

Cairde

Sinn Féin

MERRY
CHRISTMAS TO
ALL CAIRDE
SINN FÉIN
MEMBERS

Christmas 1996 (Issue 3)

POLITICAL HOSTAGES

SEND THEM HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

FOR MOST, CHRISTMAS is a time of happiness - a time when families and friends come together in celebration. However, for one group of people the Christmas season brings with it hardship and sadness. For Political prisoners and their families it is a very trying and lonely occasion filled with extreme emotion and tears.

There are almost four hundred Irish republicans serving sentences in prisons in England, Ireland and the US. Since the beginning of the current phase of conflict over 10,000 republicans have been incarcerated, affecting almost the entire nationalist population in the north.

Trying to maintain a relationship with a loved one who is imprisoned is always difficult, but during the and since the IRA cessation of 1994 it has become virtually impossible for those imprisoned in England.

Conditions for these prisoners and their families have deteriorated to a critical level with a number of prisoners being subjected to a punitive regime of constant strip-searches, sleep deprivation, lack of proper food,

exercise, fresh-air and medical treatment.

This treatment and the reluctance of the British government to utilise the facility created by the Dublin governments ratification of the European Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners over a year ago highlights in a very real way their use of republican prisoners as political hostages.

Sinn Féin is calling on Britain to end its cruel and draconian victimisation of republican prisoners and to repatriate them to prisons nearer their families immediately so as to minimise the hardships being endured.



• One of many young children whose father or mother will be in prison this christmas

SINN FÉIN BOOKSHOP ON THE WEB

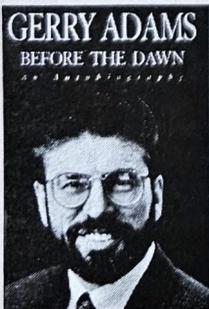
Sinn Féin are pleased to be able to announce that the Party's bookshop is now 'open' on our internet site. With a wide selection of books available on Irish history, the labour and women's movement in Ireland along with a range of books on social and economic issues as well as an international



section it is the one stop shop for any student of Irish history and the republican movement. We also stock a range of t-shirts, badges posters and bumper stickers.

Credit card orders can be placed via the on-line order form or alternatively you can print out your order and post it with a cheque or International Money Order directly to the Shop in Dublin.

Sinn Féin's Home Page has changed its address since the last issue of Cairde. It is now located at www.irlnet.com/sinnfein.



GERRY ADAMS
Autobiography,
Before the Dawn is available from the On-Line bookshop for IR£18.00

Christmas message from GERRY ADAMS

A Chairde,

As we approach the Christmas season people throughout the world are looking back and asking what happened to the hope and optimism that was evident in August 1994.



When we embarked on our peace strategy we knew that it would be both difficult and risky, and that we would witness both advances and set-backs. John Hume and I have been working together to reconstruct the peace process since it collapsed in February and Sinn Féin have been in regular contact with the Irish government and the White House. But Sinn Féin cannot deliver anything unless the British government makes clear that there is to be a credible process of talks, without preconditions, on a broadly acceptable time-frame and with which everyone engage in initiatives to build confidence. In short it must be made clear that the British government will not treat any new IRA cessation in the same way that it treated the last one.

I remain convinced that an historic opportunity still exists if only John Major is prepared to take risks for peace. It is my firm view, in light of all the events of the past three years, since John Hume and I first identified the means by which this conflict could be permanently ended, that we all need to embrace a peace process in a spirit of good faith.

Cairde Sinn Féin is playing an invaluable role in all of this both in assisting the party financially and in spreading our message throughout the world. I ask you to continue in this support and to get your friends to join in the work of Cairde Sinn Féin.

Thank you for all assistance. I look forward to working with you in the coming year. and would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your loved ones a happy christmas and peaceful new year.

Is mise,

Gerry Adams

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Chatter Box

“If yesterday's shameful events in Portadown prove anything, it is that nationalists are living in Northern Ireland under sufferance. The state has abandoned them to the whim of unionist politicians, the Orange Order and loyalist bully boys ... it was a battle between the Orange Order and the law. The law lost.” - **Irish News editorial, 12 July**

“We must not treat entry to negotiations as a kind of certificate of approval to be bestowed only on the like-minded. Political dialogue and negotiations should more accurately be seen as a duty on all political leaders with any contribution to make.” **Dick**

Spring, 16 October

“Sinn Féin's position is for equality of treatment, that includes the right of citizens to chose their own political representation. At this very crucial time when everyone accepts that we are in a very critical period the onus is on the British government to meet with Sinn Féin to try and resolve these difficulties.” **Gerry Adams 20th November**

“It is especially important that Mr. Bruton and his colleagues recognise that their responsibilities towards the Irish nation extends beyond the 26 county state. It must also embrace nationalists trapped without their con-

sent in the north and who would seek to secure their identity within an Irish state.” **Martin McGuinness 14th November**

We're two months down the road, and we haven't even agreed the damn opening agenda - that's a problem.” **Monica McWilliams of the Women's Coalition, on the Stormont Talks, The Independent, Monday 9 September**

▲ THIS WAY UP ▲



**Pat McGeown
1956 - 1996**

ON HEARING OF Pat's untimely death, on October 1st, Republicans everywhere were deeply shocked and saddened. The depth of respect and goodwill felt towards him was reflected by the thousands who attended his funeral and by the many, many tributes paid to him from throughout the world.

Pat was first arrested at the age of 14. Two years later, in 1973, he was interned for 18 months. He was arrested again in 1975 and spent the next nine years in Long Kesh. Pat was well known throughout Ireland and the world for the courageous stand he took during the 1981 Hungerstrike when as a prisoner in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh he refused food for 43 days.

Following his release, despite his ill-health, Pat worked tirelessly for Sinn Féin and his constituents in Mid-Falls, Belfast. He played a major part in the development

of Sinn Féin's peace strategy and also spoke out on behalf of prisoners held in Ireland, England and the US. He was known to many people throughout the world, particularly in the US and England where he spoke extensively about political developments in Ireland.

Speaking at his funeral Sinn Féin's Gerry Kelly said: "We lay to rest a good Irish patriot whose life was dedicated to the people. Proudly working class, amongst other things he has been a soldier, politician, community worker and bridge builder. He devoted his entire life to the establishment of an independent Ireland because he believed, as we all do, that only by the removal of the British government and partition could the people of Ireland live in a just and equal society."

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News in brief . . . News in brief . . . News in brief . . . News in brief

SINN FÉIN ADDRESS UN

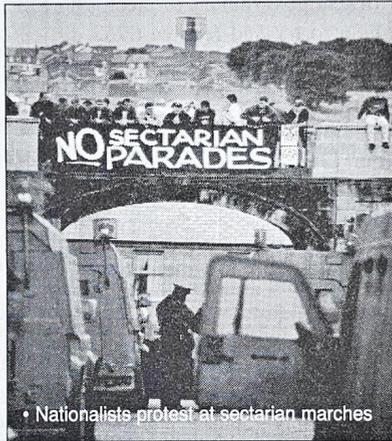
On 9th November Glór na nÓg, the Sinn Féin youth organisation, addressed the United Nations in New York when they made a presentation to the General Secretary and the ambassadors of UN member states. The UNICEF sponsored conference, 'Young Voices', was established to give a platform to young people living in conflict situations and involved 50 young people from 25 different countries. Representing Sinn Féin were Louise Beck, Connor Maskey and Jane Donaldson.

PAT KELLY RELEASED

Seriously ill republican prisoner, Pat Kelly, was granted "extended temporary release" from Portlaoise Prison last month. Pat, who is suffering from skin cancer, was given the release on medical grounds as his condition had worsened significantly in recent weeks. Commenting on the release Sinn Féin Vice President Pat Doherty said "It is with a sense of relief that I am able to welcome Pat Kelly's temporary release from Portlaoise jail for urgent medical treatment. However, it is a relief coupled with anger at the British government who delayed and prevaricated over allowing Pat Kelly access to treatment when he was in jail in England."

SF SUBMISSION TO PARADES REVIEW

Earlier this month Sinn Féin launched its submission to the British government appointed Review of Parades highlighting the need to reach agreement on codes of practice, based on principles of equality, which would apply to all contentious parades. The submission included the



• Nationalists protest at sectarian marches

following general principles:

- The right to march is a democratic right. It is fundamental to the civil and human rights of all citizens
- The right to march involves freedom of assembly and freedom of political expression
- The right to march is not absolute, it is a right which carries responsibilities; it is a right which

must not be misused

- In any society, especially a divided society, the right to march must be exercised with due regard for the rights of others
- The right to march does not extend to threatening the safety and security in their homes of those through whose districts the marches proceed
- Organisers of marches are duty bound to exercise their right to march in such a way that they do not cause offence to those through whose district the marches proceed
- Marches should not be organised through districts where it is obvious that the local community will find the marches offensive
- Where proposed marches are contentious the host community has a right to be consulted by march organisers. In this way the right to march is balanced against the mutual right of the host community to be consulted when marches are controversial
- Where local communities express their objection to a march and appoint representative bodies and spokespersons to express their views the organisers of marches have a duty to meet with these representatives

Copies of the submission are available from the Sinn Féin Head Office at 44

FUNDS NEEDED URGENTLY

Sinn Féin is again asking for your much needed financial assistance in developing the party and our peace strategy.

It is only through the efforts of Irish people home and abroad and supporters of Irish freedom worldwide that we can achieve our ultimate objective of a united and independent Ireland.

Name:

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Please find enclosed my donation of:

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