



Sinn Féin



Maithamh 2006

Sean Martin/Sean Treacy Cumann - Tra Ghearr

Challenging period ahead for Republicans

The 22nd May saw Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams MP nominate the DUP's Ian Paisley for the position of First Minister of the Assembly. Undoubtedly, many republicans will be confused by Sinn Féin's decision to nominate the DUP leader for this position.



However, we believe that nominating Paisley was the only way to test the DUP and either expose their continuing rejection of equality or, indeed, try and force the DUP to adopt a different view. It was also intended to send out a positive signal to broad civic and political unionism. Far from being a political stunt, it was a serious effort to advance the peace process.

For Republicans our focus has not changed. Our aim is to bring about a united Ireland, a democratic socialist republic. We believe that the best way to achieve this is through the peace process.

This means that certain realities remain for Mr Paisley and the DUP to grasp. If they are ever going to exercise power it will be along with Sinn Féin and it will be in the context of the All-Ireland architecture of the Agreement with all of the safeguards, checks and balances which that contains. There is no possibility of any brand of

unionism exercising majority rule again in the Six Counties.

It is with this focus that we have agreed to enter the 'Peter Hain' Assembly. This is not the same Assembly which existed under the Good Friday Agreement (GFA). Our sole focus in the Assembly is to have an Executive elected. We therefore will not be participating in debates on issues over which Assembly members have no control. We have set out clear guidelines for our participation in the Assembly, we will not be getting involved in a talking shop.

Our objective has to be to get Ian Paisley into the power sharing arrangements on the terms contained in the GFA. Until this is achieved the Assembly should have no other role.

If it becomes clear in the coming weeks that Ian Paisley is not prepared to come on board then the two governments have big decisions to make. An Assembly without

power is pointless and should be would up. The Assembly members' salaries and allowances should be stopped. The two governments must then press ahead with all of the other aspects of the Agreement and increase substantially the All-Ireland elements.

The Irish government must also move speedily to implement their outstanding commitments, particularly on the issue of Northern Representation in Leinster H o u s e .

Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have already stated that the current phase of political talks will decide the future of the GFA – the stakes are high.

So, the coming weeks are a challenging period for all Republicans. We need to maintain a focus on the political objectives we have set ourselves in the short term. We will all know very quickly what future direction this process will take.

Comhgairdeas – An Droichead

Tréslaionn muid don Droichead príomhdhuais Ghlór na nGael a bhaint ar ocaíd cheiliúrtha bhliantúil. Don chéad uair tharla go raibh an ceiliúradh seo I bhFoirgneamh Pairliamainte Stormont. Bronnagh an curadhmhír ar An Droichead as a shaothar ar son na Gaeilge agus an Chultúir. Ar ghlacadh leis an duais dó, dúirt Stiúrthóir ar An Droichead, Pilib Ó Ruanaí faoina dtodhcaí, “mothaíonn muid go bhfuil tionscnamh den scoth againn ach ní ligfidh muid ár maidí le sruth. Tá pleann againn ár gcuid oibre a fhorbairt sa dóigh go mbíonn eagrais uile-chuimsitheach gairmiúil againn”.

Guíonn muid gach rath, bláth agus beannacht ar An Droichead don tionscnamh seo. Adh Mór.

An Phoblacht – On Sale in the Short Strand

An Phoblacht is the weekly paper of the Republican Movement and costs 90p. It works to provide Republican activists throughout Ireland with information on events within the Republican family, keeps us up to date with all the latest developments within Sinn Féin and offers a republican perspective on wider Irish politics.

The recently re-launched 'An Phoblacht – Sinn Féin weekly' is available to buy at the end of every week.

If you don't receive An Phoblacht please contact a member of Sinn Féin direct or get in touch via e-mail (shortstrandsinnfein@hotmail.com) with your details and we will make sure you receive your copy.

Housing Crisis - campaign update

Working for Social Housing

Paddy Donnelly –
(Seán Martin/Seán Treacy Cumann
Housing Spokesperson)

During the winter of 2004 and spring of 2005 a survey, commissioned by the St Matthews Housing Association was carried out in the Short Strand area to ascertain the needs of households living here.

Sinn Féin congratulates the Housing Association on this very worthwhile initiative.

Sinn Féin has repeatedly called for a review into the social housing supply and the housing allocation points system. These are two pressing issues that must be dealt with.

It is clear that there is a serious under provision in the supply of social housing that is getting worse with every year because new build targets are not being met. Unless a new approach is developed the gap between demand and supply will continue to grow.

There are also very serious long-standing problems with the operation of the housing allocation points system that is leaving many people trapped on the waiting lists who should be a high priority and many people stuck in often unsuitable accommodation.

Sinn Féin's objectives are simple, in working with St

Matthews Housing association and the Short Strand Partnership; we intend to work for the creation of social housing where possible and also to improve the system of allocation.

How we build sustainable communities is a far broader issue encompassing not just the housing market but also issues around recreation, community safety, education and economic activity.

Sinn Féin believes that the right to shelter, to affordable quality accommodation is a basic inalienable right as declared in the Democratic Programme of the first Dáil Éireann.



Homes not Forts!

Mountpottinger RUC/PSNI Barracks must go!

Recently the Seán Martin/Seán Treacy Cumann alongside members of the Short Strand community held a protest outside Mountpottinger Road barracks calling for its immediate dismantling.

Sinn Féin opposes the unwanted presence of military and intelligence gathering fortifications in our area. We call upon the British Government

to implement promises they made under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement and demilitarise our area; and ALL areas across the Six Counties!

We know only too well the history of this building, the abuse and harassment within it and the deadly policy of collusion unleashed against this community from inside its walls.

The Short Strand area is

in desperate need of social housing, Sinn Féin is actively working with other interested and influential parties in the area to get rid of this unwanted eyesore and replace it with homes for our young people who should not have to pay extortionate prices for houses outside this community.



Threats to delivery staff must end!

Recently it has come to the attention of Sinn Féin that several delivery staff have been threatened with physical abuse and told to leave the area while going about their daily business of providing a service to the people of this community.

Sinn Féin condemns totally these attempts to intimidate working people.

Sinn Féin has met with representatives of these delivery staff, we made it clear that the vast majority of the people in this area are opposed to this type of activity.

Petition on 'All Ireland Suicide Prevention' launched

An All-Ireland Approach to Suicide Prevention is what is being demanded in a new online petition by Ógra Shinn Féin.

Suicide Prevention is the current National campaign of the Republican youth organisation and the petition will be presented to both the British and Dublin Governments.

So far the campaign has resulted in 20,000 information leaflets being distributed, a National day of awareness, local launches of the campaign, a motion being submitted to Councils across Ireland, and a major conference on the issue will take place in Dublin to bring the campaign to a close.

An Ógra Shinn Féin spokesperson for South & East Belfast urged people to sign the online petition now by saying, "An All Ireland Approach to Suicide Prevention makes sense, to have two separate strategies for such a serious issue in such a small island, is bureaucratic, time consuming and a waste of money and resources. We need an integrated, All-Ireland approach to this issue immediately. "Suicide is a huge issue which is the biggest killer of our young people in Ireland. We need to be united on developing a serious strategy that will tackle this problem now."

You can play your part by getting all your friends and yourself to sign the online petition at <http://www.PetitionOnline.com/Belfast> a Ógra Shinn Féin Béal Feirste's new website can be viewed at www.osbf.pro.ie



Reflections of 1980/81

**“They tried to make us tow their line, by using every type of crime, But freedom won’t be terrorised, nor freedoms struggle criminalized.”
Cruncher O’Neil**

Michael Mac AnBheatha
April 2006

Speaking to an old friend recently he asked what was the most traumatic year of my life? I didn’t have to think too long about it 1980/81.

That year was like one enormous emotional roller coaster to me and many of my friends who had taken the hunger strike protest to the streets of this country under the mantle of “Short Strand Youth against H-Block and Armagh”. When we first marched up the Falls Road under our banner to thunderous applause we felt a passion and a pride that would carry us through that year with vigour and determination.

There were far too many people who were involved in the whole process to mention

here. It would be sufficient to say that the youth of the short strand came to the fore in 1980/81 as they would again in 2002 during the Siege of the Short Strand.

In 1980 /81 many of the youth of this area who were not of school age were unemployed, they had to endure daily, the workers from factories like Sirocco coming into their area while they stood on street corners most of the time penniless, victims of this sectarian state.

The only positive thing about that was that we worked full time on the fight to restore political status to our friends, brothers, and sisters in the H-blocks and Armagh. Many young men from this area lay with nothing to cover themselves but a blanket twenty four seven, some of them

entering their fifth year in these conditions. Phillip Rooney would join the rearguard of the first hunger strike which came to a dramatic end in December 1980 and Sile Darragh was O/C of the prisoners in Armagh Gaol.

By March 1981 Bobby Sands would begin his hunger strike which would eventually lead to his death and the deaths of nine others. My own personal reflections on that year are maybe too great to include here. A few would be, how proud I was of all the men and women involved in that protest none more so than my good friend Adrian McCreesh who at the age of 16 entered those H-blocks and refused to be branded a criminal.

The mothers who marched those streets for all those years and most times suffered in silence.

Last but not least Thomas McNulty who came through that traumatic year with us only to be cut down in his prime on November 15th 1981 by a loyalist murder gang in collusion with British agents. There is no doubt that the hunger strike and the blanket protest affected many of the youth of this area in different ways, many would join the fight for freedom in the ranks of the IRA and end up in those notorious H-blocks while many would find a political direction that stemmed from that year.

So in 2006 with a peace process that has ups and downs galore what did we learn from it all? One thing I am sure of is that never will the British brand our struggle as criminal; I think this generation is living proof of that.

Short Strand 1916 Volunteer honoured

Charlie Monahan, from Ballymacarret was the first Volunteer from Ulster to die on active service in 1916. His name is the first name on the B Company Roll of Honour which is sited in the Short Strand, East Belfast and it was here on Sunday, 23 April that up to 1,000 republicans marched to commemorate Monahan.

Among the crowd were many life long republicans from the area who walked alongside the family of Charlie Monahan.

The parade drew to a close at Mountpottinger Road, where in the shadow of a newly painted mural dedicated to Monahan, painted by local artists Danny Devenny and Seány McVeigh, Mayor of Kerry Toireasa Ni Fhearaioisa, gave the main

o r a t i o n .
She spoke of her pride in being asked to deliver the main address, "It is a huge honour for me to be here today amongst the residents of the Short Strand. This is a community that has provided so much inspiration and determination to the struggle and the people's unbroken spirit is renowned".

Ní Fhearaioisa also spoke of her meeting with some of the women from the district and said that, "everyone on this island should be proud to be associated with them".

After the parade, the Trá Ghearr Ex-POWs held a Republican exhibition and Debate/Questions & Answer session in the Short Strand community centre.

That night a successful

function was held in St Matthews club. Following a letter sent out from Packy Leonard, a presentation was made on behalf of the Seán Martin/Seán Treacy Sinn Féin Cumann and the Trá Ghearr commemoration committee to the relatives of Charlie Monahan. Also, Short Strand woman, Brenda Murray, the first woman to go on protest in Armagh Gaol, presented Mayor of Kerry Toireasa Ni Fhearaioisa with a beautiful bronze statue.

The Cumann and Commemoration Committee would like to take this opportunity to say a big Go Raibh Maith Agaibh to all those who took part in the parade but also the many people without whose help, the days events would not have been such a success.



• Sinn Féin mayor of Kerry Toireasa Ni Fhearaioisa addresses the crowd

British State murder

The Campaign for the truth continues

Approximately four years ago a number of relatives of those who had been killed by Unionist Death Squads came together to form the campaign group 'An Fhirinne'.

This is particularly relevant within the small Short Strand/Ballymacarret area where more than 20 of our friends and relatives have been murdered by these death squads.

An Fhirinne (Irish for 'the truth') is about campaigning for the truth about collusion between the British government and their agencies with the

unionist death squads which led to the deaths of many Irish citizens.

An Fhirinne wants to see the policy of collusion ended, full disclosure by the British government of all information on its policy of collusion, and the dismantling of the structures and agencies which implemented this policy state murder.

Over the past four years An Fhirinne have organised many events to highlight this policy of collusion. These have included white line pickets, a mass in

Clonard Monastery, two meetings in the European Parliament in Brussels with MEP's who undertook to send a fact-finding delegation to Ireland, a visit to Leinster House where we met with representatives of the Irish Government, and a delegation also went to the US to lobby politicians and Irish America.

Within the Short Strand, An Fhirinne has brought its vast exhibition to the area three times, and in April 2005 held a mass in memory of all those murdered by Unionist death squads. These are

just some of the many events of the past four years and there are many more planned for the future.

On 2nd May 2006 An Fhirinne went world wide with the launch of a new website. Speaking at the event Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said that collusion and State killings were authorised at the highest political level, he then paid tribute to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of this policy.

You can visit the web site at: www.anfhirinne.org

Successful women's night in Short Strand



On Monday the 3rd of March local Republican women gathered in the Short Strand community centre to meet with representatives of the local Sinn Féin Cumann. Also in attendance was Sinn Féin's National Party Development Officer Éibhlín Glenholmes.

A wide range of issues were discussed and how best those attending

felt both they and Sinn Féin could deal with the problems facing our community.

Problems such as drugs and anti social behaviour, lack of social housing and a need for greater child care facilities were all raised.

The Cumann made commitments to hold further meetings and consultations with those who attended in order to tackle the many issues we will all be facing together. These meetings will be advertised in advance.

Sinn Féin in the Short Strand looks forward to continual co-operation with local residents and stands ready to help where we can.

For further information on Sinn Féin policy regarding any of the issues raised please contact us at the South & East Belfast Sinn Féin Office on the Ormeau Rd

Or alternatively you can visit us @ www.sinnfein.ie or contact the seán martin/seán treacy cumann in the short strand directly by e-mailing shortstrandsinnfein@hotmail.com

Irish Labour Party Position Raises Questions for the SDLP

Sinn Fein has long campaigned on the issue of democratic representation for northern nationalists in Leinster House, the seat of the Dublin government. After much pressure during negotiations the Irish government finally gave a commitment to move forward on the issue.

February 2006, however, saw An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern attempt to shy away from this commitment citing opposition in Leinster House led by Labour Party leader Pat Rabbitte amongst others.

Since Rabbitte has become leader of the Labour Party in the south and Mark Durkan took over the reigns of the SDLP in the north both have made much of their sister party relationship. The Labour party played key roles in recent SDLP election campaigns.

One would assume, then, that the SDLP have a degree of influence over Labour Party policy on Six County issues.

However, Pat Rabbitte has been leading opposition to Northern Representation. At the same time the SDLP have publicly claimed to support Northern Representation.

So, either the SDLP's public position on Northern Representation is a lie for public consumption or they enjoy no influence over the Irish Labour Party.

Either way this issue raises serious questions for the SDLP.

Join Sinn Féin

HELP SINN FEIN TO BUILD AN IRELAND OF EQUALS

If you would like to join Sinn Féin fill in the form and send it to:

South and East Belfast Sinn Féin, Unit 3, 174-178 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 2ED.

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Sinn Féin: Working for YOU!

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