

**News & Opinion** | S

**Sport**

**Business & Recruitment**

**Going Out**

**Business Directory**

**Classified Ads**

**Family Notices**

**Property**

**Pix**



- Latest news
- Features
- Columnists
- Editorial
- Your letters
- Your texts
- Blog
- Podcasts

[Aisling Awards](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Search this site

Search the web

# News & Opinion

**Tell us your thoughts...**

Got something to say? [Click here to send us a comment](#)

## Columnists

**Our Papers**

## Where do the SDLP now stand?

### North Belfast News

#### Right To Reply, by Gerry Kelly

I am surprised that I can still be surprised by the SDLP's Alban Maginness but I was. His Political Platform piece in the Nov 1 issue of the North Belfast News turned logic and reality on its head.

In a half page article he lambasted and denigrated Sinn Féin for having the cheek to be part of a demonstration against an RIR military parade through Belfast.

There was not a mention of collusion, not a mention of state murder, not a mention of state violence, of torture, of internment or the thousands of arrests, house raids, strip searches, harassment etc.

There was no mention of the hundreds of thousands of deaths in Iraq since the invasion five years ago, or the two million Iraqis displaced to other countries or the other two million displaced in their own country, nor a mention of similar statistics in Afghanistan.

Closer to home there is not a mention of victims of state violence or their families.

What are his considered comments on the British military parade on Irish streets?

"The 'homecoming' is unnecessary but not worth getting upset about".

He likens the protest against the military parade to a "counter-demonstration worthy of Major Bunting and Ian Paisley in their early anti-civil rights days". Thus he equates the RIR parade with a civil rights march!

He calls the anti-military protest "an unnecessary and provocative march". He called for the protest by Sinn Féin and the victims' families "to be called off or at least rescheduled for another day".

I repeat – all this commentary and criticism is about the protest by Sinn Féin and the victims' families. There is no call from Alban Maginness for the British Secretary of State or the British Ministry of Defence to call off their celebrations of war in Iraq or Afghanistan – not to mention their four decades of war right here in the North of Ireland.

### Subscribe To Newsletter

Send us your e-mail address and we'll keep you up to date with what's happening on BelfastMedia.com

### Aisling Awards

Vote now for the 2008  
Aisling Sports category



Where exactly do the SDLP now stand?

It must be confusing for people, especially after the recent speech by SDLP leader Mark Durkan that power sharing may be abandoned by the SDLP.

That follows of course the claims by their previous leader John Hume that we all lived in a post-nationalist world!

Alban also claims that "the days of street politics are long over". Perhaps that statement sums up the political malaise debilitating the SDLP. Come down from the political ivory tower Alban.

We are supposed to represent people in the street. Find out what people think before pontificating from the house on the hill.

Part of a politician's job is to articulate and represent the views of the people. Alban's answer to those unionist politicians and loyalists who, through public utterances inflamed the situation, is to pretend there is no difficulty, to stymie legitimate nationalist and republican opposition.

Sinn Féin does not, as Alban Maginness claims, believe that nothing has changed. On the contrary, we believe that a great deal has changed, precisely because we stood up for our rights. We fight continuously for equality. We will not accept a diminishing of equality or power sharing.

Instead of writing vitriol about Sinn Féin he may have given a little thought to those on the street in Ireland who have suffered so much under the RIR, and their forerunners in the UDR and the B Specials.

And he may have given a little more thought for the hundreds of thousands who have died in Iraq since the invasion carried out on the basis of a single simple lie about the existence of weapons of mass destruction.

The shortlist for this year's Aisling Sports Award is out. Glengormley gold medalist, Michael McKillop; Pat McStravick and Sammy Dowds of Newhill Football Club; Olympic bronze medalist Paddy Barnes and St John's GAA club are this year's final four. [Click here](#) to vote for your favourite, or [here](#) to see the Aisling Awards website.



## Love and Marriage

### The Wedding Planner

Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue... well, it may not be all that, but it is the premier guide to getting married this year. Click on the front page (right) to read more.

