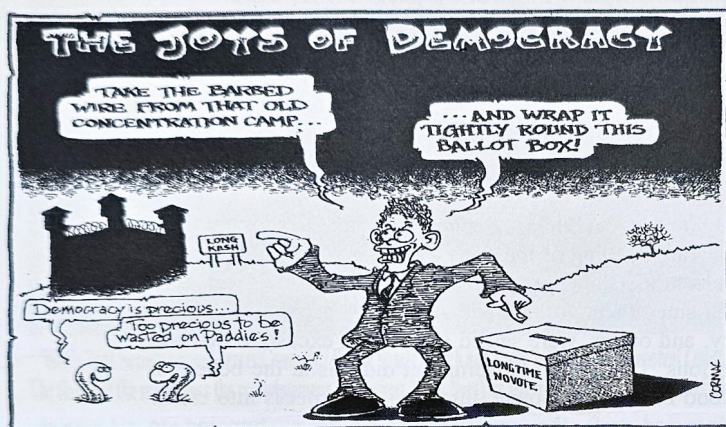


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## Newsletter of the Wolfe Tone Society

**Cancellation of elections has  
damaged confidence - Adams**



**The following is the text of an address by Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams speaking at a fund-raising dinner in Ballycastle.**

Sinn Fein's focus in the last five years has been to see the Good Friday Agreement fully and faithfully implemented. The Agreement was born out of decades of division and conflict, injustice and discrimination, and almost 30 years of war. It reflects a deep desire on the part of the vast majority of people on this island to build a just and lasting peace for everyone.

The substance of the Good Friday Agreement is about the rights and entitlements of citizens. It is about a new political dispensation on the island of Ireland and a new relationship between Ireland and Britain. It is about change - fundamental and deep-rooted change - including constitutional and institutional change - across all aspects of society.

Five years after the Agreement there has been progress. The institutions, when they functioned, did so effectively and were very popular. The reality is that for most people the situation has improved enormously. We have all come a long way in recent years. A problem, which was previously described as intractable, has proven not to be so.

But last October, almost one year ago, the British suspended the institutions for the 4th time. And then in May the British Prime Minister postponed and then cancelled the Assembly elections. These decisions and

### Events for your Diary:

**Mon. 22<sup>nd</sup> Sept 7pm:**  
Vigil in remembrance of Harry Stanley. at the Junction of Victoria Park Road and Fremont Street.

**Tues. 23rd Sept 6pm:**  
Anniversary mass for Vol. Diarmuid O'Neill at St Augustine's church, Fulham Palace rd. (nearest tube Hammersmith & 2 minute walk)

**Sat. 27th Sept 12 noon.**  
End the Occupation of Iraq and Palestine march through central London. There will be a WTS delegation on March.

**Sun. 28th Sept. from 3pm.**  
**Social at Mannions pub, (The Prince Arthur) Broad Lane, London N15 nearest tube Seven Sisters**  
All Ireland final day  
Tyrone v Armagh with social afterwards.  
Band: 5.30pm Celtic Baladeers who will be doing a live album on day for the Wolfe Tone Society.  
Admission free



the slap in the teeth delivered by Mr. Blair to republican efforts to help end the crisis has created a deep well of anger and frustration, especially among republicans.

The reality is that the roots of this current crisis lie in unionism's inability to come to terms with change, the willingness of the British government to acquiesce to a unionist veto and resistance from elements within the British system those who still think that the Special Branch, MI5 and those in the Force Research Unit and other agencies which colluded in the killing of citizens were doing a good job.



**Wolfe Tone Society picket in May against cancellation of elections in the North of Ireland**

Most immediately this impasse can be tracked to the decision by the Ulster Unionist Council last September when it adopted anti-agreement positions promoted by Jeffrey Donaldson's wing of the party and later endorsed by David Trimble. In part this was driven by the electoral challenge posed by the DUP. In effect anti-agreement forces have dominated the agenda since then. Allegations about IRA activities, while a genuine concern for the unionist constituency, and others, were seized upon as an excuse to demand and secure suspension of the political institutions. The British Government did this at the behest of the Ulster Unionists, and in breach of the Good Friday Agreement, throwing the process into crisis. This was wrong. The continued suspension of the political institutions remains a critical issue in the current situation.

However, central to the crisis is the failure, five years later, by the two governments to implement the Agreement. The core of the Agreement is about the rights and entitlements of citizens. These cannot be conditional. These rights are universal rights. They affect all citizens.

In the Good Friday Agreement these matters, that is policing, demilitarisation, human rights, the justice system, the rights of Irish language speakers, and the equality agenda, are stand-alone issues. These are issues to be resolved in their own right. They cannot be withheld or granted or subjected to a bartering process.

And as we have seen with the Human Rights Commission especially, those who are against change continue to try and hollow out the potential these bodies have to defend and protect the rights of citizens. Despite this the Good Friday Agreement, which was the culmination of an enormous collective effort by the two governments and the parties to tackle the causes of conflict, continues to hold the promise of a new beginning for everyone.

The Sinn Féin focus in the last five years has been to see the Agreement implemented, to deal with all of the issues, including that of arms; all arms and all armed groups. There has been progress. The institutions didn't function for very long but when they did they worked. And were very popular. Everyone would accept that for most people things are much better today than they were 5 or 10 years ago.

Mr. Blair's decision to cancel the elections has seriously undermined the political process and encouraged anti-agreement forces. The cancellation of the elections has also damaged confidence in the Agreement and in the credibility of the Agreement as an effective tool for change. This highlights the



fundamental problem that besets us - British policy in Ireland, even a benign policy - is an interference in Irish affairs.

Sinn Féin has been addressing all of this in our ongoing discussions with the two governments and the UUP. We have made it clear that it is our firm view that elections are the only way to create a new context, to inject a new dynamic into the process in which progress can be made. That needs the



British government providing a definitive, immutable date for elections. We need to see the right to vote restored and confidence put back into the process.

But setting a date will not of itself guarantee that progress will be made. Nor is making progress just down to republicans. It is a collective responsibility. It requires a collective approach in which all of the participants must play their part in putting the jigsaw back together again.

Wolfe Tone Society annual James Connolly / Bobby Sands March and Rally 24/5/03 through central London  
The theme of the march was the re-instatement of elections in the North of Ireland and Building a United Ireland

The Taoiseach has a huge responsibility in all of this. So too has Mr. Blair. He has

done a lot. He has to do more. He has to embrace the contribution that republicans have made to this process. We are not asking him for plaudits. We are asking him to build on the contribution we have single-mindedly built over a long period.

All of us have a lot to do, that includes Mr Trimble. And us. We will not dodge our responsibilities.

A primary objective of the peace process is the end to the conflict. It is also a clear objective of Sinn Féin's strategy. Sinn Féin is unequivocal about this. Furthermore we are wedded to the Mitchell Principles.

So what is to be done? The Good Friday Agreement has to be implemented in full.

Is the British government up for this? Time will tell.

Are the unionists up for it? There is a sizeable unionist constituency which is up for it. But it needs positive leadership. Those who claim to be in the leadership of pro-Agreement unionism need therefore to set a pro-Agreement agenda. They need to stop the agenda being set by rejectionist unionists both inside and outside the unionist party.

Sinn Féin is up for making this process work. Our activists and supporters are up for it.

Sinn Féin has a vision for the future. This goes beyond this current, troubled and protracted phase of Anglo-Irish relationships. It goes beyond present difficulties. It is far-sighted and strategic. Our democratic view is based upon the confident knowledge that the people of the island of Ireland, including the unionists, are entitled to govern ourselves and can do so better than anyone else.

Our republicanism is about change - fundamental, deep-rooted change. It's about empowering people



to make that change. That means we have to be agents of change. This is an enormous responsibility and challenge but it is a challenge that I believe this generation of Irish republicans will achieve.

Our vision is inclusive. We are totally committed to establishing an entirely new, democratic and harmonious future with our unionist neighbours. I know we have still a lot to learn about the unionists viewpoint, about their concerns, fears and aspirations. One of the failures thus far of this process is that a process of intelligent and pro active listening by all sides is not as advanced as it needs to be if we are to appreciate each others needs and difficulties.

This has to be corrected and the good work which has been done in this regard, including by Alex Maskey as Mayor of Belfast, needs to be built upon.

Winning unionists over to republicanism will not be easy, but it is not impossible. Many unionists are already very conscious of the way in which successive British governments and unionist leaderships used and abused and exploited them. Many look around at their unionist working class areas which face enormous social and economic problems, where families, the elderly and the young are weighed down with poverty, deprivation and a sense of despair. We have to reach out to them.

We have to show them that Sinn Fein - that Irish republicanism, always a generous philosophy - is their future. That together we can build a future of equals on this island that empowers, and enriches and cherishes all the children of the nation equally.

The people of this island have the right to be free. To live free from discrimination and inequality, without violence and conflict. Free to shape our own destiny - our own sovereignty. We have the right to be free from division, foreign occupation, and injustice. There will be a united Ireland. And our task, and that of all sensible Irish political leaders, should be to prepare for reunification.

That means building a republic worthy of the suffering and sacrifice of all of those who have gone before us. Republicans have stretched ourselves repeatedly to keep the peace process on track. The people have responded positively to this.

The people we represent have rights. So does everyone else on this island - unionist and others alike. We have been through pre-condition, after pre-condition, after pre-condition. The Good Friday Agreement saw a British government starting the work which its predecessors refused to contemplate. It saw an Irish government doing what successive Dublin governments refused to do. It led to unionism or a majority of it voting for an agreement with the rest of the people of our island.

We are all on a journey. It is always easier to begin a journey. The hard thing is to finish it. Sinn Fein is in this process to the end. We want the British government and the Irish government and the unionists to work with us and to finish the work we have all started. The length of the journey can be shortened and the ups and downs on the road can be smoothed out if we go at it collectively. If we do it together.

### Join the Wolfe Tone Society

Membership is open to all those who support our aims. If you would like to become a member of WTS, please complete the application below and return to WTS, BM Box 6191, London WC1N 3XX

**Membership fee: Individuals: £10 working, £5 non-working, Organisations: £20 per year. Cheques & PO made payable to Wolfe Tone Society**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Post code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

email: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_