

# S I N N F É I N T O D A Y

Sinn Féin has a leading role in the struggle to establish a 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic. Its role is vital to achieve that goal and therefore it is just as important as the role of the volunteers engaged in armed struggle - neither can win without the other. What is this vital role that Sinn Féin has?

The role of Sinn Féin can best be discussed under these headings - the 6 counties, the 26 counties and the 32 counties.

## THE ROLE OF SINN FÉIN IN THE 6 COUNTIES

By its presence on the ground and in elections Sinn Féin has challenged the S.D.L.P. voice as the voice representing the wishes of the nationalist people. This is of great importance in the propaganda war - and guerilla war is really a struggle for the hearts and minds of the people - so it is vital to speak out in support of the armed struggle. On the international level the Sinn Féin electoral victories have destroyed the British strategy of criminalisation and normalisation. The Hunger Strike made this possible but without Sinn Féin electoral victories the effects of the Hunger Strikes would be quickly forgotten - think back to the emotional wave that followed Bloody Sunday and how we failed to harness it.

Sinn Féin spokespersons from the 6 counties are constantly giving interviews on T.V. and to magazines and papers from all over the world, explaining the situation in Ireland and exposing the lies of British and Dublin propaganda about it being a sectarian conflict. This work is very important both at home and abroad. An unchallenged British account of events in the 6 counties will eventually be accepted as the truth - even by Irish people in Britain or the U.S.A. as well as the ones in the 26 Counties who are only too eager to believe that the shameful policy of collaboration is right.

Another and no less important result of a strong Sinn Féin presence on the ground in that the isolation of the I.R.A. is made impossible. The guerilla "fish" must have water to swim in. That means that the British strategy of isolating the republicans is a way of removing possible new recruits, new billets, new safe houses, new sources of intelligence information. The strategy would work only for the presence of Sinn Féin who constantly boost the moral of the people and educate them in Republican thinking about the need for a free Ireland if there is ever to be peace or prosperity.

The presence of Sinn Féin elected representatives on the Councils in the 6 Counties has effectively ended local government because of the Loyalist reaction to them. This destabilises the British presence and it produced the Hillsborough Deal. The Deal is an attempt to stabilise a rapidly worsening situation for them by drawing in the S.D.L.P. and Dublin behind the British in looking for an internal political solution. In

order to do that the S.D.L.P. must have some minor concessions - but the Loyalist will not surrender one inch. So Sinn Féin has effectively destabilised the whole thing. Of course it could only have been done in the situation created and maintained by the armed struggle.

#### SINN FÉIN IN THE 26 COUNTIES

The Republican ideal in the 26 counties was being lost to the new generation under a barrage of Section 31 propaganda revisionist history and propaganda from the pulpits of many churches. Republicans were becoming isolated and people brainwashed into the sort of thinking that "Northeners" are from another country. "National" means 26 counties and that the I.R.A. are "terrorists" the same as groups in Europe who have no popular support. Sinn Féin by its very presence challenges these lies and provides an alternative source of news and information about the 6 counties. Selling the AP/RN is a vital part of this, as are the various campaigns about prisoners, extradition etc.

By getting involved in local issues and politics Sinn Féin come into contact with ordinary people who they can help and influence. This influence is exerted as far as possible by helping people organise to secure their own rights. They learn the power of organisation and the basis of being involved in decision making and how to confront authority.

By being involved in elections Sinn Féin leaders in the area become known and respected. This is the basic move in countering the barrage of propaganda and in fighting back. As we build an election fighting capability we are having more influence on the 26 counties. This happens in two ways, first we create a climate in which pro British propaganda is seen for the lies that it is and those political figures who indulge in it are seen as anti-national and pro-Brit, second in that there is a gut nationalist feeling among the Irish people and once we claim their allegiance other parties like Fianna Fail are forced to take a less collaborationist stand if they are not to lose support to us. The net effect is to produce a more nationalist outlook even in political parties or organisations like trade unions who might have otherwise taken a Workers Party line.

#### SINN FÉIN IN THE 32 COUNTIES

The British will be defeated by the sheer length and broadness of the struggle. When they finally run out of options they will go, but what they leave behind depends on how well Sinn Féin have used the time and opportunities to build a 32 County strong disciplined party. If Sinn Féin fail to build such a party then the British may never go, or in going they will leave behind a government built in their own image, defending the same interests as theirs - a 32 County Free State. We could easily win the war but lose the peace.

We need a country wide strong progressive party which will produce the well known leaders who we need in fighting an election. What is so vital about an election? The election that all our efforts are geared towards is the vital all Ireland election which will follow a British

withdrawal. The election will be for delegates to draw up the political, social and economic shape of the new 32 County Ireland. It will only be a 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic if enough delegates who think that way are elected. That will be the day of Decisions for the whole struggle down all these years. All the suffering and sacrifice of volunteers, prisoners, relatives, supporters and the ordinary Irish people can result in a great victory - if Sinn Féin does its work now.

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