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Local & National

Students' union could kick out SF youth wing

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Friday, March 14, 2008

Sinn Fein's youth wing faces expulsion from the University of Ulster's Students' Union for breaking university guidelines, the Belfast Telegraph can reveal today.

Ogra Shinn Fein is being investigated for distributing a leaflet which included images of masked gunmen.

The picture of the individuals, standing over a coffin draped in the Irish tricolour pointing weapons in the air, appeared on a flyer advertising the inaugural James Sheridan lecture in which Sinn Fein councillors Ian Milne and Peter Bateson spoke.

Sheridan was a member of the south Derry brigade of the IRA.

He was 20 when he died during an accidental explosion in Magherafelt on the night of 18 December 1971. The leaflet, which included Sinn Fein's website, encouraged students to hear the "remarkable story" of the "courageous" Sheridan.

The university adopts a strict political protocol whereby posters informing people of the subject, time and venue of a meeting are allowed to be displayed. A university spokesperson said: "They are not permitted to distribute leaflets or display posters which other members of the university would regard as offensive."

"Because of this group's behaviour on this occasion, we understand that consideration is being given to the withdrawal of their accreditation as a recognised club or society within the Students' Union."

years. Ask them about James Sheridan and his comrades, about Francis Hughes and all the events and people who have brought Republicanism to where we are today, and where the future will take us.



This talk will last approximately 1 hour
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www.osf.ie
www.sinnfein.ie

The Students' Union President said it was likely that Ogra Shinn Fein would lose rights, such as access to buildings.

Danny O'Connor said: "A letter will be sent to them. We don't like what they did. They will be pulled in within

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the union. We can't let that slide past."

A distressed student, whose policeman father was killed by the south Derry brigade, contacted the Belfast Telegraph to express his disgust.

The student said: "It breaks my heart that the upper echelons of society give succour to such justification of murder by volunteers [described as] "brave patriot dead" and "Irish soldier" under the guise of educational politics."

A spokesperson for the Ulster Unionist Party said: "This event was disgusting, wrong and highly inappropriate. There is no place for such an event in a modern tolerant university."

DUP MP Jeffrey Donaldson appealed for the university to apologise.

A Sinn Fein spokesperson said: "In no way was there an intention to cause any distress."

Sinn Fein councillor Ian Milne said: "I presume it was nothing more than to alert the student population of the lecture."

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