

# PRESS RELEASE

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# SINN FÉIN

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## THE E.E.C. AND IRISH FISHING

Recent developments within the E.E.C., particularly with regard to Fishing and Regional Policy, underline in a sad but clear-cut way the truth of the continuing Sinn Féin allegation that life under the Treaty of Rome is unsuited to small underdeveloped economies like ours.

It is perfectly clear from Mr. Lenihan's behaviour at home and in Brussels that he is more interested in making party political capital against the departed Coalition Government than in trying to salvage something from a disastrous situation. This, in turn goes to show that changes in Government in Dublin mean little or no real change in the fortunes of the Irish fishing industry, or in the protection of Ireland's vital national interests in this or in any of the other urgent economic spheres.

Mr. Lenihan is right however when he says that we have little or no choice but to yield to the verdict of the European Court in the present circumstances. For the simple truth is that it was Mr. Lenihan's Fianna Fail party which dragged us into the E.E.C. in the first place, and signed on the dotted line an arrangement which took away our right to determine our own future, or as it now seems, even to protect what are our own riches so that they could be exploited in the interests of the Irish people.

Fianna Fáil accepted the basics of the E.E.C. fishing philosophy as part of the overall deal on E.E.C. entry. For them to complain now is less than honest. The basic aim of the Treaty of Rome on which the E.E.C. is based is to eliminate national economic differences, abolish national markets, and promote the interests of the "bigger fish" in a huge multi-national market where most businesses on the Irish small-nation scale do not stand a chance.

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The latest developments emphasise that this E.E.C. philosophy is not confined to manufacturing or heavy industry only. The aim is to make every industry a big industry, that is, one on a Western European scale, and to exploit even the smaller marginal advantages in natural resources which Ireland may enjoy in some limited areas, in the interests of the E.E.C. giant.

Most Irish people would not claim a right, even as members of the E.E.C., for us to go and demand a share of German coal or British oil. Yet we are expected to open our fishing waters - now the richest in the North Atlantic - to states which have little or no coastline, and which have plundered their own fish-stocks long ago. They now want to move in and plunder ours as well, in order to keep their own fish factories and huge multi-national-style industry going for a few more years.

There is something sick in talk of Ireland running the risk of having to compensate Dutch fishermen if we do not give them a catch-quota in our waters, which is several times that which the Brussels bureaucracy would allow to native Irish fishermen at the same time. There is no talk of compensating the Irish fishermen directly concerned, even where their restraint forms part of an overall conservation strategy, aimed at ensuring that we can still fish the seas in the next generation and beyond.

The myth of high-minded E.E.C. concern for conservation and international fish stocks has also been exposed. The totally greedy interest in fish exploitation, with little concern for anything other than short-term quick profits, is best indicated by the fact that the six original members of the E.E.C. have collectively been responsible for the destruction of most of the rich fishing areas in the North Atlantic. They now want to move in on Ireland's relatively small stocks, and wish to engage in the same selfish practices only as a second best - because there is nothing else left.

Those who placed hopes in the Regional Fund of the E.E.C. as a possible solution to Ireland's chronic underdevelopment have also been bitterly disappointed. Sinn Féin never believed that the Regional Fund was anything more than a smoke-screen to hide the real trend of economic development under Treaty of Rome policies - which is away from the poorer and outlying areas towards further concentration in the centre.

Surely any national regional policy, even on a limited scale, would try to develop the natural resources of a given area, like fishing in the Irish context, in the interests of the people who live in those areas? Instead what is now being attempted is a deliberate attempt to rob our underdeveloped areas of whatever wealth they have, to scoop out the natural raw material, which could be cultivated and processed in those areas, and take it back to the centre for processing in places like Holland which have considerable geographic advantages in world trade already, and are also well ahead in the process of industrial development.

Sinn Féin's recent policy document The National Offshore sets in context the root causes of the fishing controversy and the failure of E.E.C. Regional Policy. It also outlines the alternative which we aim to pursue in the interests of the Irish people.

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