1974

Sinn Fein - Structure and Activities

Sinn Fein

Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/workerpmat

Part of the Political History Commons

Recommended Citation
https://arrow.tudublin.ie/workerpmat/58

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by the Workers' Party of Ireland at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Materials by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact yvonne.desmond@tudublin.ie, arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, brian.widdis@tudublin.ie.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License
The basic unit of Sinn Fein in the Cumann or club. In Dublin there are about 23 Cumann, each based in a certain area like Ballymun or Rathmines. Every year a Cumann has an Annual General Meeting at which the members elect an officer board, which is responsible for organizing and co-ordinating the activities of the Cumann for the following year. An officer board must consist of at least a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and delegate to the Coordinating Committee. Other essential positions are: Educational Officer, Public Relations Officer, and if possible a Finance Officer.

Chairman: The Chairman’s job is to ensure that the Cumann involves itself in the activities of Sinn Fein on a whole, and implements all decisions made by the organisation, where they affect the Cumann. He/she must keep order at Cumann meetings and see that the business of the meeting is carried out properly and efficiently.

The Secretary records all decisions made by the Cumann, in the minutes and deals with correspondence, filing etc.

The Treasurer keeps a record of Cumann funds and all items of income and expenditure. A financial statement should be made at every Cumann meeting and a financial report given at the end of the year.

The Public Relations Officer issues statements to the media making known the opinions of the Cumann to the people on any particular issue. In many many Cumann the PRO compiles a local newsletter to communicate to the people the views of Sinn Fein on all issues, local and national, affecting that. A newsletter helps to establish contact between the local Cumann and the people as it can make the policies and ideology of the Movement relevant to the people in their day to day lives. Every member of the Cumann should contribute something to the Newsletter.

The Education Officer fulfills a vital function in the Cumann. His/her job is to ensure that every member of the Cumann understands the basic policies and ideology of the Republican Movement. Lectures are given at most meetings of the Cumann on various aspects of our policies and objectives. Every member should take part in the subsequent discussions. Education and discussion is designed as a guide to our activities so that we will be better equipped to reach our goal with an aware and dedicated membership.

The Coordinating Committee: (Regional Executive), The Coordinating Committee co-ordinates the activities of all Cumann and gives them leadership on major issues. It is composed of an officer board, elected each year by the members at an Annual General Meeting, plus one delegate from each Cumann. In Dublin the Coordinating Committee meets once a fortnight. The function of the delegate is to report the activities of the Cumann to the Coordinating Committee to represent the views and proposals of the Cumann to it, and then to go back to the Cumann and give the members a report on the decisions taken by the Coordinating Committee. A report should be given to the Cumann after every delegate meeting. The Officer Board meets once a week.

The Ard Cumann: The Ard Coordinating or National Executive is the governing body of Sinn Fein. It consists of 18 members, elected by delegates from every Cumann in the country at the Annual Ard Feis. There are also two delegates on the Ard Coordinating from each region and Coordinating Committee.

Ard Feis: The Ard Feis is main policy making body of Sinn Fein. Resolutions from the Cumann go forward to it on all aspects of our policies and structure and rules. All resolutions passed become the policy of Sinn Fein for the next 12 months.

Sinn Fein therefore is a completely democratic organization at all levels ensuring the maximum participation of all members in policy formulation and organisation.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. Propaganda: One of the most essential activities of a Sinn Fein Cumann is Propaganda, the dissemination of our Republican principles and policies among the people. We want the support of the mass of the Irish people in the struggle for the re-conquest of Ireland we must make our policies and objectives clear to them. One of the best ways of doing this is through the sale of our papers, the United Irishman, the monthly journal of the Republican Movement, and the Irish People, the new weekly, urban paper. Members are required to sell the United Irishman at least once a week in pubs, at Churches, shopping centres and any other outlets available.

2. Citizens Advice Bureau: Many Cumann operate a Citizens Advice Bureau, and there is also a central CAF in Gardiner Place.
2. Many Currians operate a Citizens Advice Bureau, and there is also a Central CAB in Head Office. The function of the CAB is to establish a centre where people can come and have their problems dealt with. These problems range from bad housing conditions, Tenants in trouble with landlords or the Corporation, to people in trouble with the law who have no idea of how to get legal advice. The CAB is also an information center where the people can find out their rights under the Social Welfare Acts etc. A good Curran can start successful agitation from CAB cases. The CAB also identifies Sinn Fein in the public mind as an organisation working for the people and defending their rights and interests. Every member should help in the work of the CAB, or if their Curran doesn't have one they should help out in the Central one, especially any member with specialists knowledge in Law or Social Services, such as students or social workers.

3. In accord with Sinn Fein's policies of becoming involved in the day to day struggles of the ordinary people, it is vitally important that a Curran should have a high level of involvement in local organisations. This can only occur if the members of the Curran are members of the organisations of the people in their local area. The many peoples' organisations are Tenants and Residents Associations, local youth clubs, cultural and sporting organisations like the GAA and the Gaelic League, and economic organisations like Credit Unions. The Curran must expose the people to come together to defend their common interests. This is why Trade Unions and Tenants organisations are formed. As such these organisations have a vital role to play in the revolutionary struggle. First of all Republicans in these organisations must identify the main problems affecting the people. This can only be done by attending the meetings and taking part in the activities of Tenants and Trade Unionsists. Having identified the problems, we must discover the best means to fight for the peoples' rights, our task then is to persuade the Tenants, for example, to adopt our maxx strategy on the rent strike. If our tactics are correct, Republicans will become identified as leaders of the peoples' struggles. This policy not only gives the people a radical leadership but it also involves the mass of the people in the struggle for the re-conquest of Ireland for her people.

4. Each Curran is obliged under the Constitution of Sinn Fein to adopt the policies of the organisation, where possible to specific local conditions. Agitation could be started on ground rents, campaigns for more community facilities, more housing, employment etc. All instances of political patronage and corruption, the disregard shown to the peoples' rights by speculators and developers should be exposed to the full and exposed by a Sinn Fein Curran. The Irish language and culture should also be encouraged by Currians. If halls are available locally a Curran can run Ulster and Irish sessions. This generates an awareness among the people of their own culture and traditions, as well building up a Curran's finances.

5. Since the ban on entry to Parliament has been removed, Sinn Fein will contest all local and general elections as far as our resources allow and candidates will take their seats where elected. The contesting of elections is likely to become an increasingly important part of Sinn Fein's activities. Participation in Parliament is merely an extension of the Social, Economic and Cultural aspects of the struggle and brings the Peoples' fight into the heart of the enemy camp.

6. Sinn Fein relies for financial support primarily from its own members and supporters. A Curran has to contribute something every month for the maintenance of the Connaught Connaught, and also has to pay an annual affiliation fee to the 2nd Connaught. In order to finance its own activities it is also required to have regular fund raising events. All members are required to take part in these, whether they be collections, socials, raffles etc. The major collections during the year are the National Collection and the Easter Lily collection at Easter.
DUTIES OF A MEMBER

1. Every new member is on probation for a period of three months. If at the end of that period he/she is found to be an unsuitable member or if you have not been an active member, you may be expelled from the organisation. Now members must be in a Camnann for two months before they have a right to vote, and only those who have been in Sinn Fein for at least 12 months may be elected as officers, except in the case of the Camann being formed.

2. Almost every Camann meets once a week. Members should attend every Camann meeting, if possible. If a Camann is to operate properly and efficiently it must have the maximum participation of all members, and if there is not a good attendance of Camann meetings, very little activity can be planned or organised. Any member who attends less than 12 Camann meetings a year, ceases to become a member of Sinn Fein. If you cannot attend a meeting, you should contact your Camann Secretary, find out what activities have been organised and say when you are available for them.

3. At each Camann meeting, a subscription is taken up from each member. This is usually a fixed amount, but students and unemployed members can subscribe only what they can afford. There is also a levy of 10p. per member per month which goes to the Camnissir Camnissir. All new members must become registered members of Sinn Fein immediately. If you are not given a registration form to fill out, ask the Secretary to get one. You then get a membership card, which costs 50p. Members must be registered once a year.

4. A member has a duty to become involved in as many areas of Camann activity as possible, both internal and external. External activity consists of paper sales, Citizens Advice Bureau work, local questions, activities organised by the Camnissir Camnissir and Ard Camnissir etc. Internal activity: this consists of the Educational Programme, discussions and the internal business of the Camann. Members should contribute and take part in the Camann's discussions. An organisation is only as good as its members are, so the more discussion, constructive ideas and proposals from the ordinary members, the better revolutionary organisation we will have.

5. A resolution was passed at the 1972 Ard Fheis, making it compulsory for all members of Sinn Fein (who are eligible to do so) to join a trade union. The Trade Union Movement is the largest and most powerful working class organisation in the country, so it absolutely vital that Republicans join their Trade Unions - and not simply join them, but be active in promoting the rights and interests of Irish workers.

6. A member of Sinn Fein cannot belong to any other political party. Your first and only political allegiance must be to Sinn Fein. There is no room for divided loyalties or ambiguities. If we want to lead the Irish people in a Socialist Revolution, we must have a single-minded party of dedicated revolutionaries, totally convinced of our aims, policies, tactics and strategy.

No member of Sinn Fein can be also a member of the Free State armed forces or police.

Neither is there any room in this Movement for passengers. We only want people who are prepared to become active Republican Socialists, people who are determined to fight and eventually overthrow the established order and Imperialist domination of our country, to the best of their talents and abilities.