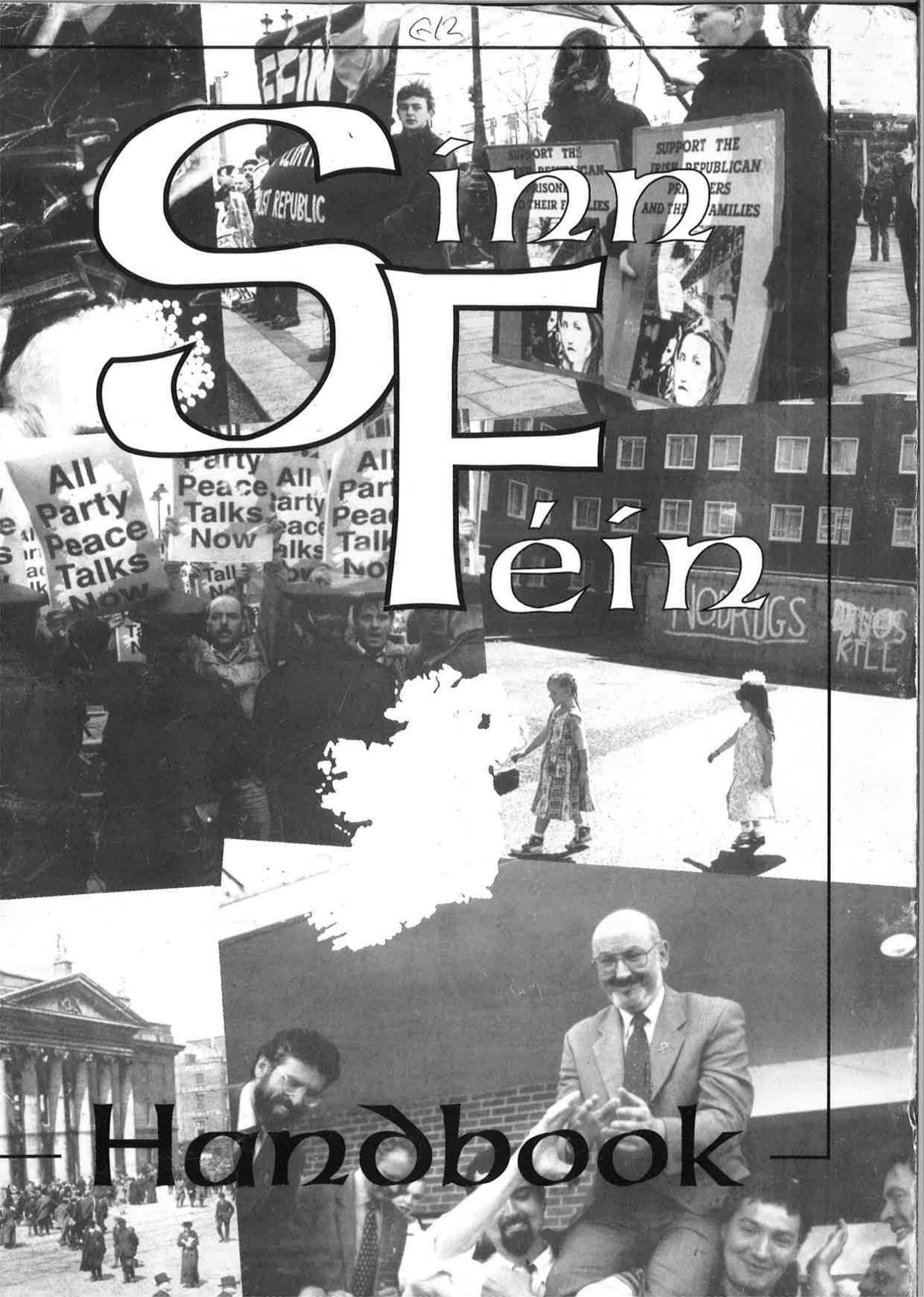


Sínn Féin



— Handbook —

Sinn Féin Handbook

October 1997

Six Tenets of Irish Republicanism

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Some Useful Information on Ireland

Six Tenets of Irish Republicanism

SEPARATISM

- To break the connection with Britain and exert the right to Irish self-determination;
- The establishment of a 32-County Irish Republic.

ANTI-SECTARIANISM

- To substitute the common name of an Irish person in place of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter
- Sectarianism serves British interests
- Republicans must promote anti-sectarianism, it cannot be eradicated within the Six-County state

SECULARISM

- The complete separation between church and state;
- Avoids domination by any one religious group in any 32-County state.

SOCIALISM

- The ownership of Ireland by the people of Ireland and the subordination of private property to public right and welfare;
- Socialism must create a vision of freedom and democracy in Ireland;
- It depends on the democratic participation of the people to succeed.

FEMINISM

- Men and women are born equal;
- Society must regulate itself to ensure this equality;
- There can be no real national freedom without women's freedom.

IRISH REPUBLICANISM

- Is a progressive, radical and relevant political analysis;
- Includes all the people of Ireland.

What is Sinn Féin?

Sinn Féin is an open and revolutionary political party dedicated to the re-unification of Ireland and the establishment of a 32-County democratic, socialist republic. The party is organised on a 32-County basis and it campaigns for radical change in a range of areas in the political, economic, social and cultural fields.

Sinn Féin believes that the British presence and the partition of Ireland are the root cause of conflict in Irish society, and are directly responsible for the numerous problems besetting Irish society North and South.

Sinn Féin believes that ending British rule is essential if progress is to be made towards a socialist republic.

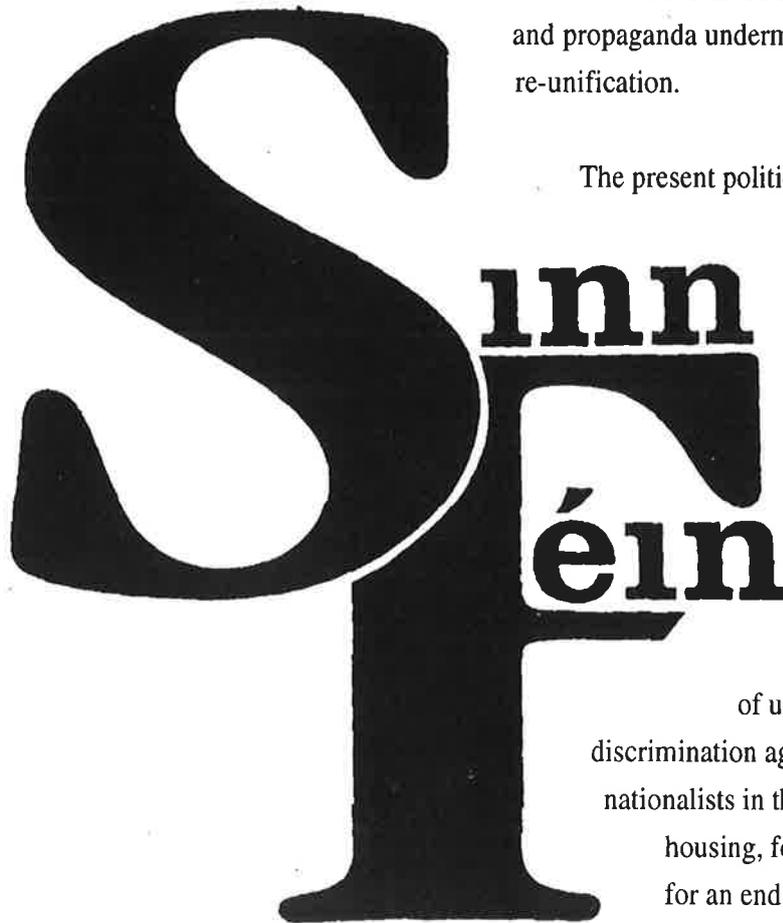
It follows from this analysis that Sinn Féin's primary work centres around the struggle for independence and most of its human and financial resources are put into achieving this principal objective.

Sinn Féin is building a popular, credible and strong political organisation as a radical alternative to the establishment parties.

While Sinn Féin in the Six Counties must consolidate and expand its support base, and thereby overcome the attempts to stabilise British rule, in the 26 Counties Sinn Féin must also extend its support base by making republicanism more relevant to the day-to-day needs of people who do not experience occupation by a foreign government and to challenge through community involvement the ethos of a state whose foundation and propaganda undermines the national desire for re-unification.

The present political and economic systems in both states deprive working class people, men and women, of amenities which affect the quality of their lives. These injustices must be campaigned against and Sinn Féin activists must play their part with others in demanding improvements in the levels of unemployment, an end to discrimination against women and against nationalists in the Six Counties, for better housing, for more social services and for an end to harassment by forces of the respective states.

Sinn Féin believes that Irish independence can best be achieved by becoming a strong radical party with roots in the community and energetically campaigning for unity, independence and socialism.



The History and Background of Sinn Féin



Modern Irish republicans trace their political origins to the movement of the United Irishmen and women of the 1790s. They took their inspiration from the French Revolution and fought for the breaking of the political connection between Ireland and Britain, believing that only an independent Ireland could guarantee equality and prosperity for the Irish people.

Most of the leading figures of the United Irishmen were Presbyterians and Protestants and a key part of their programme was unity between Irish people of all religions in the cause of liberty. Their rebellion in 1798 was ruthlessly suppressed, but their ideas continued to inspire Irish nationalists for over a century and a half.

The name Sinn Féin (We Ourselves) first emerged in the early 1900s. Sinn Féin was founded in 1905. It was a federation of nationalist clubs and eventually, all nationalists to the left of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster came to be popularly known as Sinn Féiners. The press of the time called the 1916 Rising the "Sinn Féin Rebellion".

The Sinn Féin party, reorganised in 1917, was based on the demand for an Irish Republic. It won the 1918 general election overwhelmingly and set up Dáil Éireann (Assembly of Ireland). Following three years of guerrilla war, led by the underground republican government, the party split in 1922 on the issue of the Treaty which partitioned Ireland.

Throughout the 1920s, following a devastating Civil War, Sinn Féin continued as the republican party. The departure of its leader Eamon de Valera to form Fianna Fáil in 1926 meant that it was to remain as a small abstentionist party for the next four decades. Its fortunes ebbed and flowed in the late 1950s and early 1960s with the IRA's border campaign, during which it enjoyed some electoral success.

In the 1960s, Sinn Féin adopted a more radical stance on social and economic affairs and campaigned politically to gain support on issues other than partition. But differing approaches to the Civil Rights Movement and to the

The History and Background of Sinn Féin

outbreak of the present conflict in the Six Counties led to another split. One section of Sinn Féin was in the process of abandoning the republican demand for complete British withdrawal from Ireland and went on to become what are now Democratic Left and the Workers' Party.

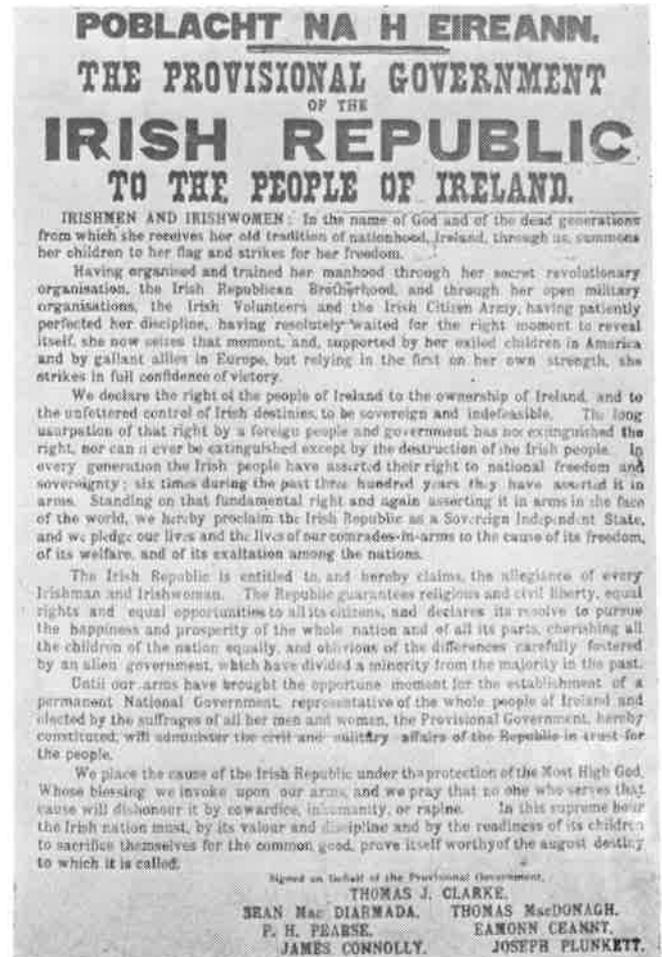
The Sinn Féin which emerged in 1970 — popularly known at the time as 'Provisional' Sinn Féin — was to evolve through the '70s and '80s to the party we know today. It was to the forefront of the resistance of the nationalist people in the Six Counties, as they saw their peaceful demand for civil rights met with state violence. Sinn Féin again took on the role of the leading advocate of British withdrawal and a 32-County Ireland and campaigned on the streets throughout Ireland in the 1970s.

It was only in the early 1980s that the challenge of Sinn Féin as a serious political force and central element in the republican struggle was first fully felt. The re-evaluation of strategy and reorganisation which resulted from the mass campaign in support of republican prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh before and during the 1981 Hunger Strike (when ten prisoners died) set Sinn Féin on its course for the 1980s.

Electoral successes placed the party at the centre of the political stage and thwarted British government efforts to impose an internal partitionist solution in the Six Counties. It gave the most effective voice they had ever had to the dispossessed nationalists of the Six Counties. Having always pursued a lasting, peaceful settlement based on national self-determination, the party refined its peace strategy in key documents *Scenario for Peace* (1987) and *Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland* (1992). The pursuit of that strategy laid the groundwork for the present efforts to achieve lasting peace in which Sinn Féin has been a central participant.

Sinn Féin's Aims & Objectives

Sinn Féin is a 32-County legally registered political party



with a wide range of policies, not just relating to the conflict in Ireland but reflecting all Irish political, economic and social issues.

Sinn Féin's objectives are the achievement of national self-determination and the creation of a secular, socialist republic with a democratic island economy based on the principles of the *Proclamation of 1916*, the *Democratic Programme* of 1919 and the beliefs of Tone, Pearse and Connolly.

Sinn Féin has radical policies on national self-determination, neutrality, the European Union, the economy, employment, workers' rights and unemployment, industrial relations, privatisation, emigration, agriculture, poverty, women, the environment, fisheries, culture, local government, health and social services, education, the Irish language, combating the drugs crisis and international issues.

Recommended Reading List

Selected Writings: James Connolly Vol 1 + 2
 The Cause of Ireland — **Liz Curtis**
 Ireland Her Own — **T.A. Jackson**
 A History of The Irish Working Class — **Peter Beresford Ellis**
 Northern Ireland: The Orange State — **Michael Farrell**
 Arming the Protestants — **Michael Farrell**
 Legions of The Rearguard — **Conor Foley**
 Northern Ireland: The Political Economy of Conflict — **Rowthorn & Wayne**
 Skylark sing your lonely song — **Bobby Sands**
 Nor Meekly Serve My Time — **Ed. Campbell, McKeown & O'Hagan**
 Politics in The Streets: The Origins of The Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland — **Bob Purdie**
 Don't Mention the War — **David Miller**
 Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution — **C.D. Greaves**
 The Life and Times of James Connolly — **C. Desmond Greaves**
 Is Ireland A Third World Country? — **Published by CRD Belfast**
 Long Walk to Freedom — **Nelson Mandela**
 Tomorrow is Another Country: The Inside Story of South Africa's Negotiated Revolution — **Allister Sparks**
 Fire From the Mountain: The Making of a Sandinista — **Omar Cabezas**
 The Secret Army — **J. Bowyer Bell**
 The IRA — **Tim Pat Coogan**
 Peace Process books
 Brian Nelson
 Pearse
 1798 & Tone
 Various Jail Writings
 An Phoblacht/Republican News
 Pathway to Peace — **Gerry Adams**
 The Greening of the White House — **Colm O'Clery**

Pamphlets

A Political Catechism — **Desmond Wilson**
 Women in Ireland — **Lily Fitzsimmons**
 The Case for the Defence of Articles Two and Three — **Irish National Congress, PO Box 2814, Dublin 7**
 Ireland Upon the Dissecting Table — **James Connolly** on Ulster and Partition, Cork Workers Club
 Labour in Irish History — **James Connolly CWC**
 Labour, Nationality & Religion — **James Connolly CWC**

Recommended Video List

Behind the Mask
 Cry Freedom
 Off Our Knees

A Dry White Season
 Unfinished Business
 A World Apart
 Hidden Agenda
 Ormeau Marches
 Hush a Bye Baby
 1981 Hunger Strike Video
 Sinn Féin Education Tape 2 (the ISM's)
 Off our Knees (Civil Rights 68 Committee)
 Irish Ways
 Hang Out Your Brightest Colours (Michael Collins)
 Unfinished Business (Economics of Six Counties)
 Compilation Tapes of Gerry Adams in America
 Sinn Féin Election Broadcasts Westminster and General Election Broadcasts May 1997

A.N.C. Tapes

- (a) Mayibuye Iafrika
- (b) A Better Life for All
- (c) Let the People Speak
- (d) People Under Fire
- (e) Mandela — 75th Birthday

Television Documentaries on-

- Shoot To Kill
- Bloody Sunday
- Dublin Bombings etc

Falls Curfew (locally produced)
 Interment (locally produced)

Plays:

Crime of Castlereagh — Bobby Sands Play
 Just a Prisoners Wife
 Cost of Tapes around at least £15.00

Sinn Féin Education Video Series:-

1. History and Background to Republicanism
2. Nationalism, Socialism, Republicanism, Feminism etc

A recommended reading list is also included on these videos, produced a few years ago.
 * Available on order from
 "Video Section",
 c/o Conway Mill,
 6 Conway Street,
 Belfast BT13 2DA.
 Tel:- 248543
 Cost: Approximately £15.00 each

Summaries of our policies

Summaries of our policies are attached.
However, see overall Sinn Féin Policy Document,
1996/1997.

Sinn Féin also has more detailed policy on a number of issues contained in publications including the

- *Local Government Policy Document* (1993), (relating to the 26 Counties),
- *Democracy or Dependency — The Case Against Maastricht*, an updated document on EU policy,
- *The Economics of a United Ireland* (February 1994), the party's discussion document on the peace process
- *Towards a Lasting Peace in Ireland*, (1992), — *Policing in Transition — A Legacy of Repression: An Opportunity for Justice*, discussion document, 1996
- *Moving On — A Policy for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equality* (1996),
- *Empowering the Communities* (1997) and
- *Putting People First, The Role of the Community in Economic Development*.

The Structure of Sinn Féin

Ard Chomhairle

Sinn Féin's ruling body — is elected by delegates at the Ard Fheis. An Ard Chomhairle consists of eight officers and twelve members elected by the Ard Fheis, one representative from each of the Chomhairlí Limistéir and eight co-opted members. One third of an Ard Chomhairle must be women. An Ard Chomhairle meets monthly. The current Ard Chomhairle officer board is:

Gerry Adams	President
Pat Doherty	Vice-President
Lucilita Bhreatnach	General Secretary
Mitchel McLaughlin	National Chairperson
Rita O'Hare	Director of Publicity
Joe Cahill	Treasurer
Dessie Mackin	Treasurer

Ard Chomhairle Sub Committees

1. Ard Fheis
2. Women's Equality
3. Electoral Strategy
4. International Affairs
5. Peace Strategy Ctte

An Coiste Seasta

Is appointed by an Ard Chomhairle. This body meets every ten days and gives direction to the party leadership at two other levels.

Comhairle Na Fiche Sé Chondae Comhairle Na Sé Chondae

These two committees comprise of Sinn Féin activists with a responsibility for developing Sinn Féin in the 26 Counties and the Six Counties. The Six County body is elected annually and the 26 County body is appointed by the Coiste

Seasta. Both committees meet fortnightly.

Chairperson Na Fiche Sé Chondae: Joan O'Connor Tel: Dublin 8726932

Chairperson Na Sé Chondae: Gerry O'Hara Tel: Belfast 439300

Comhairlí Cúigí

It is planned to change these to Comhairlí Cúigí, regional bodies operating in Dublin, the six counties, Conacht/Ulster, Leinster and Munster

Comhairle Limistéir

This is a regional council which is made up of delegates from Comhairle Ceantair. There are 16 regions. Comhairle Limistéir meet fortnightly.

Comhairle Ceantair

Is elected by cumann delegates. This occurs once a year after an Ard Fheis. The Comhairle Ceantair covers a distinct area such as a city or a city region defined by the degree of support and electoral constituencies. Comhairle Ceantair meet monthly.

Cumann

The base of Sinn Féin is the cumann. The cumann must consist of five members to be properly constituted. It is organised at a local district electoral level. Cumainn meet at least monthly, but usually fortnightly or weekly. Cumann AGM should be held after each Ard Fheis

● There are also a number of departments within Sinn Féin:

Publicity & Press Tel: Belfast 230261 Dublin 8726932

Republican Publications: Tel: Belfast 8722609 Fax: 8733441

POW: Tel: Belfast 249975

International Affairs: Tel: Belfast 323214

Policy Review & Development: Tel: Belfast 439300 Dublin 8726932

Culture

The Role of a Cumann

The Sinn Féin Cumann work is both internal and external.

Externally the cumann builds popular support and articulates the republican position in their area. Internally the cumann fully involves itself in the formulation of party policy and strategy.

A plan for Development and Programme of work is compiled following each Ard Fheis by Cumainn which prioritises campaign work, to increase Sinn Féin's candidates/councillors profile. Impact of plan should be reviewed and up-dated as is necessary.

Building Support — External

- Putting the Sinn Féin position across in the media, in leaflets, posters, newsletters, meetings and selling AP/RN, and above all, just talking with friends and neighbours and fellow workers.
- Getting involved in local and national campaigns — eg. protesting against some form of military repression, campaigning against bad housing, drugs, discrimination, or a campaign opposing cuts in health & social services.
- There are also a number of 'broad front' groups which have been set up in recent years, like the Irish National Congress (INC), the Miscarriages of Justice Group or the Reclaim the Spirit of Easter group.

- Helping people through advice centres.
- Involvement in local groups, such as tenants groups, trade unions and cultural groups.
- Election work; building support and contacts in every ward, preparing a marked register, promoting the candidate and Sinn Féin's profile.
- Participating in the Annual Sinn Féin ten-week National Draw which runs from August to October/November.

Formulating Policy — Internal

- Attending cumann meetings and working out — through discussion and debate — the best policies for the party.
- Keeping informed of developments within the struggle.
- Deciding on resolutions for the Ard Fheis.
- Delegates from cumann to be selected to regularly attend Comhairle Ceantair structure or Comhairle Limistéir structure. Delegates responsible for reporting cumann activity, representing view of cumann on relevant current issues.
- Cumann members responsibility internally also extends to attendance and participation of regular discussion meetings held at regional level on Sinn Féin's Peace Strategy.

How not to build Sinn Féin

- 1.** Don't attend meetings or at least arrive very late.
- 2.** Be sure to leave before the meeting is over.
- 3.** Next day find fault with officers and the committee.
- 4.** Take no part in Cumann affairs, or if forced to do so, do a sloppy job.
- 5.** Be sure to sit at the back so you can talk to a friend and don't take part in any discussion.
- 6.** Take all the Cumann will give you, but give nothing in return.
- 7.** Never ask anyone to join the Cumann.
- 8.** Talk co-operation but never co-operate.
- 9.** If asked to help with anything always say you haven't time.
- 10.** Never accept an office — it's easier to criticise.
- 11.** If appointed to a committee never give any time or service to it.
- 12.** Never do anything more than you have to do, then when others are willingly and unselfishly using their ability, yell and scream that the Cumann is being run by a clique!

Electoral Representation



In the Six Counties, Sinn Féin has consistently registered votes of more than 10% of the total electorate and almost 40% of the nationalist electorate. In the 26 Counties, the republican alternative has been consistently offered under conditions where republicans were censored and demonised and lack the financial resources of the establishment parties.

Elections in the Six Counties have been conducted under conditions where election candidates have been denied access to the media, where election workers have been harassed, arrested and murdered, where combined opposition to Sinn Féin was the sole electoral plank of our opponents.

In the May 1997 Westminster Elections, Sinn Féin polled 126,921 votes throughout 17 constituencies in the Six Counties. This was 16% of the overall vote and 42% of the nationalist vote.

Sinn Féin has now become the third largest political party in the Six Counties. Two MPs were elected. Party President Gerry Adams for the constituency of West Belfast polled a record vote of 25,662, a larger vote than any other party leader. Martin McGuinness, MP for Mid-Ulster polled 20,294 votes winning over 40% of the poll.

In the 26 Counties General Election, June 1997, Sinn Féin contested 14 constituencies, polling 45,614, culminating in 2.55% of the overall vote. This was the first election fought in over 20 years free from media censorship.

Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin topped the poll in Cavan/Monaghan, becoming the first Sinn Féin TD to be elected in this constituency. Caoimhghín Ó Caoláin won 11,531 votes, 19.37% of the total poll. Martin Ferris in Kerry North polled 15.91% of the vote coming very close to the third seat and Seán Crowe, Dublin South West

Electoral Representation

constituency, winning 8.9% of the poll, came within shouting distance of the last seat.

In the 26 Counties, Sinn Féin has 27 councillors across the state with 6 County Council seats and 21 Urban District Council seats. In Monaghan, there are seven councillors on county and urban authorities.

Local government elections are due in 1998.

In the Six Counties, Sinn Féin is currently represented by 74 councillors with 16.9% of the overall vote and 43% of the nationalist electorate.

Sinn Féin is represented on 17 of the 26 councils in the Six Counties. In Belfast, the largest elected assembly in the Six Counties, Sinn Féin won the largest share of first-preference votes giving them 13 seats, the largest grouping on the council.

Established in November 1905, Sinn Féin is an open, legally registered and democratically elected Irish republican political party whose membership is drawn from throughout Ireland and whose national leadership is elected at our annual conference, or Ard Fheis.

Sinn Féin believes that the root cause of conflict and division between the Irish people stems from partition and the British Government's claim to sovereignty in Ireland. We believe that Britain's jurisdiction in the six northeastern Irish counties was and is based on the continued denial of democracy and has consistently failed to bring about a just and democratic society.

Sinn Féin is committed to ending the union with Britain and to the establishment of a new, agreed and inclusive Irish society which, we believe, can only evolve when the Irish people, without external impediment, can freely exercise our right to national self-determination. Sinn

Féin believes that the Irish people in themselves have the ability, talent and vision required to settle their differences if a level playing pitch is created and maintained by a negotiated settlement. We are convinced that an agreed, non-sectarian, pluralist and non-sexist Irish jurisdiction - that guarantees the full protection of all religious and ethnic minorities - is the desired wish of the vast majority of Irish people at home and abroad and of the international community in general.

Sinn Féin has elected representatives on local government bodies in every major Irish city and town. Sinn Féin's strongest electoral constituency is in the British-occupied Six Counties where we are the third main political party.

In Belfast, Ireland's second largest city Sinn Féin receives more votes than any other party on the City Council and is the largest party on Belfast City Council. For numerous historical and contemporary reasons, not least of which has been the impact of over 70 years of partition and the effects of state censorship, repression, harassment and intimidation of our membership, Sinn Féin's percentage share of the overall vote in the 26 Counties is some 2.55%, a situation which the party hopes will significantly improve as we move to a stabilised political situation.

Sinn Féin traces its political origins to the movement for Irish independence advanced by the founders of Irish republicanism, Theobald Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet who, in the late 18th Century, were inspired by the liberal ideology underpinning the French Revolution. They believed the British presence in Ireland to be a negative and divisive influence and that true equality and prosperity for the Irish people could only be attained in the context of an independent Ireland. Sinn Féin, in the historical and contemporary sense, has remained committed to those ideals and to the attainment of Irish self-determination.

Sinn Féin and the 'Peace Process'



The prerequisite for a lasting peace in Ireland is the existence of democracy. Without democracy there can be no settlement, no economic stability, no end to injustice or partition. The denial of national democracy creates the conditions for conflict, perpetuates injustice and division and deprives the Irish people, North and South, of a free and open society in which economic prosperity and social equality can be achieved.

Ireland is the most underdeveloped countries in Western Europe. It has the highest unemployment and emigration rates and the greatest levels of poverty. This is the legacy of the British domination of our country. The primary task facing the Irish people today is the resolution of the national question and the establishment of an Irish democracy in which the Irish people as a whole can decide their future. Therefore, Sinn Féin's primary objective has been to keep the demand for national self-determination firmly on the political agenda. For us this is a core part of

any peace process and an essential step in building a more just and egalitarian society for all the people of this island.

The development of such a peace process is an ongoing task, and has at its political core the need for:

- A new agreement between London and Dublin to end partition;
- Inclusive talks as a means of resolving the conflict;
- A programme for national reconciliation.

The adoption of such procedures would allow a real peace process to develop. People want peace, a peace that will last. A peace process is a means to that end. The Irish Peace Process grew out of Sinn Féin's peace strategy.

The people of Ireland have a right to develop an economic democracy which tackles unemployment, bad housing, and which can provide a proper health service and an open education system for all citizens. We deserve a non-sexist, pluralist, democratic socialist Ireland. An Ireland

Sinn Féin and the 'Peace Process'

which cherishes all the children of the nation equally. Sinn Féin stands for a society in which Irish people can live together, is not a mere interlude between wars, but an incentive to the creative and collective energies of all the people who live on this island.

Sinn Féin is committed to the transformation of Irish society and to a negotiated and democratic settlement. We know that peace is not simply the absence of violence. Real peace — a lasting peace — is based on democracy, justice, freedom and equality. Sinn Féin has a vision that sees beyond the present phase of our history. Our vision foresees the unity of the people of this island.

Sinn Féin is:

- For Inclusive Peace Talks;
- For Equality;
- For a lasting peace settlement;
- For national self-determination for the Irish people.

An All-Ireland Economy

It is now widely accepted that an all-Ireland Economy

would bring considerable benefits. The Irish state is now advocating the bypassing of the political structures in the Six Counties and 26 Counties to create an 'island economy' based on co-operation in the areas of trade, economic planning and infrastructural development. A more thorough economic integration would bring greater benefits.

Sinn Féin advocates:

- The creation of an all-Ireland economy;
- The transformation of the economy of the Six Counties into a production and developed peacetime economy in harmony with plans for an all-Ireland economy;
- The elimination of the economic distortions created by partition particularly in the border counties;
- A commitment to investment in social infrastructure;
- The absolute necessity of viewing economic development in the wider context of social, political, cultural and environmental priorities;
- Full parity of esteem and equality of treatment for all sections of the community.



Irish Political Prisoners Factfile

Numbers

- There are approximately 300 Irish political prisoners in gaols in England and the Six Counties.
- Over 60 are serving life.
- Approximately 80 are serving 20 years or more.

Irish Prisoners in England

- There are 26 Irish political prisoners held in gaol in England.
- Five have served over 21 years (Vincent Donnelly, Eddie Butler, Joe O'Connell, Hugh Doherty, Harry Duggan).
- Five remand prisoners are currently in SSUs. The use of SSUs has been condemned by human rights bodies and medical experts.
- Irish political prisoners in England are denied compassionate parole.
- All are seeking transfer to Ireland. The British Home Office continues to stall on repatriation/transfer despite legislation being in place to facilitate this.
- Relatives of Irish prisoners who make the expensive and arduous journey to England for visits continue to be harassed under the PTA and quite often find that the prisoner has been 'ghosted', moved overnight to another prison without warning to either the prisoner or family.
- Elderly and infirm relatives are unable to travel to England.

Temporary Transfer

- Prisoners on temporary transfer from England are denied facilities available to prisoners in the Six Counties.



Numbers/Location

Portlaoise

Prison Facts

33 prisoners
*6 Republican prisoners have served over 21 years

England

26 prisoners
*5 have been in solitary confinement in Belmarsh prison for two and a half years.

USA

4 prisoners
*4 are serving 40-year fixed term sentences

Maghaberry

10 prisoners

H-Blocks/Long Kesh

290 prisoners
*80 are serving fixed sentences of 20 years or more.

Irish Political Prisoners Factfile

- Prisoners on temporary transfer have been advised that the categorisation of transfers is soon to be changed from permanent and temporary to unrestricted and restricted. It would appear that those categorised as being on restricted transfer will continue to be denied compassionate and other parole facilities.
- All prisoners should be afforded the same parole facilities.

Republican Women Prisoners

- The NIO operates a policy of discrimination against women prisoners.
- Facilities available to women fall far short of those available to male prisoners in either Maghaberry or Long Kesh.
- Restrictive conditions in the women's prison, which male prisoners are no longer subjected to, include lock-ups, limited association and exercise periods, confined exercise space and restrictive access to telephones.
- Women POWs leaving or returning to the jail continue to be strip-searched.
- Since 1982 over 4000 strip-searches have been carried out on a female POW population which has never exceeded 32 women.
- Strip-searching has been condemned by many human rights bodies including Amnesty International and the National Council for Civil Liberties.

Over 60 Republican prisoners are serving life

- Lifers in the Six Counties serve, on average, 17-20 years.
- three Republican prisoners sentenced in England to life imprisonment have been set 'whole life' tariffs. While the courts have rescinded two of

these, one man is still subject to a 'whole life' tariff. Whole life tariffs should be scrapped.

- British army private Ian Thain, sentenced to life, was released after two years. British paratrooper Lee Clegg, sentence to life, was released after two and a half years, reinstated in his regiment and promoted.
- 60% of the current Republican prisoner population have already served twice the time Lee Clegg spent in prison.
- The average length of sentence being served by republican prisoners is a little over 18 years.
- Lifers are considered for release by an anonymous Review Board.
- They are denied legal representation at such review hearings.
- They are denied access to secret reports, compiled by unnamed prison staff, which are the basis for Review Board decisions to recommend release or not.
- They are offered no explanation for a decision not to recommend release.
- They cannot challenge any such decision.

Sinn Féin is campaigning for:-

- Immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners held as a result of the British/Irish conflict.
- All interested parties to oppose the British government's treatment of Irish Political prisoners. Britain has been guilty of gross violations of Human Rights in relation to prisoners.
- Immediate transfer of all Irish Political prisoners from British and American jails back to Ireland.
- Equality of treatment for compassionate parole for all Republican prisoners in Portlaoise jail.
- Implementation of a release programme for the Forty Year Men held in Portlaoise.
- No extradition of Irish citizens charged with political offences to British jails.

Sinn Féin's Policing Policy



To fulfil normal policing functions in a democratic society, a police service needs to be accountable to the community it serves. It needs to be under the democratic control of that community. A police service needs to be open and transparent about its operation, and to allow for a genuinely independent examination of complaints against it. The RUC or the gardaí are none of these things. Sinn Féin seeks the creation of a new all-Ireland police service in the context of a democratic political settlement. Any new all-Ireland service must be democratic, accountable, and responsive to the community.

We believe that the issue of disbanding and replacing the RUC should be seen in the context that:

- The RUC has been seriously discredited. Therefore the

continued existence of the force will remain as a core problem in the context of conflict resolution;

- There is a strong public demand for the disbandment of the RUC;
- Everyone in the community wants an acceptable police service;
- There is general agreement that the disbandment of the RUC and the creation of a new police service should be accomplished in a planned and orderly manner;
- In a changing political situation, aimed at leading to a secure, just and peaceful society, there would inevitably be a substantial reduction in personnel levels in any new police service;
- Any new police service must be unarmed and free from 'political' control in the sense that the RUC has been

Sinn Féin's Policing Policy

politically directed by the unionist establishment and the British government;

● A new police complaints body, with clear legal authority and powers, must be set up, which is totally independent of a new police commission.

If the will exists between both the London and Dublin governments, then we believe that our proposals constitute a realistic and achievable framework for a new policing structure, which would enjoy a wide degree of consensus.

Sinn Féin therefore demands:

1. The immediate disarmament of the RUC pending their agreed and orderly disbandment

2. The immediate withdrawal of the RUC from Nationalist areas

3. The abolition of Diplock courts

4. The immediate disbandment of the RUC Special Branch

5. The immediate repeal of all emergency legislation

6. The dismantling of 161 military-style fortresses currently occupied by the RUC.

7. The establishment, through the medium of inclusive peace talks involving all parties and both governments, of an agreed, fully independent, monitoring agency, which would oversee 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 above, and the establishment of a proper policing service.

8. The Dublin government should immediately initiate a

comprehensive programme of restructuring, retraining and relocation to personnel within the Gardai. This programme should be designed to divert resources away from activities associated with the conflict — such as the concentration of personnel on the border and in the massively over-resourced Special Branch — and

towards community policing and the fight against drugs, especially in Dublin.

The RUC was founded at partition to serve as the paramilitary policing force for what was, de facto, “a Protestant state for a Protestant people”. Since 1921 the RUC has been the guardian of unionism. Until the 1972 collapse of Stormont, it was used in every decade to intern nationalists and to suppress any signs of nationalist dissent. Its loyalty, above all, was to unionism rather than to the Six-County population as a whole.

● The RUC has been guilty of a catalogue of sectarian and political murders, and yet not one of its members has served a day in jail for killings carried out on duty. It has a long history of collusion with loyalist death squads. The Brian

Nelson case exposed the close relationship between the RUC Special Branch and loyalist death squads.

● More than any other police force in the Western world, the RUC has been condemned by human rights bodies including Amnesty International, Liberty and Helsinki Watch.

● 93% of the membership of the RUC is Protestant. This illustrates how, in a conflict situation, one section of our community is ‘policed’ by the other.

● The RUC’s primary function of suppressing nationalists has been carried out with the aid of a battery of repressive legislation, including the former Special Powers Act (1922) and the Emergency Provisions and Prevention of Terrorism Act which replaced it in the 1970s.



Sinn Féin's Drugs Policy — Empowering Communities



The increasing abuse of heroin and other drugs among young people, especially in the Dublin area, must be viewed with alarm, and evidence of the spread of drug pushing and drug abuse in the Six Counties, especially the greater Belfast area, is worrying.

Sinn Féin condemns the totally inadequate response of the Dublin government's proposal to deal with this epidemic. Not only does it not recognise the underlying social and economic injustice of which drug abuse is a symptom, but utterly fails to adopt a comprehensive drugs programme. Their failure to compel the statutory bodies (Gardaí, Customs, Revenue Commissioners, Health Boards, Education Department, Judiciary and Prison administrations) to take a unified approach in tackling the importation, distribution and sale of drugs in Ireland, has left communities with no option but to tackle this problem themselves.

Sinn Féin believes that community mobilisation is central to any strategy against drugs. The coordination of

existing resources and the significant introduction of new resources, including funding from both the Dublin and London governments and additional funding and expertise from the EU, can combat this growing problem.

The official response to the growing threat from AIDS is inadequate. At present those at greatest risk in Ireland are intravenous drug users, but AIDS also affects other sections of the population. To prevent the spread of AIDS, Sinn Féin calls for the following steps to be taken immediately.

1. A preventative education programme for the general public;
2. Preventative education programmes for high-risk groups. This should be done in conjunction with voluntary organisations who have the experience and the contacts, but not the resources to fund such a programme;
3. An education programme for schools. This should start at primary level with a programme geared especially towards young children;
4. The introduction of a needle-exchange programme;
5. Reform the contraception laws in the 26 Counties to make

condoms more freely available;

6. Provide adequate, community-based treatment and counselling services and facilities for drug users;
7. Provide comprehensive educational, counselling and rehabilitation services in the country's prisons, in particular young offenders' centres.

Sinn Féin recognises the efforts of and congratulates anti-drugs groups throughout Ireland who have sought to tackle the drugs problem in their areas in the absence of any worthwhile action against the drugs epidemic.

In the past year, Dublin Sinn Féin has drawn together party policy on drugs passed at Ard Fheiseanna since 1990 and published it in the document: *Empowering Communities — a Sinn Féin response to the drug epidemic*. In addition, a national internal drugs conference hosted by Dublin Sinn Féin began the process of networking and information sharing on the drug problem.

As a party actively campaigning to support individuals, families and communities hit by drug addiction, Sinn Féin commits itself to:

1. Develop, in line with our existing policies for social and economic change, health, education and economic policies which take into account the prevalence of drug addiction in Ireland.
2. Continue to hold conferences and seminars on the drugs crisis and related issues in the forthcoming year.

Women

3. Promote the demands and concerns of women and their active involvement at all levels and in all areas in tackling the problem of drug addiction and drug dealing, as it is predominantly women who currently have to bear the burden in families and communities hit by addiction.
4. Campaign for the separate and distinct needs and demands of women and of girls to be fully recognised and addressed in all aspects of drug education, treatment, support and training services and in community drug campaigns.



Youth

5. Campaign for the rights of children and of youth to practical personal health and drugs education from the earliest possible age.
6. Campaign for the right of children and of youth to local leisure, recreation and sports services and facilities, matching their needs, to be a mandatory component in all housing and residential development schemes, private and public, and for the provision of such facilities in existing housing areas. The current situation in many areas is that young people believe the only buzz to be got is through drugs or joyriding or petty crime.
7. Demand the resourcing of local youth workers rooted in the communities in all areas, both urban and rural.

Education

8. Demand the immediate introduction of drug and health education on the primary and secondary school curriculum.
9. Promote the idea of partnership between third-level institutions and people living in their surrounding localities in the area of drug-related research.
10. Insist on the involvement of local youth and adults in the provision of drugs education, training, counselling and drop-in services. The expertise lies as much within communities as in professional qualifications.

Sinn Féin's Drug policy — Empowering Communities

11. Demand the immediate hiring of drugs counsellors in all schools in the 10 areas of Dublin and in Cork North City identified by the government as most affected by heroin abuse. An open door policy should operate for concerned parents and families.

12. Insist that state agencies deliver on their responsibility to provide relevant and accurate information about drugs and drug dangers.

13. Encourage government and non-statutory groups to promote public debate, discussion and awareness-raising on addiction and drug use, including the arguments concerning the regulation of the illegal cannabis trade.

Health

13. Campaign for the proper resourcing of locally-based community health workers.

14. Call for an independent review of current statutory drug-treatment centres — their efficacy, services and policies.

15. Call for an independent international review of the current policy of methadone dispensing with recommendations as to how best to avoid replacing one addiction with another.

16. Call for tighter regulation of legal prescriptions and for those over-prescribing legal drugs without reasonable cause to be pursued by law.

17. Demand that the statutory bodies and local authorities reach a conclusion without further delay

on who is responsible for the collection of discarded syringes and that the body appointed to do this set up a freefone 24-hour telephone line so that immediate action can

be taken on discarded syringes and other possibly infected materials.

18. Demand continuous and genuine consultation between the Health Boards and all sections of local communities regarding the provision of services and the location of clinics, and insist that health providers enter into partnership with local communities who in several areas have the experience and expertise to cope with drug-related problems.

19. Demand immediate legislation to force public houses, concert venues and dance venues to provide clean drinking water free to customers.



Garda/Legal

20. Campaign for the Garda to be made accountable to local communities, regions and to Leinster House.

21. Back the demand coming from communities that assets seized from drug dealers be put into locally-run drug treatment services.

22. Call for an independent Gardaí complaints body to investigate complaints against the force or its members.

23. Call for the suspension of Gardaí while allegations of bad conduct or ill-treatment in custody are taking place.

24. Demand that the Garda Special Branch role as political police end.

25. Call for the Garda to focus resources on stopping dangerous drugs from being distributed or sold.

26. Demand better resourcing of

state laboratories so that up-to-date and pertinent information is at all times available to statutory and non-statutory groups on drug types, make-up and dangers.

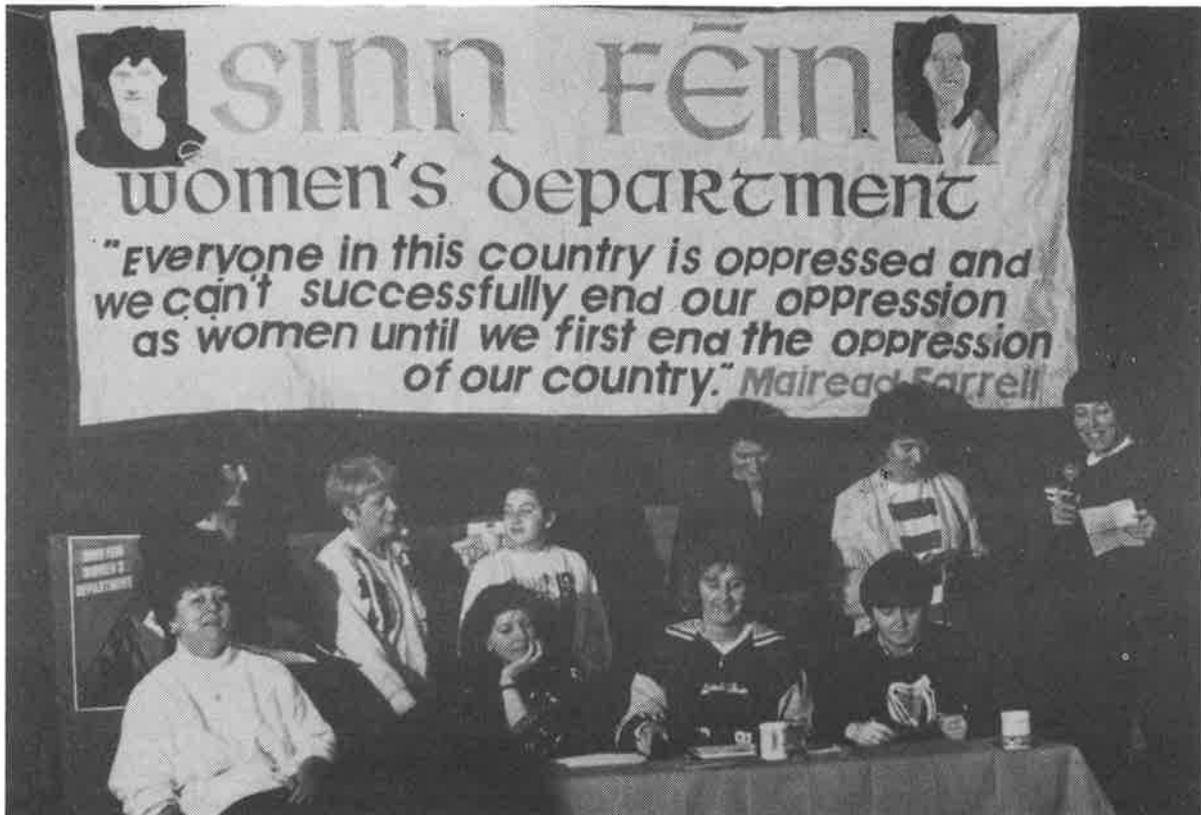
Youth Policy



With over 40% of the population under 25 years of age the 26 counties has the youngest population in the EU. According to recent figures, almost 62,000 people between 18 and 25 years of age are signing on the live register. While unemployment rates have decreased over the past three years youth unemployment is still running at twice the rate of unemployment for those over 25.

● Real jobs and quality education and training should be provided for young people. They should not be forced into dead end schemes to massage the unemployment figures;

- Sinn Féin will oppose any diminishing of young persons' social-welfare entitlements;
- Funding for youth services and recreation facilities should be increased;
- Given the decline in the turn-out of young voters in recent years, Sinn Féin supports the holding of elections on a weekend to facilitate the participation of students.



Women

To achieve real equality for women Sinn Féin is advocating:

- Measures to achieve equality of representation both in political life and in appointments to all public bodies.

Women must be involved in making the laws that affect their lives

- The setting of time scales to achieve equality of outcome in employment structures, education and training

- As child-care has been identified as the biggest difficulty faced by women wanting to work or participate in public life, the provision of child care facilities and subsidies for childcare must be a priority

- Area partnerships, as new structures, should be set up with the aim of ensuring gender equality

Equality & Anti-discrimination Policy

Sinn Féin Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Policy

Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual people suffer from discrimination and harassment in every aspect of their daily lives. Whether in the social, political, economic or cultural spheres, they are denied equality of rights and opportunities. There is no logical or rational defence for such exclusion. Only ignorance and indifference enable such a denial of basic fundamental rights to continue.

Republicans are only too well aware of what it means to be treated as second class citizens. Our policies are the result of decades of resistance to marginalisation and discrimination.

When confronted with experiences which are similar to our own, it should be automatic for us, as republicans, to understand and actively express that understanding through solidarity. The denial of justice for one section of this nation is the denial of the rights for us all.

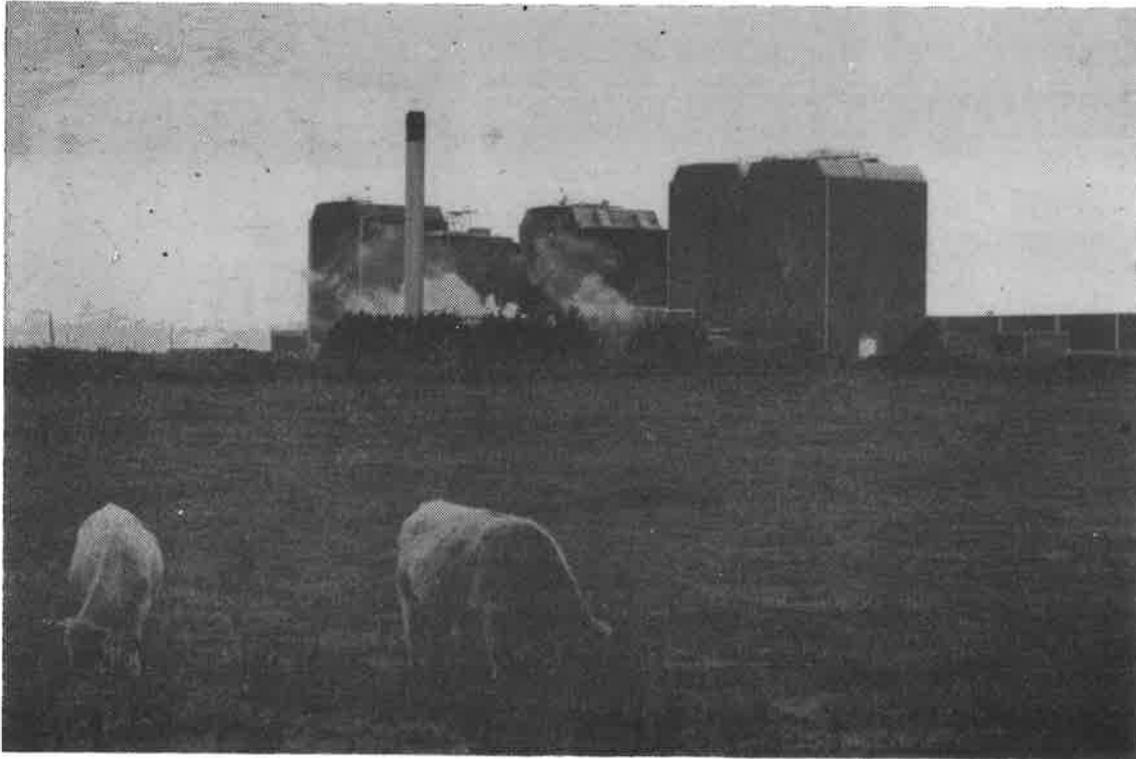
It is also important to remember that lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not a community set apart from the heterosexual population. In every community, in every

locality and in every political party, there are lesbian, gay and bisexual people who are denied equality on the grounds of their sexual orientation. Sinn Féin has a responsibility to ensure that within our own ranks and the wider community it represents, that second-class citizenship is not acceptable, and that the rights of lesbian, gay and bisexual people are not negotiable.

At a time when the inequalities of the society within which we live are so readily observable, we just rise to the challenge and confront all forms of discrimination and marginalisation. It is time we moved on and made our position clear — there is no room for discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in our party, in our community nor in our country.

Sinn Féin's *Moving On* policy document contains an extensive series of recommendations for legislative reform, an internal awareness and anti-prejudice programme for all Sinn Féin party workers and a range of campaigning recommendations. It is available from: Sinn Féin, Ard Oifig, 44 Cearnóg Pharnell, B.A.C. 1.

Environmental Policy



Sinn Féin has long been to the fore in raising environmental issues, issues which are of great importance to the Irish people. The environment does not respect borders. Consequently, there are environmental issues which affect both parts of our partitioned country. These include the pollution and the gradual destruction of the Irish Sea by nuclear, industrial and human waste.

Sinn Féin condemns the British government's decision to approve the Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (THORP) at Sellafield. It calls on the Dublin government to take practical action against THORP by instigating legal action in the European and World courts and by providing funding for environmental groups such as Greenpeace to carry out effective protest actions to prevent THORP being built.

Sinn Féin endorses the call by all of the major environmental groups for an international conference to specifically tackle the threat posed to the Irish Sea by

pollutants and over-fishing. Sinn Féin calls on the British and US governments to stop all submarine traffic in the Irish Sea, to protect those working on fishing fleets operating in the area.

Sinn Féin will oppose any attempt to build a national toxic-waste incinerator in Ireland, given that this country does not produce enough waste to justify economically this proposed development and that technological development negates any argument for its necessity.

Working closely with local communities, Sinn Féin has been involved in a diverse range of projects, from protecting the Black Mountain and Cave Hill in County Antrim, to raising public awareness about the environmental impact of gold mining in County Tyrone and lignite mining around Lough Neagh.

The lesson we have learned from our involvement in

Environmental Policy

these issues is that collective action by local communities and winning support from the broad community, is what is needed to achieve real change.

Trade unions have a role to play. Workers can suffer damaged health and death from working with dangerous materials. Health and safety inside the workplace and environmental protection are interlinked. Trade unions should take steps to protect their colleagues and also the community beyond the workplace.

Sinn Féin believes that greater local democracy and accountability in relation to the environment is vital. Local communities must be involved in the planning process and must have access to all sources of information.

Sinn Féin's General Election manifesto (1997) summarised policy outlines as the following:-

For too long environmental issues have been divorced from the social realities of everyday life. Sinn Féin is committed to correcting that imbalance. We cannot hope to eradicate our consume-and-throw-society overnight but we can begin to making changes at home and in the workplace. The aim must be to create less pollution, use energy wisely, reuse and recycle waste and establish integrated transport systems. Sinn Féin will campaign for a better environment by:

- Opposing the building of a national incinerator;
- Continuing to support local communities in the campaign against nuclear dumping in the Irish Sea;
- Calling for the closure of Sellafield;
- Supporting incentives to minimise the production of waste and encourage recycling;
- Supporting the use of an eco-tax to deter companies from over packaging their products;

- Reducing the use of non bio-degradable plastic;
- Encouraging the development of organic farming and banning genetically engineered food;
- Making the control of water pollution in coastal water and in rivers a priority.

Agriculture

Irish farmers, their families and the rural communities they make up have found themselves in an impossible position in the Ireland of the 1990s. The years of CAP funding have created gross inequities where 80% of the benefits have gone to 20% of the farmers. Now thousands of farmers have found themselves either in debt or working holdings which have been deemed economically unviable. *Teagasc*, the agricultural advisory body in the 26 Counties, has estimated that up to 5,000 people will leave farming every year in the 1990s. Furthermore despite the fact that EU funds now account for approximately 50% of average farm income, there is no concern in government at our dependency on the EU or on its effects on the Irish economy.

- Agricultural policy must be directed towards keeping the maximum number of active farmers in rural Ireland;
- Low-interest loans to be made available to assist small farmers;
- Aggressive overseas marketing to overcome the BSE scare;
- All farmers convicted of Angel Dust use in beef production or of using BSE infected animals to maximise compensation for herd depopulation to be banned from livestock production;
- Cases of farm families in financial difficulties to be resolved by negotiation not by eviction.

Education Policy

Overall aim i.e. Education should be a right not a privilege which should be available free of charge and accessible at all levels, to all. For too long education has been a privilege for the rich and denied to the majority of the working-class people of Ireland. Education should be viewed as a resource to be invested in for the betterment of society in Ireland.

Education policy and methods of teaching should reflect the goals of a society which is non-sectarian, non-exclusive, and unsteretyped. It should encourage openness, variety and learning, not the rigid, rote-learning exam-orientated system of the past the remnants of which remains with us today.

Sinn Féin is opposed to teachers being made redundant and calls for a reduction in class numbers. Teachers' wage levels should be improved and they should have the right to negotiate wages and conditions. Students and parents should be adequately represented on bodies that decide curricula. Parents and teachers, democratically-elected, must have the majority voice on all school-management committees.

Cutbacks in education and student-loan schemes have affected access to education for a large number of people. Student loans will disproportionately limit the access of nationalists in the Six Counties to higher education as the economic disadvantages to Catholics will prevent many capable young people from pursuing third-level education. Sinn Féin demands that student grants for those in further education be raised to an adequate, acceptable level. There is a clear demand for grater access to further education. Sinn Féin believes that money must be made available to permit the evolution of an adult-education system that is centred on local communities and will allow people to identify their education needs.

The current non-status of the Irish language within the

education system must be changed now, to reflect the aspirations of the nationalist people. It is an insult that the language of our country is given the status of a foreign language. Sinn Féin demands that the discrimination against Irish culture, history and the Irish language, be remedied immediately.

Recent 'reforms' by the British government contain a hidden agenda which seeks to undermine nationalist identity by measures that limit opportunities for an Irish identified education. More overt attacks on the Irish/Nationalist identity are being taken through the introduction of Education For Mutual Understanding (EMU) and the special support given to integrated schools, while discriminating against Irish language schools.

- Sinn Féin calls for the Irish language to be afforded an important role in the curriculum of all primary and secondary schools and for Irish-medium schools to receive the same access to funding as integrated schools.
- Sinn Féin calls for a comprehensive system of education capable of providing a wide range of subjects to cater for the interests of pupils and the needs of the community.
- Sinn Féin demands that nursery education should be made available for all who may wish for it.
- Sinn Féin is opposed to Dublin government polices which demand a minimum of 32 enrolments before a new gaelscoil will receive funding, even though existing schools are allowed to remain open even when the roll has fallen to as low as seven pupils. The Department of Education should adopt a more sympathetic approach to attempts to establish gaelscoileanna.

Some Useful Information on Ireland

Total population: 5,103,655

Six Counties Profile

Population:	1,577,836			
Nationalists:	42%			
Other:	58%			
Women:	51%			
Men:	49%			
Age Composition:	Under 19	20-39	40-64	Over 65
	32.5%	29%	26%	13%

UNEMPLOYMENT: Although the British government claims that unemployment has fallen below 100,000, this still represents, even in their distorted terms, a jobless rate of 14%. Unofficial estimates by trade unions and other bodies place the figure much higher, e.g. the West Belfast Economic Forum, in May 1991, revealed that the real unemployment figure was probably closer to 151,000 or 20.7%. Catholic males remain 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed.

HOMELESSNESS: Poor people are more likely to live in damp, inadequate housing and face a higher risk of homelessness. This is particularly true among 16-25 year olds. In 1995-96, nearly 11,000 households presented themselves as homeless to the N.I. Housing Executive, an increase of 7% upon the previous year. According to SHELTER, almost 30,000 people in the Six Counties are without a home.

Twenty Six Counties Profile

Population:	3,525,719			
Catholic:	93%			
Other:	7%			
Women:	50.4%			
Men:	49.6%			
Age Composition:	Under 19	20-39	40-64	Over 65
	36%	28%	24%	11%



UNEMPLOYMENT: There are over 300,000 people unemployed and more than one million people live in poverty while billions of pounds are taken out of the economy by multinationals.

HOMELESSNESS: It is modestly estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 people are homeless in Ireland.

17% are under 18 years of age

33% are aged 18-25

33% are aged 26-40

17% are over 41

The majority of homeless people in Dublin are from Dublin; 18% are from the rest of Ireland; 11% are from Britain; and 10% are from overseas. The 800 hostel beds in Dublin see an occupancy of 95%. Local authority housing is only a realistic option for families with children and it is becoming more difficult to get accommodation in the Private rented sector, especially for the unemployed.

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