SEVEN YEARS into the Agreement, the walls of sectarianism are not coming down, but are being built higher. None of the main parties has a remedy for this. Some of them don't see any need for a remedy. As if Catholics being divided from Protestants was the most natural thing in the world.

We say it's unnatural. Our remedy is to pay more attention to the class we belong to than the community we come from.

This isn't just the best way to deal with the division. It's also the best way for the people being left behind in both communities to rise up.

Parties which focus exclusively on representing one community or the other end up representing only the well-off within each community. Thus, all the main parties in Derry want to give millions to build a runway for Ryanair. But not one of them is up for a fight on water charges.

They are happy to hand over Fort George and Ebrington Barracks to big business for “development” — while lamenting the lack of facilities for young people on nearby estates.

They all say they are against poverty, then agree to cut the already-low wages of council workers. These politics don't advance either community. They advance a minority within each community.

Our strategy is for people to organise from below — not to look to politicians or paramilitaries to deliver. We'll use a mandate as a platform to build support for anyone abused by the State or other agencies. We pledge full backing for all whose jobs or dignity, homes or livelihoods are threatened by unaccountable big business.

We will defend the public service against the privatisation agenda accepted by the four main parties in the Assembly.

We will support all families, irrespective of community, who want the truth about how their loved ones died, whether at the hands of the State or at the hands of paramilitaries — or by the two together in collusion. We won't be telling anyone to stay quiet because demanding the truth might disrupt the “peace process.”

We are a local expression of the world-wide anti-war and anti-capitalist movements. We have been at the heart of the campaign against the illegal war on Iraq — which has cost tax-payers billions, even as they tell us there's no money for school buses, speech therapists or third level tuition.

Water charges make the point. Only a mass campaign of non-payment holds out hope of defeating privatisation and saving the water service jobs. But such a campaign would have to mobilise across the board. This would directly challenge parties which are based on mobilising one community in competition with the other.

It’s for this reason that they all say they are against water charges — but are all against a non-payment campaign, too.

There’s the difference in a nutshell.
The system isn’t working
-One in five jobless in Derry area

Don’t let Council rubbish our future

Derry in dire straits
ECONOMICALLY

Derry in dire straits. The economist, Michael Gallagher, spell this out in the Derry Journal (April 13th). Gallagher referred to the habit of “talking up” the city — Derry is booming, Derry is buzzing, Derry’s the happening place.

But Gallagher confirmed what the trade unions and the SEA have been saying — that as some grow more prosperous, many are left behind.

Instead of showing anger over this issue, Nationalist and Unionist parties put one another about who'll give the best representation to “our side” vis-a-vis “the other side”.

Gallagher highlighted desperate problems of child poverty in Shantallow, Creggan and Broadway, but no remedy for these problems can be found in trying to advance one community in comparison with the other.

The statistics also show that Victoria and Caw are catching up fast in the poverty stakes.

The main causes of child poverty are inadequate benefits, low wages, poor public services and poor access to public services.

Privatisation cuts jobs and drives wages down. So does contracting out. And both destroy public services. Lack of publicly-funded child care means that lone parents in particular are excluded from jobs. Council workers’ pay is driven down, through cut-backs supported by all parties currently on the council.

These causes of poverty can’t be dealt with by pushing one community’s interests over the other’s. Increasing benefit levels and defending wage rates will be achieved for all or not at all.

The main parties are not responsible for Derry’s economic problems. But they have no policies for dealing with the problems.

They all operate as local managers of capitalism. And they don’t even do that well, being focused 24/7 on wrong-footing their rivals within their own parties.

What Michael Gallagher’s report showed is the need for a radical shift in political priorities. The SEA offers this on May 5th.

Bigots rule in Altogelvin?

IT IS a disgrace that the Accident and Emergency Dept. of Altogelvin does not provide the morning after pill.

An A&E should help women faced with an emergency that could impact the rest of their lives. They will treat a broken finger as an emergency. So why not the threat of an unwanted pregnancy?

It is possible to buy the morning after pill over the counter at (some) pharmacies. But it costs £24 — that’s almost half the weekly benefit of a single person or a quarter of a lone parent’s benefit.

This is another example of the poor getting the wrong end of the stick. Anyone who cannot find the £24 has to run around looking for a family planning clinic that is open. This can be hard, especially on a holiday weekend.

The sooner it is taken, the more likely the morning after pill will work. But Altogelvin’s refusal to provide emergency contraception makes it much more difficult for women to act responsibly.

Hospitals in Belfast, Antrim, Craigavon supply emergency contraception in their A&E Departments. So why not Altogelvin?

The answer — in a survey carried out by the University of Ulster 10 years ago — is that two thirds of doctors in the Western Board area refuse to provide emergency contraception for “moral” reasons. Those in charge of the A&E in Altogelvin are being allowed to put their own morality ahead of women’s health needs.

Those who think emergency contraception is wrong need not use it — but they should allow other women to make up their own minds. The SEA will use elected positions to push to achieve this.

Fight needed to keep North West on the rails

DERRY’s last rail link remains under threat. But the issue isn’t given the priority it needs.

Earlier this year, the Department of Regional Development agreed — under pressure from rail workers and the Into The West campaign — to maintain but not to upgrade the Derry-Ballymena track. This will cost £23 million between now and 2008.

The Department turned down the option of spending an extra £17 million to bring the line up to the standard of Ballymena-Belfast or Belfast-Dublin.

A continuous welded track to Ballymena would allow a travel time to Belfast of an hour and five minutes (express) or an hour and 20 minutes (stop) — this would bring Belfast within travel-to-work range.

Aldergraave could be reached in an hour via an Antrim-Aldergrove link.

A Culinlin-Lisburn spur would make Dublin a three-hour journey.

A fast, modern line could link up with new track from Sagg through Donegal, giving us a necklace of rail around the island.

The other parties say this is pie-in-the-sky. We say it’s common sense.

Our rail link has been run down because of the historic bias in Belfast government against the north west.

Because of an ideological bias against the public service. And because the big-money air and road lobby dominates transport debate. Eleven percent of rail users in the North are senior citizens.

Twenty-four percent are students.

These are categories the establishment parties think they can ignore.

A good rail system will take cars off the roads, reducing pollution, stress and the carnage of accidents.

A campaign, centred on the rail workers and reaching out to all communities along the line, can force a change in priorities and give us the publicly-owned rail system which the coming generations deserve.

At Westminster and council level, the SEA will push this plan higher up the agenda. Vote SEA on May 5th.

Women missing from election line-up

The missing face in the SEA line-up is the face of a woman.

Two potential female candidates dropped out at a late stage, one for health reasons, the other for family reasons. We were unable to persuade a number of women trade union and community activists to go forward instead.

This illustrates the continuing difficulties facing women, not just in politics, but in society generally. It strengthens rather than weakens our resolve to achieve equality for all.

All SEA members are fully committed to women’s rights. We can offer representation — on child poverty, education, health, trade union rights etc. — which would improve women’s lives and their willingness to be involved in political life.

The system isn’t working

WE ARE forever being told that we never had it so good. Unemployment is at its lowest level for decades, it’s claimed.

Well, some people have never had it so good. But the truth is, unemployment in Derry is almost as bad as ever.

Everyone remembers Maggie Thatcher’s famous 18 changes to the way unemployment was counted.

But New Labour never changed her figures back. The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (formerly the Unemployment Unit) gives estimates of the REAL level of unemployment. When they add in those who want to work but are considered “inactive”, people on government schemes, and part-time workers who’d like to work full-time, the figure for Foyle isn’t the official eight percent, but well over 20 percent.

Anyone looking for a job in Derry knows this. Around 6,000 applied for 250 jobs at Debenhams. A look at the job Assist computers shows there are few jobs on offer and most of these are low-paid.

We mustn’t allow endless Orange versus Green argument to hide this reality.

The SEA will use a mandate to help keep class issues on the agenda.

Don’t let Council rubbish our future

DERRY urgently needs small-scale recycling facilities across the city for every hundred or so houses. In most parts of Europe there are glass, paper and plastic recycling bins on every street corner. These bins are emptied on virtually a daily basis, so they don’t overflow. Of course, this demands investment in the bins and more refuse collecting workers.

In a city that is blighted by unemployment and which faces millions of pounds in fines by the EU if we do not recycle considerably more of our household waste, employing more waste management workers would, in the long run, save the public service. And because the big-money air and road lobby dominates transport debate, Eleven percent of rail users in the North are senior citizens.

Twenty-four percent are students.

These categories the establishment parties think they can ignore. A good rail system will take cars off the roads, reducing pollution, stress and the carnage of accidents.

A campaign, centred on the rail workers and reaching out to all communities along the line, can force a change in priorities and give us the publicly-owned rail system which the coming generations deserve. At Westminster and council level, the SEA will push this plan higher up the agenda. Vote SEA on May 5th.

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Socialist Environmental Alliance candidates:

**McCANN**
WATERFORD RURAL

Eamonn McCann, 62, has been active in left-wing politics for more than 40 years. He provided a strong socialist voice in the early civil rights movement, and stood in Foyle for Labour in 1969. He has been continuously involved since in challenging the abuse of State power, arguing for an approach based on class rather than community. He is a campaigner for the rights of children and people with disabilities, and against sectarianism, racism and homophobia.

He is local chairman of the National Union of Journalists and vice-chairman of Derry Trades Council. He is father of Kitty, Luke and Matty, grandfather of Rosie, and lives in Derry with his partner, Gorette Horgan.

“I will use any mandate I receive to encourage active solidarity with every group of workers in struggle. Elected socialists, together with activists outside, can make a real difference.”

**BRYCE**
NORTHLAND

Colm Bryce (39) is a former trade union organiser and is currently researching a PhD in labour history at Magee. He is a member of the Derry Anti-War Coalition and Communities Against the Water Tax. He was an organiser of the 25,000 strong march against the Iraq war in Belfast in February 2003.

“There is a need for a socialist voice on the Council, to stand up against the relentless drive — started by Thatcher and continued by Blair — to hand all public services over to private companies. This is the real agenda behind water charges.

“Local councils are being expected to push through the privatisation agenda — and in Derry, as elsewhere, they are going along with it. £1,000 billion is spent each year by Western governments on arms. Only £50 billion is spent on development. That's all wrong. We want to be able to help put it right.”

**FRIEL**
CITYSIDE

Liam Friel (28) was born in Creggan and has lived there for most of his life. A member of the NIPSA trade union, he was actively involved in the 2003/2004 pay dispute. He is now chair of his local NIPSA branch. He is an active fighter for equality for all in the workplace, and regularly represents workers in talks with management.

He has been deeply involved in Communities Against the Water Tax, organising meetings across the city to encourage support for non-payment.

“The city council has let the people down. Take a look at Bull Park. They say there's a shortage of funds to continue the redevelopment, but they can throw millions at the airport. The City Baths are under threat — one of the best-loved facilities by schools in the entire area. To close the learning pool, where so many thousands learned to swim, will be shattering for the community as a whole. We badly need a new radical perspective on the council.”

**KEHOE**
NORTHLAND

Oisín Kehoe (28), from Rosemount, is team leader at Ballymagroarty’s Naíscoil (Irish language nursery) and on the committee building the new Gaelscoil (Primary School). He runs Club Na nÓg, a youth club for children attending Irish medium schools.

Those of us working with young people have steadily faced cuts to resources, so it's not surprising we have young people hanging about with nothing to do. Blaming young people is easy for politicians and deflects attention away from the failure to provide an alternative. That's why I'm campaigning vigorously to save the football pitch in Brooke Park.

“The SEA offers hope of politics, based on sectarianism or the greedy interests of a few, but on the social needs and struggles of all ordinary people. There is a very real chance we could make a breakthrough in this election, but we need people to give us their first preference.”

**McAULEY**
WATERFORD

Davy McAuley (30), from Drummahoe, is a trade unionist and a worker in one of Derry’s new technology plants. He sees working-class unity on social issues as key in the fight for fair wages, decent working conditions and quality public services.

He has been a pioneer in trying to organise unorganised workplaces.

“Whether it's a big-name department store, fast food chain or large manufacturing plant, I urge people to join a union that will stand by them.

“The erosion of our public services and the back-doors privatisation in our hospitals and schools were energetically carried out by the main parties during the Assembly.

“I firmly believe that water charges can be defeated by building from the bottom up.

“From Lincoln Courts to the Bogside, the SEA will do all it can to give people the confidence to stand together.”

**Make war on poverty, not on Iraq**

A FREQUENT argument in relation to our proposals is that the money isn’t there. Health and education boards are faced with Treasury demands for 2.5 percent cuts across the board. So how can they find the money for improvements? But there’s plenty of money. Plenty for bombs to flatten Fallujah, but not to pay speech and language therapists. Plenty for the Euro-fighter and the Trident submarine, but not to pay speech and language therapists. Plenty for development. That’s £1,000 billion is spent each year by Western governments on arms. Only £50 billion is spent on development. That’s all wrong. We want to be able to help put it right.

Campaigners from across the world demanding a radical re-ordering of priorities, nationally and internationally.

We are at the heart of the anti-war movement, locally and along with the movements in the South and across the water.

We will use a mandate on May 5th to boost our anti-war and anti-capitalist efforts.

We will speak out against major leaders who preach to us about the need for peace, while waging cruel and criminal war elsewhere.

Blair talks about the need to build “trust” between parties here. But he lied in his teeth to lure Britain into the war on Iraq. As did the sounddried Bush.

Another thing which distinguishes us from the four main parties is that we pledge not to accept any invitations to visit the White House on Patriot’s Day, or on any other day either.

We don’t say, end paramilitarism. We say, turn left and join us in building a real struggle against the establishment.

For George, Ebrington for the people!

Abolish ILEX! And we want the books opened to see how much public money has been wasted on this folly so far.

We believe that the future of these fantastic riverside sites should be decided by councillors themselves, democratically accountable, and that the priorities should be amenities for Derry people, especially young people, not more private property, offices and yuppie apartment projects.

We believe young people should be directly involved in the planning.

Just a short distance away from Fort George, in Gallaghier, there’s a major social problem involving youngsters totally alienated from a society which puts no value on them. Do councillors not see the connection between that and handing this wonderful amenity over for private entrepreneurs to make profit from?

On the council, we'll propose abandoning ILEX and ending the abandonment of our young generation.
The Socialist Environmental Alliance has been the most positive force for radical change in the Derry area in recent years. On the airport, the rail link, council pay, water charges, etc., the SEA has led the way. All the other parties offer more of the same — selling-off public services, acceptance of water charges, poor wages, property developers destroying our environment, evictions at the dictat of a billion-pound multinational.

**PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT**

We challenge the agenda which puts profit before all else. We stand for the common interests of working people — the only sound basis for resolving the endless stalemate of communal politics.

- **A vote for any other party is a vote for water charges**
- **No airport evictions — upgrade the rail link**
- **Oppose racism, homophobia and domestic violence**
- **Union rights, secure jobs and decent wages for all**
- **Money for education and health — not for war**

**The SEA**

- **Move on with the SEA**
- **Abolish ILEX — for democratic decision-making**
- **No water charges**
- **MPs expose council airport fiasco**
- **说出来， council pays buttons**

**The current council advertises the Derry area as a place where workers come cheap. They boast that wages are lower than in Britain and the rest of Europe. They have given an uncritical welcome to anti-union companies like Seagate and Marks and Spencer. We want to make Derry a union town again, where workers are respected and paid well and have secure jobs. The council should immediately raise the minimum wage of council workers to the European decency threshold. We will oppose the current cuts in pay for council workers. We want full re-cycling, street-corner facilities — otherwise we face million-pound EU fines or an incinerator in years to come.**

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**What are the current challenges facing Derry?**

- **Airport**: The airport is a major issue. The SEA argues for the upgrading of the rail link to Belfast, and against the new airport.
- **Water Charges**: The council has imposed water charges, despite the fact that we are paying for water already, through the rates.
- **Education and Health**: The SEA calls for more funding for education and health.
- **Wages**: The SEA demands decent wages for all workers, not just on wages. All parties unite to bring their weekly net wage to just over £200 a week.

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**What is the SEA's position on the airport?**

The SEA is not anti-airport. If the airport was devastating, the report goes on: “There appears to be no recent data to quantify the number of travellers from the Republic using the airport.”

All the talk about the “vital role” of the airport for the cross-border region has been bleeher. Again, no factual basis.

The **SEA is not anti-airport. If the council had a plan showing that upgrading the runway was in the interests of all, we’d listen. But they have no plan. They just do what Ryanair wants. This is a rotten basis on which to threaten people’s homes.**

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**Who are the SEA candidates?**

**WESTMINSTER ELECTION**

- Eamonn McCann: Foyle — 07977 924321
- Eamonn McCann: Waterside Rural — 07977 924321
- Colm Bryne: Northland — 07771 781958
- Oisin Kehoe: Northland — 07745 068184
- Liam Friel: Cityside — 07840 560397
- David McAuley: Waterside — 07812 537786

**COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

- David McAuley: Waterside — 07812 537786

**Email**: seaderry@iol.com  **Website**: www-socialistenvironmentalalliance.org