

# A STATE APART

## Task Sheet 1

### Programme 3

### ULSTER WORKER'S COUNCIL STRIKE

#### REPORTING THE VIOLENCE

Here are two local newspaper versions of the same events in Belfast in August 1972.

#### Extract 1

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August

LENADOON CATHOLICS ATTACKED

Catholic residents of the big Lenadoon Housing Estate on the outskirts of Belfast, fought hand-to-hand battles last night with Protestant extremist mobs who invaded the area in an attempt to burn people out of their homes. The attackers, armed with cudgels and bottles, and many carrying pistols, swarmed into the estate from the Suffolk district. They were spotted by two women who raised the alarm. A warning siren was sounded and brought hundreds of residents onto the streets. In the initial attack, involving a forty-strong mob, windows in houses in Doon Road and Horn Drive were smashed. At least two shots were fired.

#### Extract 2

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August

PROTESTANTS FLEE LENADOON HOMES

Protestants fled their homes in Belfast's Suffolk area last night when it was invaded by up to 500 Roman Catholics. The trouble started about 11pm following an 'Eve of August 15<sup>th</sup>' bonfire in the Lenadoon Avenue area. There were conflicting reports of what happened. Residents maintained that the invaders smashed the windows of Protestant homes; and that Protestants who gathered to protect their families, came under attack. An army spokesman said 100 Roman Catholics came down from the top of Lenadoon Estate and troops drove a wedge between them and 50 Protestants at Lenadoon Avenue / Stewartstown Road.

1. Complete the table below, giving examples of fact or opinion found in these extracts.

FACTS – information which can be checked and proved right or wrong

OPINION – the author expressing his own views by using approving or disapproving words, exaggerated phrases, or showing prejudice

<u>Extract 1</u>	
FACTS	OPINIONS

<u>Extract 2</u>	
FACTS	OPINIONS

- 2a. In what ways do these accounts differ?
- 2b. What similarities are there in the stories?
3. Do you think the authors' own political views could have influenced their writing? Explain your answer.
4. Suggest which local Belfast newspapers printed these stories.
5. Write a paragraph, giving as many reasons as you can, to explain why these accounts of the same incident are so different.
6. Write your own version of the events in an objective or neutral style.

# A STATE APART

## Task Sheet 2

### Programme 3

### ULSTER WORKER'S COUNCIL STRIKE

The sources below are taken from newspapers at the time of the strike. Read them carefully and answer the questions which follow.

Source A                    THE GUARDIAN, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1974

#### SAMPLE ULSTER POLL SHOWS A MAJORITY FOR POWER-SHARING

A large majority of people in Northern Ireland are in favour of power-sharing and want the Assembly and the Executive to work, according to a survey commissioned by the BBC. The survey found that 69% of the sample thought that the Assembly and the Executive should be given a chance – and 74% approved power-sharing.

The largest division of opinion concerned proposals for a Council of Ireland as set out in the Sunningdale Agreement. 41% were in favour, 37% were against, and 22% didn't know. Three quarters of the Catholics approved of a Council of Ireland, but only one quarter of the Protestants were in favour.

Source B                    THE SUNDAY TELEGRAPH, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1974

What led to the present crisis was the Council of Ireland which seemed – and rightly so – to be a step towards the merger of Ulster into the Republic. If the proposed Council of Ireland had been modified earlier, the strike would have never begun.

Source C                    THE DAILY TELEGRAPH, 28<sup>th</sup> May 1974

Mr Brian Faulkner announces in the Assembly, agreement among the Executive to postpone the major part of the Sunningdale Agreement: the giving of powers to an All Ireland Council – until after the next Assembly elections in 1977-78.

Source D                    THE GUARDIAN, 24<sup>th</sup> May 1974

#### WHY THE WARLORDS WON

The Ulster Loyalist leaders have lost a golden opportunity to discredit Mr Faulkner and have underlined their current alarming dependence on the paramilitary extremists. Had they accepted the plan (to postpone the Council of Ireland) they would have isolated the real activists and forced them to call off the strike.

This, in turn, would have restored the confidence of tens of thousands of Loyalist voters who are angry about being denied the right to work, alarmed at the prospects of dwindling food and petrol supplies; and horrified at the damage being done to the economy of their Province.

- 1a. Using the figures in Source A, draw two pie charts to show the responses to
  - power sharing
  - the Council of Ireland.
  
- 1b. How reliable do you think this type of opinion poll is, as evidence of people's views?
  
2. What does the author of Source B see as the main cause of the Ulster Workers' Council Strike?
  
3. Look at Source C. Why do you think the Executive decided to postpone giving powers to a Council of Ireland?
  
4. Using the information in Source D, explain how Loyalists reacted to Brian Faulkner's postponement of a Council of Ireland?
  
5. How useful are newspapers as evidence to a historian studying the strike?

You are a TELEVISION RESEARCH TEAM preparing for a mock debate on the Power-Sharing Executive of 1974. Each group must first choose ONE of the following viewpoints:-

- The Executive
- The Ulster Workers' Council
- The London Government
- The Dublin Government

In your group, prepare a speech to be given by an actor, chosen by the group. Find out from the programme and any other resources available:

- **the attitude to power-sharing**
- **your views on the Council of Ireland**
- **reaction to the strike**
- **your thoughts on the fall of the Executive**

Present your speeches to the rest of the class.