

PRESS RELEASE

from

SINN FÉIN

January 17, 1971

NEW SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMME

The Constitution of Sinn Féin advocates not merely the complete overthrow of English rule in Ireland but also the setting up of a Democratic Socialist Republic based on the Proclamation of 1916.

Among our objectives are the establishment of "a reign of social justice based on Christian principles by a just distribution and effective control of the nation's wealth and resources", and the institution of "a system of government suited to the particular needs of the people."

Sinn Féin has never looked on the ending of British rule in Ireland as an end in itself but rather as a means to restore the "ownership of Ireland to the people of Ireland" (1916 Proclamation). In the words of the Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann 1919 which quoted Pádraic Pearse:

"We declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the nation, but to all its material possessions; the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation and with Pearse we re-affirm that all rights to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare."

Sinn Féin seeks to establish a system in which exploitation of man by man will not feature and which will be truly democratic right down through society.

"We declare that we desire our country to be ruled in accordance with the principles of Liberty, Equality and Justice for all, which alone can secure permanence of government in the willing adhesion of the people." (Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann, 1919)

Over the past few years much time and effort was devoted within Sinn Féin to preparing this Social and Economic Programme which we are now publishing. Some of those who were involved in an attempt to take over the Republican Movement had it suppressed, however, in favour of a more extreme draft outline which was never published.

Our total document consists of 12 sections, viz.

1. Introduction
2. Finance
3. Industry

.../...

SINN FÉIN 2a SRÁID CHAOIMHÍN Íoch BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH 8

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4. Agriculture
5. Fisheries
6. Forestry, Upland Grazing and Peat Production
7. Transport
8. Planning and Building
9. Irish Language and Culture
10. Education
11. Social Services
12. Trade

During the past 12 months the programme has been revised, updated and prepared for publication. Sections 1 - 8 are published to-day. It is hoped to publish the remainder in the near future.

Some of the more important and fundamental features of the programme can be summarised as follows:

1. The wealth of Ireland belongs to the people of Ireland and is theirs to be exploited and developed in their interests.
2. To ensure justice for all the means of production, distribution and exchange must be controlled by the people and administered democratically.
3. Finance, insurance and all key industries must be brought under State control. The principal agent of major development in industry, agriculture and fisheries must be the State.
4. The State will have complete control over the import and export of money.
5. An upper limit will be placed on the amount of land any one individual can own. Large ranches will be taken over and leased to groups of families to run on co-operative lines. Only resident citizens of the Republic will be allowed to own, purchase or lease land within Ireland.
6. Apart from the sectors mentioned above the main instrument of economic development will be co-operative enterprises in production, distribution and exchange. These will be based on the Comhar na gComharsan philosophy which is founded on the right of worker-ownership and is native Irish as well as being co-operative or distributist in character. Each individual worker will own an economic unit of the means of production in the form of farm, workshop, business or share in a factory or other co-operative. Here is real industrial democracy. Credit Unions will play an important role in this type of development.
7. Private enterprise will still have a role to play in the economy but it will be a much smaller role than it has to-day. It will have no place in key industries and state incentives will favour co-operative projects as the most socially desirable. No non-national shall be allowed to have a controlling interest in an Irish industry.

8. An independent stand will be taken in foreign policy. Power blocs such as NATO and the E.E.C. on the one hand and COMECON and the Warsaw Pact on the other will be avoided. Trade will be expanded with the smaller and neutral nations of Europe and with the countries of the third world in Asia and Africa. We have more in common with the underdeveloped countries of the world (where two-thirds of the world's population lives) than we have with the rich club of former colonial powers in the E.E.C. Trade links will be maintained with all countries and groups of states such as the Common Market, with which a trade agreement should be negotiated. The aim will be to have as much free trade as possible bearing in mind that certain industries will need protection for a period.
9. The Irish language and Irish culture will have an important morale-boosting role in the national effort.
10. Pending the achievement of national independence of all 32 Counties, an Economic Resistance Movement will be built up to defend the interests of the Irish people against exploitation, whether from foreign take-overs or native gombeen capitalism; to democratise industry and to promote the Comhar na gComharsan philosophy. Efforts to push us into the Common Market will be rigorously resisted and a demand will be made for the revoking of the Free Trade Area Agreement with England.

In the drafting of this programme our aim has been to outline a social and economic system which would strike a balance between Western capitalism with its poor and hungry amid plenty on the right and Eastern Soviet state capitalism (or any of its variations) with its denial of freedom and human rights on the left.

We hope this document will be widely reported, read and studied. Constructive criticism and comments will be welcomed because it is realised that as circumstances change, plans of this nature need to be revised and changed.

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"It is the duty of the nation to assure that every citizen shall have opportunity to spend his or her strength and faculties in the service of the people.

"In return for willing service we, in the name of the Republic, declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the nation's labour." (Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann, 1919).

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Title: Press Release from Sinn Féin: New Social and Economic Programme

Organisation: Sinn Féin

Date: 1971

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