

Previous attempts to bring peace to Northern Ireland have failed. What problems need to be overcome so devolution and peace can succeed in Northern Ireland?



So what are the problems?

- ❖ Paramilitaries – Loyalist and Republican terrorists are fighting a war against each other. Unionist and Nationalist politicians find it hard to discuss peace when the other side is killing their people.
- ❖ Partition – Both sides want different things. Nationalists want a Free and independent Ireland. Unionists want Northern Ireland to remain part of the UK.
- ❖ British and Irish governments – There was a great deal of mistrust between Dublin and London until 1985.
- ❖ Distrust – Unionists/Protestants and Nationalists/Catholics do not trust each other.
- ❖ Economic and Social problems. Poor schooling, housing and amenities need investment. Who gets the investment first. High Unemployment is caused by lack of companies and businesses willing to invest in Northern Ireland whilst the Troubles continue.
- ❖ America was funding the IRA and Sinn Fein.
- ❖ Weapon decommissioning and the end of violence.
- ❖ The arrest and detainment of innocent Catholics.
- ❖ Orange Marches and RUC seen as offensive to Nationalists.
- ❖ Civil Rights.
- ❖ Different opinions amongst the Unionists and Nationalists. DUP vs UUP. Sinn Fein vs SDLP.

Obstacles to Peace - Politics

What we have to do is defeat the IRA. To do this, we'll need a huge security effort.



Hardline Unionist
e.g. DUP

We support tough security. Some political reform is needed, but the Irish Republic must not be involved in the process.



Moderate Unionist
e.g. UUP

We want reform in Northern Ireland. The Republic ought to have some influence on how Northern Ireland is run. As a minority, we feel we need the Republic's protection.



Moderate Nationalist
e.g. SDLP

The only way to solve our problems is to cut all connections with Britain.



Hardline Nationalist
e.g. Sinn Fein

During the Troubles, the media reports of bombs and shootings gave people outside Northern Ireland the impression that Northern Ireland was a war zone.

It seemed to have no normal life and no normal politics either. This was not the case.

There were 'normal' political parties in Northern Ireland, and most people supported them.

All the parties had views and policies relating to a wide range of 'normal' issues such as education, health care and housing.

However the key question for all the political parties was clear: how could they bring peace back to Northern Ireland

Part of the problem for the politicians was that they did not agree on how to do this.

Northern Ireland's main democratic parties

Ulster Unionist Party: Throughout the Troubles, the Ulster Unionist Party was the largest party in Northern Ireland. Most moderate Protestants supported it. Its main aim was to defend Northern Ireland's position as part of the United Kingdom. Its leaders in this period were Brian Faulkner (1971-74), Harry West (1974- 79), James Molyneux (1979-95), David Trimble (1996-**2005**)

Democratic Unionist Party (DUP): This party emerged in 1971 as a more hardline unionist (or loyalist) party. It was led by Ian Paisley. Its support came mainly from working-class Protestants.

Alliance Party: This was a moderate unionist party founded in April 1970. It wanted to promote reform and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Its main support came from the middle classes, both Protestant and Catholic.

Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP): A combination of Liberal and Labour politicians, along with some of Northern Ireland's socialists, formed this party in August 1970. It was supported by the majority of Catholics and Nationalists, especially the middle classes. Its first leader was Labour politician Gerry Fitt (a socialist and a nationalist). Fitt left the party in 1979 because he felt that it was too nationalist and not socialist enough. John Hume took over as leader.

British Ideas – Direct Rule

Politicians in the British government in London also had their own solutions. In March 1972, the British government's response to increasing violence in Northern Ireland was to introduce Direct Rule. This meant that the province was run by a British government minister, the Northern Ireland Secretary. It was meant to be a temporary measure while a political solution was found that everyone in Northern Ireland could accept. Direct Rule actually lasted for over 25 years.

During that time, the politicians did not give up. There were three major political initiatives in the period 1973-93.

Direct Rule:

- ❖ Direct rule from London was introduced because of the increased violence in Northern Ireland and the unwillingness of the Unionist politicians to help the Catholics.
- ❖ It brought half a century of unionist control to an end. It meant that the aim of uniting Ireland had failed because the two communities could not work together.
- ❖ The decision did little to stop the violence. Paramilitaries on both sides tried to fill the gap left.
- ❖ The Unionist ministers had attempted to make some changes, but to the nationalist opposition, they appeared to be too little and too late. It appeared that in the space of three short years, three unionist prime ministers had failed to restore stability. They lost the trust of all sides of the community.
- ❖ But the main reason for direct rule was the fact that London and Belfast could not agree about security policy amid worsening violence.
- ❖ Two days after Bloody Sunday, the British Embassy in Dublin was burned down and some weeks later the Official IRA killed seven people in a bomb attack at military barracks in Aldershot, England.
- ❖ Fearing a full-scale civil war, the British Prime Minister Edward Heath decided Westminster should take complete control over security policy in Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland Prime Minister Brian Faulkner and his cabinet resigned in protest.
- ❖ On the day the Stormont parliament met for the last time, 100,000 unionists converged to join a two-day protest strike that crippled power, public transport and forced businesses to close. Mr Faulkner was cheered as he walked onto the balcony. He called for restraint and the crowd dispersed quietly.
- ❖ All power now rested in the hands of the new Secretary of State, William Whitelaw. His Northern Ireland Office was responsible for the day-to-day running of the province. Although 1973 would see an attempt at establishing a power-sharing assembly, direct rule was there to stay.

Peace was needed because....

Nationalists had few civil rights

Many Nationalists were joining the IRA

Unionists had lost their power.

Distrust was turning into hate in many areas.

Attempt 1: The Power-Sharing Executive and the Sunningdale Agreement, 1973-74

- ❖ This was proposed by Northern Ireland Secretary William Whitelaw in consultation with the main Northern Ireland parties.
- ❖ A new Assembly was elected to govern Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The main parties in the Assembly were represented on a Power-Sharing Executive (a government which would guarantee to share power between nationalist and unionist communities).
- ❖ A Council for Ireland was set up which would link Belfast, Dublin and London over issues of concern to all of them. Details of this Council were worked out between the Northern Ireland parties and the British and Irish governments in the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973.

The defeat of Power Sharing

- ❖ The aim of the Power-Sharing Executive was to undermine support for the IRA by giving the nationalist community a say in how Northern Ireland was run. It was made up of six Unionist ministers, four SDLP ministers and one from the Alliance Party. The Executive was elected in 1973 and began governing in 1974.
- ❖ There were many tensions between the parties. The SDLP agreed to take part in the new Assembly even though it was extremely unhappy that the policy of internment was still in force. However, the Nationalists were happy with the idea of a Council of Ireland. They hoped it would give the Republic some say in how Northern Ireland was run. This was exactly what worried most Unionists. They felt that a Council of Ireland would be like letting the government of France interfere in the affairs of an English county such as Kent.
- ❖ It was unionist suspicion about the Council of Ireland which brought down the Power-Sharing Executive. In May 1974, a group calling itself the Ulster Workers Council declared a general strike to protest about the Council of Ireland. There was little support for the strike at first, but loyalist paramilitaries used intimidation to force people to join it. Over the next two weeks, support for the strike increased among the unionist population, bringing Northern Ireland to a halt. Faulkner and the Executive resigned on 27 May. Power Sharing had been defeated and Northern Ireland was back under Direct Rule.

Peace failed because....

Unionists could not agree.

Nationalists and Unionists wanted different things.

Violence made each side suspicious of the other.

Campaign of Terror and Hunger Strike

- ❖ During the rest of the 1970s, the IRA campaign of terrorism, and the loyalist responses, continued.
- ❖ Between 1973 and 1980 1,398 people were murdered in shootings, sniper attacks, bombs, land mines and booby-traps. Many bombings of mainland UK and Ireland were carried out. Many innocents were killed and injured.
- ❖ There were many attempts to bring about a settlement. A second IRA ceasefire collapsed in 1975, despite the efforts of various groups, such as the Peace People.
- ❖ As the army became wise to the IRA, the terrorists were forced into being more and more secretive. Many of them went underground, while others joined political parties, in particular Sinn Féin.
- ❖ Most terrorist prisoners at this time were held in the Maze Prison, in southwest Belfast and were classed by the British as 'Special Category'. In 1976, however, the British announced plans to remove this Special Category status and would instead treat them like any other criminal.
- ❖ This meant that they had stricter rules and had to wear prison clothes. Many IRA prisoners, and a few others, refused to wear prison clothes. They sat in their cells with a blanket round them and refused to wash or clean their cells. Some also spread their faeces on the walls and urinated on the floor and their mattresses. It was known as the 'Dirty Protest'. A visiting Catholic Priest said he would not even let an animal live in the conditions the prisoners were living in. Despite their attempts, the protest did not get much public attention and it slowly died away.
- ❖ In 1980, a number of Republican prisoners decided to go on hunger strike to attempt to re-instate the Special Category status, and refused food. This time, there was widespread Nationalist support and marches were organised. The strike was called off in December 1980, when the strikers believed they had been granted their demands. They were wrong, however and a second hunger strike began in March 1981.
- ❖ Its main member was Bobby Sands, a Maze prisoner. Despite his convict status, he stood in the 1981 UK General election and won a spectacular victory. Despite the fact that the hunger strikers had such massive support, the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher did not make any concessions and Bobby Sands, and nine others, died of starvation. Eventually the hunger strikers' families called a halt to the strike.
- ❖ It was not a total failure for the Nationalists, however. Sinn Féin had been able to use the strike to re-launch itself into the public gaze once more and its first MP, Gerry Adams, was elected in 1983. Over the same period the IRA increased its violence yet again. From 1969 to 1984, terrorism claimed the lives of over two thousand people, some in horrific and excruciating circumstances.

Attempt 2: The Anglo-Irish Agreement, 1985

- ❖ This was agreed between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and Irish Taoiseach Garrett Fitzgerald.
- ❖ It set up an Intergovernmental Conference: the Northern Ireland Secretary and Irish Foreign Minister would meet regularly.
- ❖ There would be cross-border co-operation on security, legal and political issues.
- ❖ The Agreement set up its own civil service with staff from both sides of the border.
- ❖ The British government accepted that there might one day be a united Ireland, but only with the consent of the majority in Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The Irish government accepted the existence of Partition, and also the principle of consent.

Anglo-Irish Agreement

- ❖ The Anglo-Irish Agreement was presented by the Irish and British Prime Ministers. They hoped to use their co-operation to bring peace.
- ❖ Unionists, however, saw it as an act of treachery by the British Thatcher government because they were not consulted.
- ❖ In effect, the Anglo-Irish Agreement created a stalemate in Northern Ireland politics for the next five years.
- ❖ The most important feature of the Agreement was the establishment of regular meetings between UK Northern Ireland secretary and the Irish Foreign Minister. It was to meet regularly to discuss matters of 'common concern'
- ❖ The Agreement marked a change in attitude for Margaret Thatcher. Like Irish Prime Minister Garret Fitzgerald, she believed a cross-border body might stop support for Sinn Fein and lessen republican violence.
- ❖ Only the SDLP wholeheartedly supported the plan. Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams said it "copper-fastened partition and Dublin's recognition of the Northern Ireland state". This helped the SDLP win more seats in the next election.
- ❖ Unionists were furious. Just a week after the Agreement was signed, 100,000 of them gathered to demonstrate at Belfast City Hall. On 17 December all 15 Unionist MPs resigned from their seats forcing by-elections to highlight Protestant opposition to the Agreement. A "day of action" was declared 3 March 1986 which closed down much of Northern Ireland's industry and commerce. Mrs Thatcher largely ignored the protests. Unlike in 1912, this time there was little sympathy for the unionist view in most of mainland Britain.
- ❖ The Assembly was dissolved in June 1986. Unionists refused to consider any form of negotiation with nationalists because they said it undermined constitutional guarantee given by successive British governments. By mid-1987, the campaign against the Agreement had run out of steam.

Peace failed because....

Unionists could not agree.

British government refused to talk to Sinn Fein and extreme Nationalists.

Unionists protested against any suggestions the government made.

Sinn Fein thought that the Irish were abandoning the Northern Catholics.

1986-1995

- ❖ With hindsight, unionist fears were probably exaggerated. Although Garrett Fitzgerald hoped the Agreement would be a step to Irish unity, Mrs Thatcher's main aim was cross-border security to help tackle the IRA.
- ❖ There is some evidence that the Agreement did help to combat the IRA. However, its main effect was to give the SDLP a much-needed boost against Sinn Fein. In national and local elections in 1986-87, Sinn Fein support dropped significantly. Many nationalists could see that the way ahead was in moderation, and that the Agreement gave the Republic some say, however small, in Northern Ireland's affairs.
- ❖ Sinn Fein refused to accept the Agreement, and would not compromise in any way. Many Nationalists, therefore, were happy to return to the SDLP, who embraced the Agreement, now that there was a concrete achievement to be built on. They believed that the SDLP, through the Agreement, could call on the Republic's government to point out what they felt were injustices and abuses.

Continued violence

Despite the Agreement, the paramilitaries continued their campaign of violence, striking at a range of targets, as the timeline in Source 3 shows.

1987 An IRA bomb kills eleven people and injures over 60 at a Remembrance Day service in Enniskillen. A single loyalist gunman kills three mourners at an IRA activist's funeral.

1988 Eight soldiers are killed by an IRA landmine.

1991 Loyalists kill 31 people in the course of the year, mostly innocent Catholics and usually as revenge for IRA attacks.

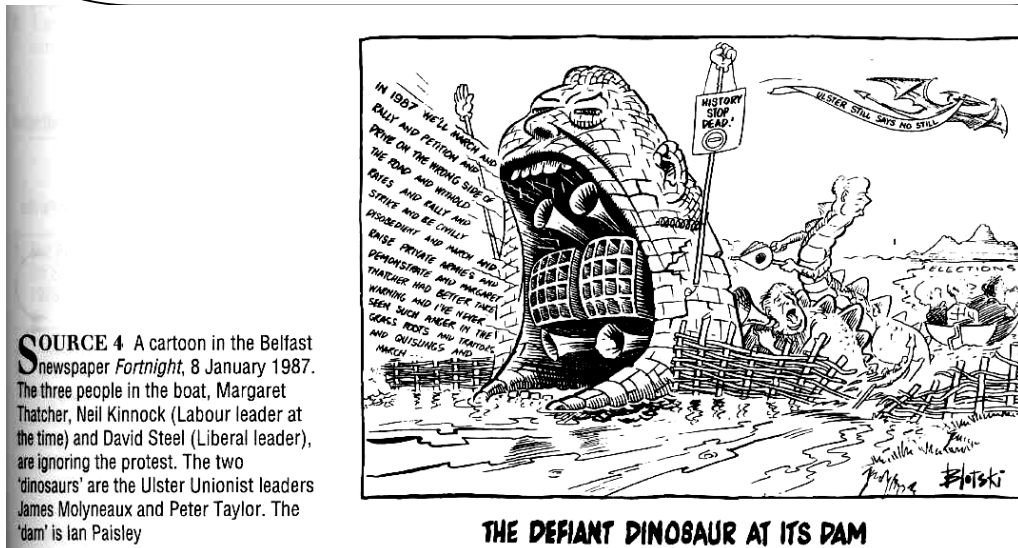
1992 The UFF kill five Catholic civilians in an attack on a betting shop.

A huge IRA bomb in central London causes up to £1 billion worth of damage.

1995 The IRA kill two young boys in Warrington with a bomb placed in a rubbish bin.

An IRA bomb goes off prematurely in a Shankill fish shop. The bomber and nine innocent Protestant civilians are killed.

Loyalist gunmen kill thirteen in revenge attacks for the Shankill bomb.



SOURCE 4 A cartoon in the Belfast newspaper *Fortnight*, 8 January 1987. The three people in the boat, Margaret Thatcher, Neil Kinnock (Labour leader at the time) and David Steel (Liberal leader), are ignoring the protest. The two 'dinosaurs' are the Ulster Unionist leaders James Molyneux and Peter Taylor. The 'dam' is Ian Paisley

THE DEFIANT DINOSAUR AT ITS DAM

Attempt 3: The Downing Street Declaration, 1993

- ❖ This was agreed between Prime Minister John Major and the Taoiseach, Albert Reynolds.
- ❖ Talks were to be set up to decide on a new form of government for Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The new Northern Ireland government would respect all traditions in Northern Ireland.
- ❖ Only parties which rejected violence would be allowed any say in the talks.
- ❖ The British government said it had no selfish political or economic interest in Northern Ireland, but was concerned only with the welfare of all the people of Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The British government accepted that Irish unity was an issue for Irish people, but said that it could only happen with the consent of those in the North.
- ❖ The Irish government accepted the principle of consent for Irish unity.
- ❖ The Irish government also accepted that it might have to drop the parts of its constitution which claimed the North as part of its territory.
- ❖ The Irish government would set up a Forum for Peace and Reconciliation to promote trust and understanding between the traditions. Only those who rejected violence could be part of this.

- ❖ The Downing Street Declaration wanted the people of Ireland to decide their future. They would decide if they wanted to be part of Britain or Ireland.
- ❖ Hardliners were outraged. Ian Paisley called the Declaration a sell-out to Dublin. The more moderate Ulster Unionists were prepared to consider the document.
- ❖ Sinn Fein also said that it would be hard to sell the plan to the IRA.
- ❖ The importance of the document was that it recognised that the peace process could only work if three sets of relationships were addressed:
 - The relationship between Nationalists and Unionists in Northern Ireland
 - The relationship between Northern Ireland and the Republic
 - The relationship between Dublin and London
- ❖ The document also stated that the British government's role was to "encourage, facilitate and enable" the peace process - rather than specifically encourage any single outcome.
- ❖ Secondly, the Irish government said that it recognised that a significant minority - in other words the Protestant majority in Northern Ireland - could not be forced into arrangements that they opposed. This effectively set the ball rolling for the eventual removal, as part of the Good Friday Agreement, of the Republic's constitutional claim over Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The Downing Street Declaration effectively signalled a public sea-change by the two governments in how they were prepared to approach Northern Ireland's political future. It was now over to the paramilitaries to decide whether or not they would be part of that. The stage was set for political talks.

Peace had a chance because....

British and Irish governments identified problems.

Targeted normal people.

All political parties were included – if they stopped paramilitary violence



SOURCE 5 John Major and Albert Reynolds announce the Downing Street Declaration outside 10 Downing Street, 15 December 1993

1994: Paramilitary ceasefires

- ❖ After the apparent advances in 1993, 1994 did not start well.
- ❖ In January, the Republicans asked for clarification of the Downing Street Declaration: they clearly did not like it.
- ❖ There was more tension later that month when the US President Bill Clinton gave Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams a visa, allowing him to meet with Irish-American groups in the USA. This turned out to be an important decision. Irish Americans confirmed the views put forward to Sinn Fein by John Hume in his talks with Adams. Some new thinking was now beginning to emerge within the republican movement
- ❖ This became clear on 31 August when the IRA announced a complete ceasefire. On 13 October, the loyalist paramilitaries also declared a ceasefire. There were no wild celebrations - people had seen many ceasefires come and go. Nevertheless, Christmas 1994 was the most peaceful for many years in Northern Ireland.

1995: The Joint Framework Document

- ❖ The ceasefires were followed by the Joint Framework Document published in February 1995. This agreement was drawn up by the British and Irish governments and set out a plan for a peace process in Northern Ireland, including a new assembly for Northern Ireland and a North-South Council of Ministers with influence over a range of issues. It set the 'agenda' for the talks which resulted in the Good Friday Agreement. It was generally welcomed, and 1995 saw Northern Ireland's lowest death toll in the Troubles. However, there were still problems:
 1. Unionists were suspicious about the plan for a North-South Council of Ministers: would it lead to a united Ireland?
 2. Unionists and the British government wanted to see DECOMMISSIONING of IRA weapons, but Sinn Fein said the IRA would not give up weapons because it did not trust the British government.
 3. Many members of paramilitary groups were in prison: would they now be released early, and how would the families of the victims feel about this?
- ❖ Despite these major difficulties, peace now looked possible. In September, the new Ulster Unionist Party leader, David Trimble, confirmed his full support for the peace process. In October, an international commission under former US Senator George Mitchell was set up to work out a process for decommissioning weapons and achieving a settlement which everyone could accept. Mitchell had enormous experience as a negotiator and peacemaker. The respected journalist and writer on Northern Ireland Peter Taylor believes that 'without Mitchell's patience and personal, political and diplomatic skills, it is unlikely that the Good Friday Agreement would ever have been finalised'.

1996: Decommissioning and elections

- ❖ The following year, 1996, was another dramatic period in the peace process. In January, Senator Mitchell set out the 'Mitchell Principles', a plan for achieving decommissioning of paramilitary weapons. Sinn Fein agreed to the Principles, but the IRA leadership said it did not, and refused to hand over any arms.
- ❖ As a result, the British government demanded elections in Northern Ireland: Prime Minister John Major wanted to see how much support the paramilitaries had. Nationalists were outraged, because new elections meant delays in the peace process.
- ❖ In February, tension turned to despair as the IRA detonated a huge bomb in London's Docklands, followed by another in Manchester in June. In July, violence erupted at Drumcree, near Portadown, as Catholic residents objected to an Orange Order march through their neighbourhood. On the positive side, the loyalist ceasefire held, and in June the elections to the Northern Ireland Forum took place without violent incidents in Northern Ireland.

1997: New governments and deep divisions

- ❖ May 1997 saw a new Prime Minister, Tony Blair, elected in the UK, and in June there was a new Irish Taoiseach, Bertie Aherne.
- ❖ Blair appointed Dr Mo Mowlam as Northern Ireland Secretary. She was to play an important role in the peace process, and both nationalist and unionist politicians admired her abilities as a negotiator. She organised many events at Stormont and encouraged people (from the nationalist community in particular) not to associate Stormont with their bitter memories of the past.
- ❖ Dr Mowlam was soon fully aware of just how tough her new job was. There was more IRA violence in June, and for the second year running clashes occurred between police and Loyalists over the Drumcree march in July. In a much-praised move, the Orange Order voluntarily called off other potentially controversial parades to help ease the tension.
- ❖ In July, the IRA announced a new ceasefire. This allowed Sinn Fein to take part in the peace process negotiations, but it did not lead to the decommissioning of any weapons. Unionists were divided over whether or not they should sit down to talks with Sinn Fein while the IRA still had all its weapons. The DUP pulled out of the peace process in September, but David Trimble did not. He remained committed to it, despite bitter criticism from some fellow Unionists and despite the fact that he himself was unhappy with some aspects of the process.
- ❖ The Republicans were also divided. In November, some members of the IRA left the movement because they did not support Sinn Fein's participation in the peace process. They set up their own republican splinter groups, Continuity IRA and the Real IRA.

1998: The Good Friday Agreement

- ❖ A new Northern Ireland Assembly with 108 members would be set up. All key decisions would require the consent of both communities in the province.
- ❖ A North-South Council of Ministers would also be set up, made up of members of the new Assembly and ministers from the Republic.
- ❖ The Irish government would remove Articles 2 and 3 of its constitution, which claimed the North as part of its territory (subject to a referendum of the people of the Republic).
- ❖ There would be a review of policing in Northern Ireland.
- ❖ Early release for paramilitary prisoners was promised.

The Good Friday Agreement was little short of an historic breakthrough. The 65-page document, signed in 1998, sought to address relationships within Northern Ireland; between Northern Ireland and the Republic; and between both parts of Ireland and England, Scotland and Wales.

The process, however, was gruelling. The Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble insisted that UK Prime Minister Tony Blair amend the agreement to ensure that no one in the proposed Northern Ireland Assembly could take office if it had links to paramilitary groups still engaged in violence.

Mr Blair refused to make amendments but offered an assurance that politicians linked to paramilitaries who refused to hand over weapons would not hold office in a Northern Ireland government. He also promised decommissioning of weapons would have to begin immediately after the Assembly came into being.

In the end, the Ulster Unionist, SDLP and Sinn Fein leadership welcomed the agreement.

But the DUP leader Ian Paisley called it "more treacherous" than the Sunningdale Agreement where the UK government established the first power-sharing executive two decades earlier. Several Unionist MPs also defected from the party to oppose the Agreement.

The final Agreement was posted to every household in Northern Ireland and put to a referendum on May 22. A referendum was also held in the Irish Republic. The result was in favour of the Agreement: 71.2% of people in Northern Ireland and 94.39% in the Republic voted Yes to accepting the Agreement.

An Assembly was elected in September that year. The Ulster Unionists won the largest share of the vote and 28 seats. The SDLP took 24 and Sinn Fein won 18. If the process required to reach the agreement was gruelling, implementing the details has been far more tortuous. It is, indeed too early in its life to say whether the document marks a final break from the past. But almost every aspect of the agreement has caused controversy of varying degrees between the parties.

The release of paramilitary prisoners was the first aspect to dominate the headlines. For nationalists, reform of the RUC - or lack of it as some would have it - has been among the most important issues.

For unionists, the real issue was decommissioning - but the obligations placed upon the parties in this aspect were disputed almost from the moment that the ink dried.

Throughout the first three years of the agreement's implementation, unionists accused republicans of failing to live up to the spirit of the agreement's requirement for the decommissioning of arms. On the other hand, Sinn Fein accused the British government of failing to demilitarise quickly enough. It added that it could not force anyone to give up arms and that the agreement only stated that the parties should use all their power to influence the process. One thing was clear throughout all these negotiations - neither the British or Irish governments were willing to countenance any renegotiation of the package. In the words of Prime Minister Tony Blair, the agreement "is the only show in town".

Peace had a chance because....

Normal people voted for peace.

Catholics began to have their rights identified.

Co-operation was encouraged.

All political parties were included.

1998-2005 Problems

- ❖ Four months after the Good Friday Agreement a car bomb ripped through the town of Omagh killing 29 people. It was the worst atrocity in the history of the Troubles.
- ❖ Two baby girls, five other children, 14 women and five men were among the victims.
- ❖ The bombing was carried out by dissident republicans calling themselves the "Real IRA", led by a former Provisional IRA quartermaster-general. The Real IRA later apologised for the bombing saying it had intended only to hit commercial targets. It later called a ceasefire to all military operations.
- ❖ The bombing was widely condemned by both sides. It raised fears that the political groups could not control their military wings. In particular, it increased pressure on Sinn Fein to ensure that weapons were handed over.
- ❖ But many also sought to find hope in the wreckage, that the atrocity was some kind of last desperate act against the inevitable momentum of the peace process.
- ❖ However, the Real IRA's apology and ceasefire were shortlived. Dissident republicans went on to carry out a string of sporadic and small-scale bombings in Northern Ireland before turning their attention to London. In a series of publicity-seeking attacks, the group targeted MI6 and the BBC's headquarters.
- ❖ The pursuit of those responsible has been painfully slow - hampered by a lack of hard evidence.
- ❖ In 2000, the BBC's Panorama named four men it believed were responsible for the bombing and in 2001 relatives of the victims launched a £1m campaign to raise funds for a civil action against the alleged bombers.
- ❖ In 2003 elections in Northern Ireland saw the extremists take power. The DUP and Sinn Fein now hold power in Northern Ireland. They want to renegotiate the Good Friday agreement.
- ❖ In 2005 IRA have pulled out of the Agreement, and Sinn Fein are under a great deal of pressure to reform after they were accused of being part of a multi-million pound bank-raid in Dublin.
- ❖ The IRA are using violence again. Weapons decommissioning has stopped.

Answering the question:

Introduction – Describe the obstacles facing peace in Northern Ireland. Focus upon the main areas. Distrust; Politics; Different Aims, Violence and Civil Rights.

Paragraph One: Sunningdale Agreement: Describe what it is and then explain why it failed. In your last sentence explain how the obstacles to peace in your Introduction stopped it.

Paragraph Two: Anglo-Irish Agreement: Describe what it is and then explain why it failed. In your last sentence explain how the obstacles to peace in your Introduction stopped it.

Paragraph 3: Downing Street Declaration: Describe what it is and then explain why it failed. In your last sentence explain how the obstacles to peace in your Introduction stopped it.

Paragraph 4: Good Friday Agreement: Describe what it is and then explain why it failed. In your last sentence explain how the obstacles to peace in your Introduction stopped it.