

## **Stormont Election Manifesto, 2007**

*Republican Sinn Féin election Manifesto, Feabhra/February 2007*

Republican Sinn Féin is taking the opportunity of the present election in the Six Counties to put before the electorate a positive programme for an end to English rule in Ireland. We seek national independence for ALL 32 Counties of our country.

Believing the Stormont Assembly to be an obstacle to Irish national liberation, our candidates will not, when elected, take part in that body. They will act as spokespersons at home and abroad for those opposed to English rule here and make themselves available to sit in an All-Ireland parliament of the future.

For close on four decades Republican Sinn Féin has adhered to the noble concept of ÉIRE NUA – a totally New Ireland of the four provinces, including a nine-county Ulster. With optimum devolution of power and decision-making to strong regional boards and local councils, every section of our people would have maximum control over their own future based on local majorities. A community of communities is our aim.

Our social and economic programme, SAOL NUA, A New Way of Life, is based on Republican, Democratic Socialist, environmental and self-reliance principles. We seek an end to exploitation of humankind by any section and wish to “cherish all the children of the nation equally”.

In particular we reject English police, English courts, English laws in Ireland. Those who accept these institutions here betray the many generations of Irish people who have struggled valiantly for long-downtrodden humanity.

What the Provisional leadership is doing is in direct conflict with the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic and with the Declaration of Independence of the First (All-Ireland) Dáil. Their recent decisions also conflict with the high ideals for which so many men and women of all creeds have struggled, suffered and died over the centuries.

To approve of and work the institutions designed deliberately by a foreign power to subjugate and hold us down as a people is to strengthen English rule here and weaken our effort for national liberation.

A previous generation smashed Stormont. Efforts are now under way to undo the gains which were made then and Stormont is to be re-imposed on us. Vote Republican Sinn Féin and smash Stormont again.

No to English police, courts, laws and institutions; Yes to English withdrawal, Yes to ÉIRE NUA (A New Ireland), Yes to real All-Ireland democracy. People of the Six Counties! Do not give away what earlier generations won for us by their sacrifices. Stand by the Republican prisoners who are a living reproach to those who allowed the political status won by Bobby Sands and his comrades on hunger strike to be ended under the Stormont Agreement of 1998.

Remember an English government more than a century ago attempted to “kill Home Rule with kindness”. Those who came before us did not allow that to succeed. You, today, must not permit the advances already made to be given away by those who are selling us out step by step to the English government.

To those of the Unionist persuasion we would say that this new Stormont arrangement can only lead to continuing instability which is not in the interest of any section of the community. We would ask them to look again at our ÉIRE NUA proposals for a four-province federal Ireland which, we believe, is the blueprint for a true and lasting peace in Ireland.

The 1916 Proclamation declared “the right of the Irish people to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible”. Stand by that right in this election. Vótáil Republican Sinn Féin. Seasaimis leis an bPoblacht Uile-Éireann.

**East Derry: Michael McGonigle**

MICHAEL MCGONIGLE is living in the Dungiven area of Co Derry with his wife and family.

He served as a Sinn Féin councillor from 1985-1989 on Limavady Council, having topped the poll. He has a distinguished record of service in the area. He is also an enthusiastic supporter of Gaelic games, and is the proud father of Geoffrey McGonigle who represented the county team in both football and hurling.

In 1986 Michael took a principled stand against the reformist actions of those who still seek to usurp the honourable name of Sinn Féin. He has been active in the ongoing campaign for political status for the Republican prisoners in Maghaberry jail. Political status signed away

under the Stormont Agreement of 1998 and the criminalisation of Republican POWs was cemented by the St Andrews Agreement in 2006.

He is currently Treasurer of Comhairle Uladh (Ulster Executive) of Republican Sinn Féin and will be contesting election as the only true Sinn Féin candidate in East Derry.

### **West Belfast: Geraldine Taylor**

GERALDINE TAYLOR has been involved with Republican politics for over 30 years in Belfast. Born Geraldine Convery, she married Tom Taylor in 1964 and they have three children, two girls and one boy.

While Geraldine and Tom were interned from 1972 their youngest daughter made her communion. At the time her mother was looking after the children. Tom was later sentenced to two term of imprisonment and Geraldine kept the family together. She has operated an 'open door' policy at her home for Republicans down the years. Much of her involvement has been with Republican Prisoners and she was very active and to the fore in the H-Blocks campaign in the 1970s and 80s.

Once again she is active in her campaign for political status for political prisoners. The men in Maghaberry jail find themselves fighting to regain the gains made by the hunger strikes of 1980/81. Political status signed away under the Stormont Agreement of 1998 and the criminalisation of Republican POWs was cemented by the St Andrews Agreement in 2006.

Geraldine is a member of the Ard Comhairle of Sinn Féin Poblachtach (Republican Sinn Féin) since the Provisionals broke with the Republican Movement in 1986 when they recognised Leinster house as the legitimate parliament in the 26-Counties.

She wants to see an All-Ireland Republic under the ÉIRE NUA programme, free from British rule. The recognition of British police, courts or law in Ireland is not on her agenda. She is asking you to vote to uphold Republican principles and to "break the connection with England".

### **Fermanagh/South Tyrone: Michael McManus**

MICHAEL McMANUS lives in the Knocks area of Lisnaskea, with his wife and family. He has been a Republican activist throughout his lifetime.

He was imprisoned in Long Kesh for his Republican activities and participated in the burning of Long Kesh in 1974 in protest at conditions. Amongst his comrades at that time was the late Bobby Sands.

Following his release from Long Kesh, Michael continued his involvement in the Republican Movement, and when others, led by Gerry Adams, left the movement in 1986, Michael remained loyal to the Republic.

He is currently a member of the Ard Comhairle of Republican Sinn Féin and is chairperson of Comhairle Uladh (Ulster Executive). He has been a lifelong member of the GAA as both a player and an administrator.

### **West Tyrone: Joe O'Neill**

JOE O'NEILL lives with his wife Mary in Bundoran, Co Donegal, both have their roots on Co Tyrone. He comes from a strong Republican family and joined the Republican Movement in 1955.

His father, Frank O'Neill, was in the East Tyrone IRA and was one of those who mobilised on Easter weekend in 1916. In the Westminster Mid-Ulster election of 1955 and by-election of 1956, Joe canvassed, and was the driver, for Tom Mitchell who, along with Phil Clarke, was elected on an abstentionist ticket.

Joe was a member of the Ballyshannon Town Commissioners from 1963 to 1967 and Bundoran Town Council from 1974 until 1998. He served for over 30 years in local government. He is a strong supporter of the GAA and played football in his younger days for Aodh Ruadh in Ballyshannon, and he supports both Donegal and Tyrone. On Christmas Eve in 1971 Joe, along with two others was arrested in Ballyshannon. Their case was one of the first to be tried in the Special non-jury Court in Dublin. He was arrested again at Christmas 1972 with his friend Dáithí Ó Conaill in the summer of 1976. Following the Republican Sinn Féin Ard-Fheis of 1998 he was once again arrested and held for 72-hours.

In 1969 and 1986 when the Stickies and Provisionals respectively abandoned the Republican Movement, Joe remained true to his Republican principles. In 1986 he was part of the Caretaker Executive which protected the Republican Movement and went on to become joint National Treasurer of Republican Sinn Féin — a position he holds to this day. Joe is once again active in the campaign for political status for Republican prisoners in Maghaberry jail, including Stephen and Alan Daly from Tyrone. Political status was signed away under

the terms of the Stormont Agreement of 1998, and the criminalisation of Republican POWs was cemented by the St. Andrew's Agreement in 2006.

Joe is asking you to vote to uphold Republican principles and, to quote Wolfe Tone, to "break the connection with England".

### **Mid-Ulster: Brendan McLaughlin**

BRENDAN McLAUGHLIN was born in 1951 to John and Kathleen, at the Bolie near Greysteel in Co. Derry. He comes from a Republican family, and has two brothers and a sister. Brendan joined the Republican Movement in 1969. He was arrested and held a number of times, and had his house raided. From August 1972 Brendan went on the run. His mother died on Christmas Eve of 1973. However Brendan was unable to attend the funeral due to the presence of the British Crown Forces. In 1974 he was sentenced to four months in Portlaoise for failing to account for his movements. He was released in August of that year after serving three months – just two days after the great escape.

In May of 1976 the British Crown Forces finally caught up with Brendan outside Greysteel. He was arrested along with his brother Michael and Tom McFeely from the Foreglen. After nine months on remand in Crumlin Road he was sentenced to twelve years imprisonment for possession of a .22 rifle. Brendan was initially housed in H2 upon his transfer to Long Kesh – where he immediately went on the Blanket protest. He was subsequently assaulted by the screws.

Within a couple of months Brendan was transferred to H5, where he was in an adjoining cell to that of Joe McDonnell. In May of 1981 Brendan replaced Francis Hughes on hunger strike. Roughly a week later he suffered a stomach ulcer and was removed to the prison hospital where Patsy O'Hara and Ray McCreesh lay dying. Brendan was subsequently removed to the military wing of Musgrave Park hospital in Belfast. He was forced to come off hunger strike after fourteen days, having been given just 24-hours to live. After a number of months under armed guard, Brendan was returned to the H-Blocks after the conclusion of the hunger strike.

Brendan never took a visit whilst in Long Kesh. He was released on the 5th November, 1984, having served eight-and-a-half years owing to lost remission. Just five months after his release, Brendan lost his brother Michael – who had been out collecting for the Prisoners' Dependants' Fund. He started a band in honour of his brother – the Michael McLaughlin Memorial Flute Band. This was where he met his ex-wife, with whom he has two sons (Michael and Brendan jnr.).

In April of 1999 Brendan suffered a stroke, and has been confined to a wheelchair ever since.

**Upper Bann: Barry Toman**

BARRY TOMAN is a 28-year old scaffolder who has lived his entire life within the Kilwilkie estate in Lurgan, Co. Armagh. He comes from a staunch Republican family. Barry's father – an active Republican all his life – was interned and also served a prison sentence. Eugene Toman is a family friend.

Barry himself served a six-year sentence in Maghaberry for possession of explosives with intent. He is currently active in the campaign for full political status for Republican POWs in Maghaberry Gaol.

A vote for Barry is a vote against Stormont and a vote against English rule in Ireland. He opposes the restyled RUC and – once elected – will not take his seat in Stormont.