring peace and power-sharing to Northern Ireland.

2 Under the Sunningdale Agreement, power was restored to Stormont government, the Ulster Unionist Party and the Nationalists SDLP shared power and a “Council of Ireland” was set up to give advice on Northern policies. This council included both Northern and Southern politicians.

3 The Sunningdale Agreement was bitterly opposed by many Unionists. They believed that Nationalists were the enemy of “Ulster” (Northern Ireland) and so they did not want Nationalists in the Stormont government.

4 They also believed that the Council of Ireland would allow the Irish Republic to interfere with the running of Northern Ireland and that this might be the first step to a united Ireland.

5 Most working-class Protestants were also very opposed to Sunningdale. They formed the Ulster Worker Council, which organised a massive strike in May 1974. This strike brought Northern Ireland to a standstill, wrecked the Sunningdale agreement and led to the collapse of the power-sharing government.

6 Northern Ireland was soon again under the direct rule of the British Government.