



Friends of Sinn Féin (Canada) Les Ami(e)s du Sinn Féin (Canada)

GERRY ADAMS MAKES HISTORIC ADDRESS TO IRA



I want to speak directly to the men and women of Oglagh na hEireann, the volunteer soldiers of the Irish Republican Army. In time of great peril you stepped into the Bearna Baoil, the gap of danger. When others stood idly by, you and your families gave your all, in defence of a risen people and in pursuit of Irish freedom and unity. Against mighty odds you held the line and faced down a huge military foe, the British crown forces and their surrogates in the unionist death squads.

Eleven years ago the Army leadership ordered a complete cessation of military operations. This courageous decision was in response to proposals put forward by the Sinn Fein leadership to construct a peace process, build democratic politics and achieve a lasting peace.

Since then despite many provocations and setbacks the cessation has endured. And more than that, when elements within the British and Irish establishments and rejectionist unionism delayed progress, it was the IRA leadership which authorised a number of significant initiatives to enhance the peace process.

On a number of occasions commitments have been reneged on. These include commitments from the two governments.

The Irish Republican Army has kept every commitment made by its leadership. The most recent of these was last December when the IRA was prepared to support a comprehensive agreement. At that time the Army leadership said the implementation of this agreement would allow everyone, including the IRA, to take its political objectives forward by peaceful and democratic means.

That agreement perished on the rock of unionist intransigence. The shortsightedness of the two governments compounded the difficulties.

Since then there has been a vicious campaign of vilification against republicans, driven in the main by the Irish government. There are a number of reasons for this. The growing political influence of Sinn Fein is a primary factor. The unionists also for their part want to minimise the potential for

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FOSF Annual Golf Tournament

Caledon Golf & Country Club

Saturday, June 18; first tee off at 10 am.
Admission: \$140 includes golf, cart, prizes, dinner at Caledon G&C and fun guaranteed.

Directions from Toronto: 401 west to 410 North to Hart Lake Rd, left on Old Baseline Rd past Hwy 10 – course on the south side, (left)

To book, please contact
Bob Wynne at 905-790-0435 or 416-791-0779.

McDONALD IMPRESSES ON CANADIAN VISIT: TORONTO & MONTREAL

Mary Lou McDonald, Sinn Fein's newly elected Member of the European Parliament from Dublin, made an impressive Canadian debut at the Friends of Sinn Fein (Canada) annual dinner in Toronto on November 6. A large crowd of over 165 cheered Mary Lou into the hall after watching a short film on the electoral gains made by Sinn Fein, which included joyous celebrations of Mary Lou and her supporters at the announcement of her European victory. Mary Lou's speech was a detailed review of how Britain and the Unionists had stalled the peace process. She also set out the challenges facing Sinn Fein in crucial peace talks in December and thanked Canadians for their steadfast support.



*Eoin and Mary Lou with Pat Rooney, President,
Irish Canadian Aid & Cultural Society*

Mary Lou was joined on the tour by Sinn Fein's Director of European Affairs Eoin O Broin. Eoin, a former Belfast city councilor, spoke to the annual dinner audience about the situation in North Belfast. O'Broin detailed the daily violence faced by his constituents and then, in a short but powerful remark, connected it all to Britain's partition of Ireland.

The previous night, Mary Lou and Eoin attended a concert at the 360 Club in the Queen Street Area of Toronto. The Mahones headlined an evening of music from several musicians and bands, attracting a crowd of over 125 young supporters of Sinn Fein.

Mary Lou McDonald and Eoin O'Broin received a warm welcome at an FOSF reception in

Montreal on November 7, 2004. The two Sinn Fein representatives began their hectic day of activities by a visit to the Black Rock, a huge commemorative stone to 6,000 Irish who died of fever in Montreal after debarking from famine ships. The Black Rock is one of the earliest memorials to the Irish who died fleeing the Great Hunger in Ireland in the 1840s.

They then did an exclusive interview with *La Presse*, Quebec's leading French language daily, followed by a lunch meeting with Francine Lalonde MP the Foreign Affairs critic for the Bloc Quebecois. Madame Lalonde was briefed on the current impasse in the peace process and expressed a willingness to work on issues around the Good Friday Agreement with other members of parliament.

Then it was on to a packed reception at Hurley's. Demonstrating the wide range of support in Montreal for Republican objectives, the two were formally welcomed by Martin LeMay, a Montreal city councilor and deputy leader of the Vision Montreal Party, Manon Perron, executive member of the Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, Elsie Lefebvre, MNA for the Parti Quebecois, and former Solicitor General Warren Allmand. Mary Lou was introduced by Michael Kenneally, the honorary consul for Ireland in Montreal.

The new Euro MP described the recent electoral growth of Sinn Fein and stressed the importance of continued international support for the Good Friday Agreement. Eoin O'Broin then gave a moving account of what life is still like for nationalists in areas like Ardoyne. Many present were shocked to hear of the slow pace of progress on the ground in the North of Ireland and offered to help build support for Sinn Fein in Canada. The event's success demonstrates a strong level of solidarity with Ireland in Montreal and bodes well for upcoming FOSF activities.

JUDGE CORY SLAMS BRITISH OVER INQUIRY

Retired Canadian Supreme Court Judge Peter Cory has slammed new British legislation which will undermine any inquiry into the 1989 murder of Belfast human rights lawyer Patrick Finucane. Judge Cory had previously recommended that the British establish an independent inquiry into state collusion with the loyalist killers of Mr. Finucane. Judge Cory had been asked by the British and Irish governments to review the Finucane killing, and other high profile cases, as part of the peace process. The British stalled on Judge Cory's recommendations and only relented after considerable international pressure, including from 11 Canadian MPs. However, the British then proceeded to introduce legislation which would severely limit the independence of any future inquiry and the material to which it would have access. In March, Pat's widow Geraldine Finucane spoke to a US Congressional Committee about her concerns with the legislation. In a letter to the committee, Judge Cory set out clearly his opposition to the British plan.

This is an edited version of Judge Cory's letter:

"Dear chairman Smith,

"The proposed legislation pertaining to the public inquiries is unfortunate to say the least. First, it must be remembered that when the Weston Park Accord was signed, the signatories would have had only one concept of a public inquiry, namely, it would be conducted pursuant to the 1921 Public Inquiry Act.

"To change the ground rules at this late date seems unfair. It seems as well to be unnecessary, since the security of the realm would be ensured by the courts if an issue arose in a true public inquiry.

"Further, it seems to me that the proposed new act would make a meaningful inquiry impossible. The commissions would be working in an impossible situation. For example, the Minister, the actions of whose Ministry was to be reviewed by the inquiry, would have the authority to thwart the efforts of the inquiry at every stage. It really creates an Alice in Wonderland situation.

"There have been references in the press to an international judicial membership in any Inquiry. If the new Act were to become law, I would advise all Canadian Judges to decline an appointment in light of the impossible situation they would be

facing. In fact, I cannot contemplate any self-respecting Canadian judge accepting an appointment to an inquiry constituted under the new proposed act.

"Yours sincerely, Peter Cory."



ARD FHEIS 2005

Friends of Sinn Fein (Canada) board members Alan McConnell, Patrick Totton and Liam McKee (seen here with Martin McGuinness and Bairbre de Brun) led a group of Canadians to the 100th Anniversary Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in Dublin this March. The Canadians were welcomed to the Conference prior to Gerry Adams' Presidential Address by the party's North American Director Rita O'Hare.

CALGARY POSTPONEMENT

Unfortunately, the Friend of Sinn Fein (Canada) dinner scheduled for March 18 in Calgary had to be postponed. In light of the political and media attacks on Sinn Fein, it was decided that both Martin McGuinness and Gerry Adams could not be out of Ireland at such a critical time in the peace process. We plan to re-schedule Martin's visit in the near future.

Adams Address (from p. 1)

change, not only on the equality agenda but on the issues of sovereignty and ending the union.

The IRA is being used as the excuse by them all not to engage properly in the process of building peace with justice in Ireland. For over thirty years the IRA showed that the British government could not rule Ireland on its own terms. You asserted the legitimacy of the right of the people of this island to freedom and independence. Many of your comrades made the ultimate sacrifice. Your determination, selflessness and courage have brought the freedom struggle towards its fulfilment.

That struggle can now be taken forward by other means. I say this with the authority of my office as President of Sinn Fein. In the past I have defended the right of the IRA to engage in armed struggle. I did so because there was no alternative for those who would not bend the knee, or turn a blind eye to oppression, or for those who wanted a national republic.

Now there is an alternative.

I have clearly set out my view of what that alternative is. The way forward is by building political support for republican, democratic objectives across Ireland and by winning support for these goals internationally. I want to use this occasion therefore to appeal to the leadership of Oglaihn na hEireann to fully embrace and accept this alternative. Can you take courageous initiatives which will achieve your aims by purely political and democratic activity?

I know full well that such truly historic decisions can only be taken in the aftermath of intense internal consultation. I ask that you initiate this as quickly as possible.

Sinn Fein has demonstrated the ability to play a leadership role as part of a popular movement

towards peace, equality and justice. We are totally committed to ending partition and to creating the conditions for unity and independence. Sinn Fein has the potential and capacity to become the vehicle for the attainment of republican objectives.

Equality is our watchword. The catalyst for much of this change is the growing support for republicanism.

Of course, those who oppose change are not going to simply roll over. It will always be a battle a day between those who want maximum change and those who want to maintain the status quo. But if republicans are to prevail, if the peace process is to be successfully concluded and Irish sovereignty and re-unification secured, then we have to set the agenda - no one else is going to do that.

So, I also want to make a personal appeal to all of you – the women and men volunteers who have remained undefeated in the face of tremendous odds. Now is the time for you to step into the Bearnna Baoil again; not as volunteers risking life and limb but as activists in a national movement towards independence and unity.

Such decisions will be far-reaching and difficult. But you never lacked courage in the past. Your courage is now needed for the future.

It won't be easy. There are many problems to be resolved by the people of Ireland in the time ahead. Your ability as republican volunteers, to rise to this challenge will mean that the two governments and others cannot easily hide from their obligations and their responsibility to resolve these problems.

Our struggle has reached a defining moment. I am asking you to join me in seizing this moment, to intensify our efforts, to rebuild the peace process and decisively move our struggle forward.

BECOME A SUPPORTER

We seek the assistance of supporters across Canada. You can help by organising visits by Sinn Féin leaders and disseminating information about Sinn Féin and the Irish peace process. We also seek financial donations to help us in our work. Donors of \$50.00 or more are recognised as Supporters of FOSF (Canada). To help us build support for Sinn Féin and the peace process, please complete and return this form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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