

ALLIANCE

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NEWS RELEASE

D Young Alliance

The Alliance Party have launched a campaign for the return of young people into the mainstream of political debate and activity in Northern Ireland. Speaking at a Press Conference to launch a new recruitment leaflet 'Make the Difference, Work for Change', Dr John Alderdice said that young people were sadly disillusioned by the state of politics which contributed to the substantial loss of young people from the Province.

Dr Alderdice said "Few can blame young people here for boycotting politics because it is too easy to feel that Northern Ireland has little to offer politically which has spin offs into the social and economic fields. Lack of political progress seems to be an end in itself for many so-called political leaders but that directly contributes to less investment, higher unemployment, and many other problems in real politics.

Dr Alderdice stressed " At the end of the day if things are to change it is the younger generation who will do it. Rather than stand aside bitter or disappointed young people must enter the fray and make the difference as part of the solution to the current impasse ".

The new Alliance leaflet stresses **environment, homelessness and education.**

Youth Spokesman, Councillor John Blair, attacked current Unionist and Nationalist leaders and said "Before progress can be made in the Province Hume, Molyneaux and Paisley would need to be replaced".

Councillor Blair continued "These three old, reactionary, stubborn men hold each other to ransom in public while in private they realise each is essential for the continued strength of the others position. They are so apathetic to working together and with the police for the defeat of terrorism that one must wonder if they don't believe that continued violence suits them".

Councillor Blair said that discussion of real politics in Northern Ireland was rare and that was one of many reasons why young people lacked interest.

Councillor Blair concluded "Go onto the streets and talk to younger people and you will find them directly affected by high unemployment, poor housing, student loans, reduced housing benefit and are passionately concerned about the environment.

But there is no concern evident amongst Unionist and Nationalist politicians. No discussion on these important matters.

"We want to give younger people the opportunity to have an input into politics on these issues".

During the course of the year the Alliance Party will be holding a series of open meetings for young people on various issues such as the environment and education. Well attended meetings in Castlereagh and Omagh have already taken place on Green Politics and the Environment and further meetings are planned. The next is in Coleraine on 21 June, North Down in September and Belfast in October. Other open meetings will be held across the Province.

Cllr Blair said "Northern Ireland needs more young people to become active in politics. That is why we are producing this new membership leaflet 'Make the Difference, Work for Change'. The future should be in our hands - we have to make sure we shape

it and not the bitter and perverted minds of sectarian politicians who look only to the past. These people think, breathe and sleep the past without a thought as to how their actions will affect future generations. We in the Alliance Party do not look to the past but look to the future and for that reason ten thousand copies of the leaflet will be distributed throughout Northern Ireland.