

ORIGINS OF SINN FÉIN

An inaccuracy which is tendentiously repeated from time to time, in both lay and academic circles, is that the Labour Party is the oldest political party in Ireland.

The facts are as follows. The advocacy of the Sinn Féin philosophy was made in an address to the National Council by Arthur Griffith in 1905. The Sinn Féin League was launched in 1907 as the result of an amalgamation of the first Cumann na nGaedheal with the Dungannon Clubs. In 1908, the National Council amalgamated with the Sinn Féin League to give rise to the organization thenceforth known simply as Sinn Féin. Therefore, in choosing any of these dates as the birth year of Sinn Féin, it means that that organization, and not the Labour Party (estd 1912), is truly the oldest political party.



NOTES: The first Cumann na nGaedheal was established in 1900 with the intention of countering English influence in Ireland on a number of fronts. Members of the Cumann formed the National Council in 1903 to oppose the visit of King Edward VII to Ireland. The Dungannon Clubs were formed in the north in 1905 to commemorate the Volunteer convention in Dungannon of 1782.