

National Manifesto issued by Sinn Féin
for the EEC elections, June 14th, 1984

*One Ireland, one people
-the only alternative*



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TÁ SINN FÉIN ag dul san iomaíocht i dToghchán seo na h-Eorpa ar bhonn 32 Chontae agus fíor rogha a thabhairt againn do phobal na tíre. Is sinn an taon pháirtí uile-Éireann a sheasann go dlúth le cearta mhuintir na hÉireann troid in aghaidh daormacht Shasana inár dtír. Taimid glan in aghaidh ballraíocht sa Chomhobal Eorpach os rud é nach bhfuil aon ghné den institiúid sin ar mhaithe le muintir na hÉireann.

Dearbhaíonn Sinn Féin gur le muintir na hÉireann amháin saoirse polaiticúil, eacnamúil, soisialta agus cultúrtha agus gur trí neamhspleáchas iomlán a bhuafar poblacht daonlathach soisialach dúinn féin agus d'ár bpáistí.

SINN FEIN is contesting the EEC elections in all five constituencies in the 32 Counties, putting before the people a real alternative.

We are the only all-Ireland party with an unapologetic stand in support of national re-unification and in defence of the right of the Irish people to resist British occupation.

Sinn Féin has consistently opposed membership of the EEC, arguing against it in 1973, at the EEC parliament elections in 1979, and we do so again in this election.

It is more than ever obvious that the EEC has not only failed to produce the economic miracle promised on entry, but has proved disastrous for Irish industry and agriculture and been the most significant contributor to high unemployment and inflation in Ireland.

It is also clear that EEC membership has subjugated national sovereignty to the interests of the bigger and richer EEC states, only shifting the balance of colonial and neo-colonial dependency on Britain to dependency on Brussels. Far from reducing the effects of the border in Ireland, EEC economic policies have re-emphasised partition.

The slavish attitude of the Dublin government has also led this island into closer foreign policy and defence co-operation with the NATO nuclear military alliance, to which the nine other EEC states belong.

Irish culture has also been adversely affected by membership of a soul-less capitalist club which places a negative economic value on nationality.

of the claims made on its behalf. Because it is paid into the central exchequer of the state involved and is in the form of reimbursement, its effect in the North has merely been to reduce London's subvention and in the South, where it only amounts to 3% of capital expenditure, its effects are concentrated on the east coast because there is no internal regional policy.

Unemployment

Unemployment, in all of Ireland, on entry to the EEC in 1973 stood at 82,000, it is now 334,000 and increasing.

EEC membership has opened up the economies, North and South, more than ever, to the free competition of richer nations and has decimated Irish-based industries, particularly clothing, textiles, footwear, leather, furniture and food-processing.

There has been no growth in other indigenous industries, particularly those with export potential, to replace the losses in the traditional sector. Where native capitalists have been successful, in industries not easily penetrated by imports, they have not chosen to diversify into manufacturing enterprises in Ireland, but, instead, have invested their profits in similar firms abroad.

Policy control

In abandoning economic sovereignty to the EEC, the Dublin government has lost the possibility of using many economic tools to control its economy. The most important decisions are taken in Brussels.

The economic controls lost are extremely comprehensive and include the loss of powers to sign trade agreements with other states; to protect and develop domestic industry; to create incentives for exports; to selectively control imports; to plan the development of natural resources; and to make variations in exchange rates.

The aim of the EEC is to create a free trade area where all barriers to the free flow of goods, capital and labour are removed.

Although limited regional aid is available for underdeveloped regions, if it does not generate economic development the ultimate answer is seen as labour migration, not continued investment. With the whole of Ireland just an underdeveloped region in EEC terms, this underlying philosophy is disastrous.

A 'Buy Irish' campaign is illegal within the EEC.

The Dublin government cannot supply cheap gas or oil (if found) to Irish industry unless it sells it to other EEC industries at the same

price. Consumer prices in the 26 Counties have risen by almost 500% since entry into the EEC.

Agriculture

It was in agriculture above all that the greatest benefits were to accrue from EEC membership. There were promised unlimited markets, lucrative prices and increased employment in processing industries.

EEC agricultural policy has operated in favour of large commercial farms or ranches and against the high-labour small family farms.

Since EEC entry, 84,000 Irish farmers have left the land. Numbers employed in agriculture have fallen by an amazing 25% in the period.

Employment in food-processing has fallen by 10,000 in the past five years as EEC rules opened the way for European companies.

In 1983, the 26 Counties imported over £200 million worth of food products which could have been produced at home, including 80,000 tons of potatoes.

The short-term benefits of EEC membership lasted only five years and favoured the large rather than small farmers. It also encouraged borrowing by farmers keen to develop. More than 10,000 of them are now in serious debt because of crippling interest rates and many are in danger of losing their farms.

Irish farmers are worse off in real terms today than they were in 1972.

The high food-price strategy of the EEC's Common Agricultural Policy has meant a transfer of resources from consumer to farmer in a totally regressive manner. Subsidising agricultural development in this way, rather than from the central budget, puts a heavier burden on the poorer sections, contributes heavily to inflation, and this rebounds back again on the farmer as well as the consumer. The larger farmer benefits from higher prices to a greater degree than the small farmer, who requires subsidies.

The CAP has obviously proved detrimental to Irish farmers who have major development potential as opposed to the top-production European agricultural enterprises.

The CAP price structure which subsidises exports has caused the massive increases in live cattle exports and the loss of thousands of meat-processing jobs and the closure of meat factories.

The milk super-levy, the very limited exemption for Irish farmers, North and South, and the uncertain future, has thwarted the main area of development promised on EEC entry. Half of those farmers who have already left the land were from that sector. The small developing dairy farmer is now halted at scarcely more than one-third of his potential development.

Instead of purchase and division of land in congested areas by the Land Commission, the Dublin government propose a new land-leasing system — the return of landlordism.

Fisheries

On entry to the EEC in 1973, the 26-County fishing fleet was small and undeveloped, but the fastest growing in Western Europe. Today the industry is struggling to survive and catches are falling.

The EEC's common fisheries policy allocated quotas in accordance with the strength of the fleets, not their potential.

The quotas for 1983 gave the 26 Counties a mere 4.6% of the total EEC catch although having 25% of all EEC waters within its 200-mile economic zone; Britain, with 30% of the waters gets 37% of the EEC catch.

Even within the 12-mile limit, Southern fishermen are only allowed to take 21% of the catch.

Fish prices are now 15% lower in real terms than in 1973.

The fish-processing industry is totally underdeveloped and only of an unprofitable, very basic nature.

In comparison, Denmark, with a population of five million, has the second largest fishing fleet in the EEC, catches five times the 26-County total, but processes up to 40 times the amount of fish and over 200 times the amount of by-products.

The North's fishermen, of course, have to share their waters with the large British fleet as well as those of other member states.

When Spain and Portugal join the EEC, it will double the number of fishermen who will have rights in Irish waters. Two-thirds of the Spanish fishing fleet already fishes outside Spanish waters.

Sinn Fein urges that job-creation should concentrate in the areas of the most obvious potential development: natural resources; processing food for the neglected home market and for export; expanding the fishing fleet and processing industry to the level of other small countries like Denmark and Iceland; diversifying from the secure industries to manufacturing industry with export potential; developing agriculture through selective subsidies and land restructuring, particularly in its labour-intensive areas, such as market gardening; as well as providing the necessary social services through planned public spending programmes, particularly in the construction industry with its spin-off potential.

To do this requires economic control in Ireland, not in Brussels, so as to establish a planned economy, maximise state enterprise, and utilise

all the tools of fiscal management. Such independent economic control is impossible within the EEC.

Social issues

The EEC treaty does not allow aid to alleviate the most crushing social problems such as housing and health care, and contributions to the education area are severely limited.

The much-vaunted £60 million three-year 'housing programme' for Belfast is in fact no such thing: housing is expressly excluded from expenditure which must be spent on 'urban renewal' projects — roads, bridges etc. The British government 'agreed' that in return they will expand their housing programme in Belfast, but have in fact cut back funds to the Housing Executive.

The EEC's social fund is directly related to its overall economic objectives, thus it finances job-training schemes, integration of migrant workers (but not the Irish travelling community), and updating of new technology skills. It does not create jobs but aims to provide a workforce trained to capital's requirements.

The same cold economic motive lies behind other areas of apparently progressive EEC social reform. Equal pay for women, for example, was introduced because it already existed in some of the richer member states who were anxious to exclude the possibility of competition by low-wage economies.

There are many loopholes in the women's equality legislation as there are in EEC directives on equal social welfare entitlements.

EEC financial support in education ignores the first-level education which is most in need of funding, just as governments have neglected it. EEC funds instead provide exchange travel in higher education, computer training and job-experience programmes.

The EEC is dominated by right-wing conservative governments and parties whose interests are totally opposed to radical social improvements.

The EEC funding of various job-training schemes for youth has been seized on by Dublin and Belfast administrations as a cheap way of disguising unemployment without actually providing more jobs.

Sinn Fein believes that social rights should not be subject to economic interests. Cosmetic EEC programmes have provided governments with an easy excuse to abdicate their responsibilities. Sinn Fein sees public social spending as an absolute necessity not only to alleviate present human suffering, but as a positive job-creation programme.

Cultúr

Ritheann feallsúnacht an CEE go hiomlán i gcoinne gach gné den gcultúr agus den náisiúnachas — pé tír atá i gceist. I gcás na hÉireann ní thugann sé aitheantas dár dteanga dhúchais ach mar 'mhionteanga' agus ansin féin glactar an meon ina leith nach bhfuil fiúntas ar bith ag baint lei. Agus i gcomhthéacs an CEE, níl.

O ghlac rialtas na 26 Chontae ballraíocht amach tá líon na gcainteoirí dúchais ins na Gaeltachtaí dultha i léig. Aon seasamh a deineadh i leith na teangan siad na pobail féin a dhein é, ainneoin na bpolasaithe a bhí agus atá fós á rialú.

Díríonn an CEE a gcuid deontaisí ar thionscail atá ar mhaithe lena bhforbairt féin seachas ar mhaithe le forbairt na Gaeltachta agus dá dheasca sin le deich mbliain anuas tá teipthe ar mhórán iarrachtaí le tionscal a sholáthar dos na ceantracha Gaeltachta, a d'fhág gur lean an imirce as na ceantracha sin.

The standardising economic philosophy of the EEC runs counter to the development of a strong independent Irish culture.

Irish is not one of the official working languages of the EEC. On entry, the Dublin government agreed that Irish translations of secondary community legislation would cause 'practical difficulties'.

There is no right to correspond with the EEC institutions in Irish.

There are no provisions for simultaneous translation of Irish in the EEC parliament.

In the Gaeltacht areas, the extension of land ownership rights to all EEC citizens has helped to break up the linguistic unity of the communities.

In 1982, £250 million was spent on official language-related costs, which did not include Irish. In 1983, following the token Arfe report, a budget of a mere £70,000 was allocated for the encouragement of minority cultures and languages.

As in all other aspects of the EEC, the stronger cultures will dominate and finally smother the weaker ones.

Sinn Féin believes that Irish culture, embracing language, music, history, folklore, games, art, local customs, people's organisations, common philosophy and all the other elements, can only strengthen and develop where the Irish people themselves feel independent and confident and relate to other cultures on equal terms. The EEC has had the opposite effect.

The alternative

The EEC is obviously not working for Ireland. It has not only failed

to produce the promised economic miracle that lured us in, but has actually left us worse off than before entry.

The 26-County referendum held prior to joining the EEC, in 1972, recorded 84% in favour of entry; the latest Euro-barometer opinion poll puts satisfaction with membership at 42%. Separate figures are not given for the 6 Counties, but they will certainly not be more than that.

The alternative to membership is not to hide behind high tariff barriers — that is obviously counter-productive — but the first benefit of withdrawal would be the opening up of the domestic market to Irish producers.

The members of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA), which did not join the EEC, all have individual trading agreements with the EEC, including guaranteed agricultural markets, which do not affect their trading agreements with non-EEC countries or interfere with domestic economic policy.

European countries outside the EEC, such as Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden, have had higher levels of employment and lower levels of inflation than EEC countries.

Greenland, which joined the EEC as part of Denmark, has this year completed a negotiated withdrawal on favourable terms.

Sinn Féin advocates withdrawal from the EEC and the negotiation of trading agreements with it, but also advocates the implementation of a radical socialist economic programme in a united Ireland.

***Éire amháin,
pobal amháin
— an t-aon rogha***