

Issue 9
April 2012



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Joint FM Robinson wants IRA prisoners to tell their stories at Maze shrine

TUV Leader Jim Allister has led the criticism of Joint FM Robinson after he lauded the merits of an IRA shrine at the former Maze prison site.

TUV Leader Jim Allister stated:

"DUP Leader Peter Robinson this month took to lauding the Provo Project at the Maze as the creation of a 'tourist mecca'. It will be a mecca alright, but for terror tourists; there to wallow in and glorify the IRA's vile campaign.

1000 Embryos per year disregarded in Northern Ireland

TUV Leader Jim Allister has questioned why in Northern Ireland the Health Minister permits access by same sex couples to publicly funded IVF treatment.

Commenting Jim Allister stated:

"Childlessness can be a great source of anxiety and distress for many couples. Hence, the great help which publicly funded IVF treatment has brought to many. But, I do have to question why public funds are spent on affording this service to same sex couples, who by the very nature of their lifestyle choice have determined they are not interested in natural procreation. Yet, the public are expected to pay for expensive IVF treatment to facilitate reproduction for same sex couples.

"In my view publicly funded fertility services should not be available to lesbian couples.

A Mecca for Terror Tourists

"The key to the real intent is found not just in the siting of the Centre at the Maze but the strategic incorporation of the IRA citadel prison buildings into the centre, which Sinn Fein are already boasting will be open for 'story-telling', shorthand for the glorification of terrorism. Hence the abiding accuracy of the acronym, The Maze Shrine.

"Sinn Fein's insistence that they would support a Conflict Transformation Centre only on the Maze site is confirmation of the intent. If needed, such a centre could have been built elsewhere on a neutral green field site, but, instead, it must be at the Maze where it will be blighted and branded as a

shrine to terrorism.

"The 180 degree turn which the DUP has perfected on the Maze Shrine, from the days when they rejected a stadium because of such connotations, is telling testimony to the fact that what Sinn Fein wants, Sinn Fein gets.

"The softly, softly comfort Peter Robinson was affording IRA/Sinn Fein all weekend is indicative of a leader and a party that has abandoned all their roots in pursuit of power, as they embrace the 'whatever it takes' philosophy of working with Sinn Fein."

"When I recently pressed the Health Minister, Edwin Poots, on this issue I found his answer disappointing. While he said he will give 'consideration' to reviewing the access criteria for fertility services when NICE publishes updated guidance in July 2012, there is no commitment to act, which falls short of what I expected from this minister and his party.

"Publicly funded fertility services is supposed to be available to couples who have a medical cause for infertility. Choosing a same sex lifestyle is hardly a 'medical cause for infertility'!

"I was also surprised to discover that approximately 1000 embryos per year are being discarded in Northern Ireland within the IVF programme.

"As I identified in the recent Assembly debate, there are

troubling ethical issues flowing from IVF. Of most significance is the destruction of unused embryo's. A human embryo is, biologically, a living human being at the earliest stage of its development, Of course, it is dependent on the mother to nurture it and give it life, but, genetically, it is a distinct organism, different from both the egg and the sperm from which it grew. It does, in effect, need nothing more than the nourishment of the mother to grow into a recognizable human being. Thus, the destruction of a thousand embryos a year in Northern Ireland is a troubling issue."



Jim Allister MLA has questioned if embryos are safe in the hands of the Executive

"Many people admire his virtual one-man opposition stance at Stormont. ... There is no doubt that he is a thorn in the side of the Sinn Fein/DUP coalition. His views are not entirely negative, indeed they could be said to be good for the democratic process here by upsetting the cosy cartel at the heart of government."

-Belfast Telegraph
editorial

"Jim Allister MLA claimed the destruction of a thousand embryos a year in Northern Ireland is troubling The question is, ought we to establish here in Malta best practice criteria in IVF, derived from the legal and practical experiences on the same subject, as carried out in Northern Ireland"

- Malta Independent
criticises NI Executive's
destruction of 4000
embryos

Allister Calls for Removal of IRA Flags in Rasharkin

TUV leader Jim Allister has called for the removal of IRA and INLA flags in Rasharkin.

It is believed that the flags of the INLA and Youth IRA were erected along Main Street on Tuesday night and were erected in order to intimidate local residents in advance of the marching season.

Commenting on the latest attempt to terrorise the local community Jim Allister stated:

"I have investigated complaints from a number of Rasharkin residents and can I

confirm that both the 'Starry Plough' flag and the 'Sunburst' flags erected on a lamppost along Main Street on 24th April.

I understand that the 'Starry Plough' flag has been adopted by the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and that the 'Sunburst' flag represents the youth wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Both organisations represented are described as proscribed terrorist groups in the UK and are an affront to the law abiding citizens of Rasharkin.

These flags have been clearly erected to increase sectarian tensions in advance of the marching season and to intimidate both Nationalist and Unionist residents who would oppose the sectarian agenda of those intent on the ghettoization of the village.

I have reported the matter to the PSNI and requested that the offensive flags be removed without delay to prevent the further deterioration of community relations within Rasharkin village."

Allister meets Michelin management

North Antrim MLA Jim Allister has welcomed the opportunity to spend some hours with the senior UK management of Michelin to discuss issues relevant to the future of their Ballymena plant.

Commenting Jim Allister said:-

"The commitment and effort of senior management, along with the hard work of the labour force, is seeing Michelin through these more difficult times.

"However, one issue on which Michelin in Northern Ireland is facing extra pressure is our higher energy prices. Michelin demonstrated that in contrast to its GB plants, energy costs for its Ballymena operation are

up to 50% higher. This is contributed to by the wrong-headed energy policy being pursued by the Stormont Executive. The facts are indisputable: since the Executive committed us to the all-island Single Electricity Market our prices have diverged from the lower GB prices to align more with the higher ROI prices. Why, because in large measure we are subsidising the Republic's highly inefficiently and costly generation and transmission systems.

"Competitive energy prices are imperative for a high consumption operator like Michelin. Thus, every penny in difference in the unit price of

electricity makes a huge difference. These higher electricity prices are placing Michelin at Ballymena at a disadvantage in its internal competition with other Michelin plants and external competition with other tyre producing companies.

"I commend Michelin, which has been a lynchpin of the local economy for 42 years, for its commitment to North Antrim and look forward to it continuing to provide vital and worthwhile employment, but DETI and the Utility Regulator must help by facing up to the present regime of unbearable energy prices."

IRA Gunman fires shots over INLA man's coffin

Jim Allister has condemned an open display of paramilitarism at a recent IRA funeral.

Jim Allister stated:

"A report in the Irish News this month on the funeral of Seamus Coyle in Londonderry raises at least two interesting questions, the political inconvenience of which means they will probably go unanswered.

1. How was it possible for an

open display of paramilitarism, including the firing of shots from a rifle, to go unchallenged by the police, given their means of knowledge that such a funeral was intended?

2. Where does the revelation that the gunman who fired the shots was a member of the IRA, leave the claims that that organisation has been stood down and its weapons decommissioned?

The lawless scenes at this funeral, the inactivity of the police and the reported attendance of Sinn Fein representatives, as well as the central role for an IRA gunman, raise questions which I will now pose to the police and the Justice Minister, but doubtless neither will face up to the issues raised by this paramilitary funeral."

Allister comments on Attorney General row

Jim Allister MLA has questioned if the Attorney General can still command the confidence of the Northern Ireland Executive after initiating court proceedings against former Secretary of State Peter Hain.

In a statement Jim Allister argued:

"The independence of the judiciary is a vital part of our constitutional equilibrium. A consequential convention is that politicians do not ascribe inappropriate motives to judges in making their independent decisions.

"Politicians rushing in to defend one of their own, who spectacularly disrespected the convention, is not a healthy or edifying spectacle.

"It is foolish to talk about judges having the facility to initiate defamation proceedings, because the nature and constraint of their office effectively makes this an impracticable option.

"It is part of the duty of the Attorney General to protect both the independence and the office of the judiciary, and to do so while himself acting independently. Of course, the

steps he takes to do that can themselves be questioned and criticised, but some seem to think he should turn a blind eye to audacious assault on the probity of a senior judge. In this I believe they are wrong.

"However, the key political question which now emerges from the attack on the Attorney General by the Finance Minister is whether the Attorney still enjoys the confidence of the Executive and Joint First Ministers who appointed him. The public are entitled to know this. Thus, this is an issue I will seek to



Jim Allister demands the removal of IRA flags in Rasharkin

Allister Welcomes ASDA Apology on Union Flag

TUV Leader Jim Allister MLA has welcomed an apology from ASDA regarding the removal of products in Northern Ireland with a Union flag symbol.

Mr Allister wrote to ASDA after receiving a number of complaints emanating from the Antrim and Coleraine stores.

Commenting Mr Allister stated:

"I welcome the clear apology from ASDA. I understand that

a small number of republicans had complained to some local stores about the sale of items which carried a Union flag and the store subsequently removed them from sale.

"It was a ridiculous decision to remove any items associated with British culture because of narrow-minded and petty complaints from Republicans. Northern Ireland is part of the UK and no one should have any issue with the flag of our nation.

"I am therefore delighted that ASDA have assured me that in the run up to the Olympics and Jubilee "you won't be able to move for the British branded products" in ASDA stores.

"I hope other retailers follow their example and make 2012 a year in which we celebrate our rich heritage and culture as part of the United Kingdom".



ASDA confirm that jubilee products will be on sale in NI stores

The Maze Agenda

TUV Leader Jim Allister has expressed amazement that the First Minister is unable to give an assurance that displays at the 'Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Centre' at the Maze site will not describe people convicted of terrorist offences as political prisoners.

"What value is all the soothing talk that, despite retention of the IRA citadel buildings, the Maze will not turn into an IRA Shrine, when even an

assurance as basic as this cannot be given by the Joint First Ministers. Whether the Maze's inmates are recognised as what they were, duly convicted terrorists, or are excused as 'political prisoners' is a seminal consideration.

"The inability of the First Minister to give even this basic assurance bodes ill for what is really intended at the Maze. I have no doubt that the IRA/Sinn Fein agenda sees the

Maze Project as part of their re-write of history and that it will indeed become a place for the glorification of their wicked terrorists. Hence, the abject folly of this project and the blight which it will bring to the worthwhile elements of the Maze regeneration."



Joint FM McGuinness is named at Smithwick Tribunal

Joint FM Enjoys Protected Status as Speaker Rules out Debate

Jim Allister MLA has been stifled in an attempt to instigate a debate following claims that joint FM McGuinness authorised the murder's of senior police officers Breen and Buchanan. The claim was made during a sitting of the Smithwick Tribunal.

TUV Leader Jim Allister explained:

"In any normal democracy evidence from a judicial tribunal that the deputy First Minister had authorised two infamous cross-border murders, would provoke immediate debate in the local legislature and demands for removal from office of such a person.

"Yet, though McGuinness was named at the Smithwick Tribunal as having authorised the murder plot in which senior police officers Breen and Buchanan died, Stormont slumbers on immune from the obvious implications. Those who installed the Provo commander in office sit in embarrassed silence when I attempt to raise the issue and the Provo Deputy Speaker rules it out of order.

"This is most serious evidence, namely that McGuinness as OC Northern Command - at a time when he would pretend he had left the IRA -

personally authorised the Breen and Buchanan murders. Instead of him now being arrested and questioned, as he ought to be, his protected status prevails, because the so called process is now more important than truth or justice."

Jim Allister has kept the focus on the issue by tabling an Assembly motion.

The motion reads:

"This Assembly, concerned by recent evidence to the Smithwick Tribunal, calls on the deputy First Minister to truthfully explain his full role in the IRA."

Commenting on the motion Jim Allister stated:

"I would call on other unionist MLAs, who profess concern about this week's developments, to add their names to this motion. It's time there was a concerted effort to flush out McGuinness. He has been let off the hook for far too long. If this was anywhere else in the world the local parliament would be talking about little else, but in Stormont the cozy consensus with terrorists means it's truth that gets the elbow."

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TUV Concerns over handling of interconnector

TUV Leader Jim Allister has expressed concern that DETI and the Utility Regulator are rushing into another north-south electricity connector without adequately examining all the options and ensuring that if the interconnector proceeds it will be on the basis most beneficial to Northern Ireland consumers.

In a statement Jim Allister MLA said:-

"Quite apart from the controversy about the route and mode of a new interconnector, there are fundamental questions which I feel have never been addressed.

"Some experts in the electricity field are telling me that a high efficiency new

gas fired power station within Northern Ireland should be considered as a viable alternative, and that greater interconnection with the British mainland, where prices are cheaper, should be examined before rushing into an ESB controlled interconnector which will be used to feed high cost electricity from inefficient ROI plant into Northern Ireland.

"Thus, recently I asked the DETI Minister if any cost-benefit modelling of these various options had been undertaken. Though the answer avoids the issue, it is clear there has been no such cost-benefit modelling. This is disappointing and indicative of a one track mindset which is not serving

the interests of the local consumer.

I am equally disappointed to discover that if a new interconnector proceeds it seems likely to be in the absence of available measures to guarantee it is not merely an extension of the ESB's monopoly control. In this regard I asked the minister for assurance that a new interconnector would be put out to tender so that someone other than ESB would have the opportunity to operate it in competition with the existing interconnector. I also asked if it would be built as 'merchant plant' so that it would operate at its own risk in the market. The answer failed to take up these options, confirming instead

that it would be operated by SONI (owned by Eirgrid plc), which effectively means a green light for more southern monopoly.

Given that NI consumers are already paying considerably more for their electricity than elsewhere in the UK and that the Single Electricity Market has widened that gap, I am deeply concerned that we are set on a course which will compound the situation by tying us into production and transmission arrangements which serve only the purpose of ROI state interests. It is these interests which will benefit from twinning their inefficient plant with our vulnerable consumers."