

1977

Peace, Work & Class Politics : pamphlet

Sinn Féin The Workers party

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**PEACE,
WORK
& CLASS
POLITICS**

Sinn Féin
The Workers' Party

PEACE

Peace is the greatest single need in Ireland today. It is a priority for our Party.

Our policy is peace; our method is politics. We stand for peace without qualification. We oppose violence whatever its' origins.

Tomas MacGiolla, President Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, spoke on peace at the Party's 1976 Ard Fheis:—

Our repeated call has been for peace. It is the most revolutionary demand at this time. Throughout 1975 our members in Northern Ireland have worked tirelessly for it. We do not want the false peace of total surrender. We do not want peace between the exploiter and the exploited. We want peace between the poor and wretched. Peace that will lift, in the North, the daily burden of British, Loyalist and Provisional terror that has been loaded on top of the daily burden of wage robbery. Peace that will give the Catholic working man a pause and a chance to identify the parasites that feed on him. Peace that will allow the Protestant working man a pause to identify the real causes of his present misery. Peace, not in the woolly hope that Protestant and Catholic will come together by supernatural dispensation. Peace, not in the sick fantasies of the ultra-left, where the Protestant is to be beaten by Nationalists on a Monday and told to behave like a Socialist by the same people on a Tuesday. The peace they need and the peace they want and the peace our Party is now committed to giving them is the peace to think and plan how to lift the burden of bigotry, sectarianism and terror, both of the Catholic and Protestant middle class once and for all from their backs. We want a peace that removes the British jackboot, the Hibernian gunman and the Orange bomber, so that all our people can join in the struggle for the re-conquest of Ireland from the Bankers, the Profiteers and the exploiters — the struggle of the working class and the doomed small farmer class, for the ownership and control of the wealth of this country. That is the National Question which faces us.

WORK

Another great need in Ireland is jobs. Other parties talk about reducing the number of jobless but for us there is no "acceptable level" of unemployment. That's why we produced a plan for full employment by 1986.

Ireland's population is growing. And as it grows so too does the need for jobs. This need cannot be met by private enterprise. The native private sector is a pitiful shambles which can guarantee only low wages and insecurity to Irish workers. This is equally true, North and South.

State companies have created thousands of secure, well-paid jobs. And they could create many more if allowed to expand into manufacturing industry. Our recently-discovered resources of lead, zinc, oil and gas provide the raw materials for an industrial revolution. Companies like Bord na Mona, Nitrigin Eireann Teoranta and the ESB have the know-how to establish manufacturing industries based on these resources. But Fianna Fail and the Coalition parties say that private concerns like Tara Mines and Esso Petroleum should have control. This policy will not create any manufacturing jobs for our school-leavers or unemployed.

Our policy is designed to create jobs. We seek industrial development under State control. That's also the policy of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. Similarly, our other resources — land, forestries and fisheries — must be developed under social control to make a better and richer life for all our people. North and South, the development and expansion of the public sector are the surest first steps to full employment.

CLASS POLITICS

The major parties in this country are adept at being 'all things to all men' — particularly at election time.

But in government, Fianna Fail and the Coalition parties are true to only one class — the gombeen capitalists. Likewise, the sectarian parties — both Orange and Green — share a common loyalty to private enterprise.

Sectarianism and civil-war politics have been successfully employed by the gombeens in both states on this island to enable them to exploit Irish workers. It was in order to preserve the status quo that Southern businessmen made their deadly investment in the Provisionals in 1969. An investment Irish workers have since paid dearly for.

But there are signs of change. More and more people realise that flag-waving, tribal slogans and the violence they beget will not solve the problems of today.

Sinn Fein The Workers' Party welcomes this change. We welcome the prospect of a united working-class free of the old fears and prejudices. We are organising politically to build a new and better society. We would welcome your help.

Proposing the resolution to change the Party name to Sinn Fein The Workers' Party, at the 1977 Ard Fheis, Sean Garland, General Secretary SFWP said:

COMRADES, we have seen in the past ten years the most dramatic, the most far-reaching and the most deeply felt change to be suffered by any generation of Irish men and women since the struggle for independence was betrayed.

We have not only seen that change, which affected every citizen of this country; we have changed our social, political and economic strategies, not to accommodate but to exploit and, in certain cases, to resist it. Because, comrades, we would have been fools to do nothing more than watch its growth and shout feeble warnings from the sidelines. We would have been worse than fools to engage in an emotional and unrealistic struggle using ancient and outmoded means against forces equipped with the most sophisticated political, economic and psychological weapons.

Our Party, has taken the lead in Ireland in responding to the new conditions and meeting the new demands of our people — the Irish working class, industrial and agricultural, of any religion and of none, in every corner of the 32 Counties of our country. We have not only led the way in agitation on housing conditions, civil rights, natural resources, ground rents, fisheries, unemployment and the disastrous decision to join the Common Market, we have fully and honestly examined the state of our own organisation and its ability to meet the demands of a people, betrayed, confused, harrassed and deprived of real leadership,

We have recognised, without equivocation, the failure of elitist military policies and attitudes with which — and we face this, too — we were too closely associated during the 1950s and early 1960s. And we recognised, in the face of hostility, suspicion and defeat, that other policies were needed to lead our people in the continuing struggle for liberation from the shackles of imperialism.

We have shown the new face of imperialism to our people, we have called it by its true name, international monopoly capitalism; and we have identified its allies, the native boss and the opportunist politicians.

But take heed, and let our enemies take care; we will not achieve victory by the old means, we will not

use the antiquated, useless methods of the past. We will not appeal to old and dying sentiments, to lust for blood, our brothers' blood, and sacrifice on futile altars. We have had too much of death, too much futility.

We have not only recognised our mistakes, we have not only erased the mentality of restricted, inward-looking men from our organisation, we have rid ourselves of an obsession with the dead and replaced it with concern for the living. We have dismissed from our ranks — too often with bitter, even deadly consequences for ourselves — those who subscribed to militarism, opportunism and attitudes that tended towards sectarian conflict and the destruction of our class. Can our critics, in the conservative parties of the Twenty Six Counties and the sectarian groups of the North, say the same?

We are here, not to ignore our past but to build on it, not to cover our mistakes but to learn from them. We are here recognising the reality of the changes that have taken place and the conditions that now exist, in the Six Counties and in the Twenty Six Counties, affecting all of those we represent and those we must attract to our side in a conflict which is the most serious that the Irish working class has had to face. We are the Workers' Party. Let us not only acknowledge but proclaim it. For we are uniting the traditions of separatism and socialism that have been at the heart, and head of republicanism from the beginning.

**Join
Sinn Féin
The Workers' Party**

Write to:

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Name

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