



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

A back street in downtown Oakland named after Gerry Adams



Four representatives from the south Armagh body, Families Acting for Innocent Relatives (Fair), and a media officer spent five days in California during which their objective was to foil "Sinn Fein propaganda". The trip, which cost in the region of 3,500, was funded by donations from people in various countries, including Canada, the USA, England, Scotland and Ireland. The group consisted of Mr. William Frazer, Mrs. Reatha Hassen, Mrs. Pearl Marshall and Mrs. Edna Cairns.

Mr. William Frazer lost his father, a serving soldier as well as two uncles, one a serving soldier and the other a retired police officer. He also lost two cousins, one a serving soldier and the other a serving police officer. Mrs. Reatha Hassen's late husband was Deputy Governor in HMP Maze. Three Maze SF/IRA escapees are now living in the Oakland area. Mrs. Pearl Marshall lost her son, a serving police officer and Mrs. Edna Cairns lost two relatives, both shot dead by the Provisional IRA. The controversy began after the Oakland City Council granted a request by Ciaran Scally and Louise Martin, both from Ireland and who now live in the Montclair section of Oakland, to name a stretch of pavement "Gerry Adams Way."

The slogan adopted by the group of protesters was "Gerry Adams' Way is Murder." Group spokesman, William Frazer hailed the visit "a triumph" when he returned home. "The propaganda for the republican movement has been dealt a severe blow," he claimed. "It's unbelievable the coverage we received out there. The media had a field day with us."

Mr Frazer said the decision to name the road linking Martin Luther King Jr Way and Nelson Mandela Parkway after Mr Adams, had been initiated by Councillor Nancy Nadel. Councillor Nadel was unwilling to talk with the Fair group when they tried to meet with her. "We went up to Oakland City Council offices with a film crew. When she saw us she put her hands over her face and ran away," Mr Frazer said. "The community cannot believe how underhand this was done." Others in the Oakland area were, however, "very sympathetic towards the victims' issues". William Fraser went on to say, "Our delegation has spent five days networking with human rights groups and church groups in California."

We offer to the group our congratulations for taking the fight to the enemy.

Anyone wishing to send a donation to F.A.I.R. to help with the expenses of the trip should address their gifts to:

F.A.I.R. PO Box 29, Armagh, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, BT60 1BZ.