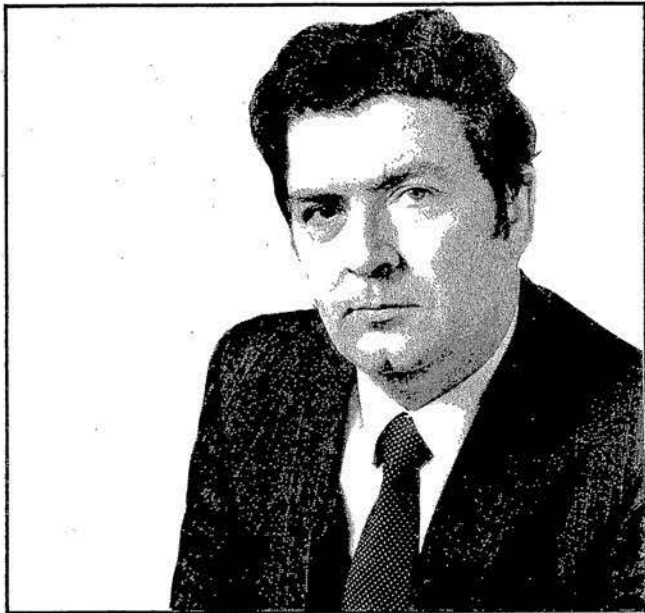


STRENGTH IN EUROPE



THE ELECTION: THE CANDIDATE AND HIS RECORD

The Importance of this Election

The European Parliament to be elected on 15th June 1989 will preside over the most important and exciting phase of the European Community's development to date. As the process for completing the internal market progresses, the impact of the European Community upon all our lives will increase. The year 1992 will mark the beginning of a new era in Europe, an era of integration of the economies of the member states. As the tariff barriers come down, and the whole of Europe opens up to the free movement of goods, services and people, the importance of the central institution of the EEC will increase. However, the direction of the Community's affairs must not be left in the hands of bureaucrats and ministers alone. The more important Europe becomes in our lives, the more important it is that we have direct control of it through our elected representatives. It is therefore imperative and inevitable that the European Parliament make up the 'democratic deficit', that it assumes an even more important role in controlling legislation and executive action. The Europe which we build must be 'A People's

Europe', a real Community, and not just a Market.

The Candidate

In proposing John Hume as our candidate in this election we are offering the voters two major advantages for Northern Ireland. Firstly we are proposing a candidate with an established international reputation, a candidate with a stature in Europe (and indeed, beyond) unequalled by our other Northern Ireland politicians. Secondly we are offering a candidate who is a leading member of the Socialist Group, the most powerful voting bloc in the European Parliament. In the last ten years the stature and influence of John Hume in Europe and the support he has commanded from the Socialist Group, and other groups in the European Parliament, have been of great importance, and have contributed to many significant achievements.

The Record

It is worthwhile to recall those achievements. In relation to agriculture, John Hume was a key figure in the successful campaign to extend the less-favoured areas, and in winning the first and second ADP programmes for these areas. In relation to the urban problems of Belfast, it was John Hume who won the Urban Renewal Programme, worth £63 million pounds, which contributed to a major housing boost for the city. In relation to cultural matters, he was again the key figure in the establishment of the Bureau of Lesser Spoken Languages, and the setting up of a permanent Bureau office in Dublin. Other initiatives taken by John Hume led to the Haagerup Report, which placed the political affairs of Northern Ireland on the European agenda for the first time, and the Maher Report which laid down a blueprint for an Integrated Rural Development Programme for Northern Ireland. While pursuing the interests of Northern Ireland in Europe, John Hume has still found time to become a very significant figure in international issues, as a defender of human rights, particularly in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, as an important spokesman on environmental issues, and as a leading proponent of the need for a more effective regional policy in Europe. He is the author of a major parliamentary report unanimously endorsed by the European Parliament on Regional Policy in Ireland. On the basis of this record, we confidently ask for the support of the electorate.

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The Socialist Group

In asking the electorate to support John Hume, we are not just asking for support for the SDLP or for him personally. We are also asking for support for the Socialist Group, the largest most powerful and most progressive group in the European Parliament. The Socialist Group has been responsible for most of the important initiatives taken by the European Parliament in recent years. The doubling of the structural funds, the development of regional policies, the prioritisation of the Social Fund, the declaration in favour of women's rights, new measures to improve education, training and job opportunities for young people – all of these and many other progressive steps have been the result of the work of the Socialist Group. As a member party of the Socialist Group, the SDLP has access to more real power and influence in Europe than any other party in Northern Ireland. That power and influence we have used and will continue to use for the good of all the citizens of Northern Ireland.

PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

Alone among the major parties in this election, the SDLP is strongly committed to the European ideal and to the concept of a United Europe. We believe that it is only through unity in Europe that we can build greater peace, prosperity and freedom for our peoples. No country can confront alone the major economic challenges of the 1990's. The European framework offers us, in Northern Ireland, a means of escaping from the suffocating policies of Thatcherism, and by joining with our European partners in the promotion of economic development, the extension of social justice and human rights, and the achievement of equality of opportunity.

The European Community, with a selective and co-operative strategy of growth, can become the most dynamic area within the world economy in the next decade. The achievement of a single market will, in itself, bring huge economic benefits. The Cecchini Report estimates that at least £7,500 million will be saved by doing away with unnecessary paperwork and delays involved in getting goods past frontier controls. There will be further cost savings for industry in the economies of scale which the single market will bring, and in the greater efficiency which the liberalisation of services and capital entail. Cecchini estimates that up to 7% could be added to the European Community's GDP, that prices would fall by up to 6%, and that up to 5 million new jobs could be created. This kind of economic

growth would enable the EEC to make a decisive contribution to the creation of a new international economic order which would facilitate greater growth in the developing countries, and a solution to the Third World debt problem.

Community Institutions

If we are to maximise the potential of the opportunities now facing us in Europe, then the central institutions of the Community must be strengthened so that they are capable of promoting and co-ordinating expansionist policies. Equally, it is necessary to strengthen the machinery of democratic control so as to ensure that sectional interests do not accumulate excessive power, at the expense of the citizens and their elected representatives.

The first priority is to enlarge the role of the European Parliament. As the volume and pace of decision making in the EEC has increased in the run-up to 1992, the control and scrutiny exercised by national parliaments has declined. If the basic principles of parliamentary democracy in Western Europe are to be maintained then the European Parliament must be in a position to make up the 'democratic deficit'. No area of EEC policy should be exempt from democratic parliamentary control.

In common with our colleagues in the Socialist Group, we have agreed the following institutional objectives for the work of the next European Parliament:

- the strengthening of the power and democratic legitimacy of the Commission, making it more responsible to the Parliament and requiring that it receive a vote of investiture from the European Parliament.
- the introduction of a system of full co-decision making between the Council of Ministers and the Parliament, in parallel with the extension of majority voting in the Council.
- greater parliamentary control of the Community budget.
- the development of the system of guaranteeing and protecting the rights of citizens in the field of Community legislation.

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Economic Growth and Monetary Union

The most important purpose of strengthening the Central Institution of the Community is to enable the member states to properly plan and co-ordinate expansionist policies for growth, while at the same time ensuring that there is an equitable distribution of economic growth throughout the regions. Co-ordination is necessary because the growth potential of the Community as a whole is much greater than the growth potential of the individual member states acting alone. Co-ordination is also necessary to ensure that expansionist policies are (1) diversified, in such a way as to take account of regional differences within the Community, and (2) selective, so that they address those sectors of the European economy most suitable for growth. In fact Europe needs a Common Industrial Policy, to plan the future for advanced technological industries, and to restructure traditional industry to meet new conditions. At the same time the Community's Regional Policy must be expanded so as to develop a comprehensive infrastructure of roads, harbours, airports, transport systems and telecommunications, in order to give real substance to the concept of a Europe without frontiers.

Scientific and technological research are essential. Alongside the initiatives of national governments, the implementation of the multi-annual framework programme for research (including ERASMUS, COMETT etc) will enable us to pool hitherto scattered efforts. Above all, a vigorous programme to stimulate and encourage small and medium sized enterprises, and co-operatives is vital to the effort to generate growth and jobs.

International monetary instability is a serious problem in the way of achieving higher growth levels. European monetary cohesion would reduce the power of the money marketeers and financial speculators and contribute to a more stable international monetary situation. We believe therefore that, as an immediate priority, all member states should be part of the European Monetary System. The EMS itself should be developed so as to lead quickly to monetary union and the creation of a European Central Bank. The Community must simultaneously develop a coherent system of rules and information procedures in order to allow democratic regulation and public scrutiny of monetary and stocks and shares transactions.

Regional Development

Europe has never had a real regional policy. It has only had a Regional Fund. This has made some very useful contributions to

specific regional development projects, but its overall impact has been sporadic and patchy. It has not stimulated a strategic approach to the development of the regions, though this is also the fault of national governments for failing to use the resources of the regional fund in an integrated and programmatic way.

The reform and doubling of the Structural Funds (ERDF, ESF and FEOGA-Guidance) has been managed in such a way as to correct these previous deficiencies. The application of the increased funds has been concentrated in a smaller number of the most deprived regions. These are called Objective No 1 regions, (both parts of Ireland are included) and 65% of total structural fund expenditure will go to these regions. National governments have been required to submit development plans for 3-5 years for their Objective No 1 Regions in order to ensure that the Structural Funds are used as part of a strategy of development.

The Northern Ireland administration has now submitted 'Regional Development Framework for Northern Ireland 1989-1993'. The Irish Government has also submitted a 'National Development Plan 1989-1993'. The contrast between the two documents is very marked. The Northern Ireland document is largely descriptive of current government actions, and contains little in the way of imaginative proposals to use the increased funds for new initiatives. We will be pressing government for further development of its proposals in order to stimulate a co-ordinated approach to the specific problems of the most disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland. Fortunately, the proposals submitted to Brussels last April are not regarded as final or complete, and there is, therefore, time and space for new proposals and more detailed elaboration.

An Integrated Rural Development Programme

Central to the struggle for economic advance in Northern Ireland is the concept of an integrated rural development programme. We have been pressing government for a number of years to introduce such a programme. John Hume has already won approval from the European Parliament for this approach, as a consequence of his initiative which led to the Maher Report. This report lays down the essential elements of an integrated rural development programme and has been lying on the table of the British Government for the last three years, yet they have failed to respond to the proposals it makes.

It is in the interests of all of Europe that we stabilise and preserve rural communities. The breakdown of traditional rural

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communities with their intricate networks of interweaving relationships, obligation and constraints has led to the over-expansion of urban centres, and a consequent strain on all of the public services. It has led also to the growth of rootless, restless urban population, vulnerable to unemployment and exploitation. The consequence is the growing phenomenon of urban crime, violence, drug abuse and racketeering.

For a variety of reasons we have been spared this experience in the North, though the rapid over-expansion of the Dublin area has given rise to some of these problems there. However, it makes good sense to learn the lessons of the European experience and introduce policies which enable rural communities to survive, expand, and develop a standard of living on a par with urban communities. This needs a strategic approach to the development of communications, the improvement of services and amenities, and the creation of alternative employment, including part-time employment for small farmers and their families who are not fully employed on the land. It also means supporting and expanding initiatives like the Rural Poverty Action Project to address the severe problems of poverty and deprivation in rural areas. It means too, introducing a scheme of assistance for small farmers to provide replacement farm dwellings in areas like those west of the Bann where the degree of housing unfitness is at critical levels.

There is also a surprising number of remote rural areas in the north where large numbers of households are without mains water or electricity; there is a clear need for a vigorous programme to complete rural electrification and water supply. In short it means an integrated rural development programme.

Agriculture

In the agricultural sector the problems of surplus production in many of the major commodities has largely been brought under control. This creates a situation where it is now possible to ease the effects on the weaker sectors and regions where the reforms have created some real hardship. In relation to milk quotas it is time to ease the problem for small producers with under 40 cows, who have been disproportionately affected. They all should at least be enabled to return quickly to their 1983 levels of production. It is also necessary for government to create a 'quota pool' which would ease the problem of acquiring a quota for aspiring new producers, especially young farmers. In fact governments should themselves take charge of the

buying, selling and leasing of quotas, in order to prevent profiteering and exert supervision and control.

There remains a compelling argument for the graduation of headage payments up to a cut-off point, in the beef and sheep sectors.

The principle has already been conceded in the new special premium for beef, and the general extension of it would enable scarce resources to be channelled in a more concentrated way to the most needy farmers. The British Government is now the only government in the EC which does not impose an upper limit on headage payments, and the result is that many very large and wealthy farmers make a fortune out of CAP.

We have regularly pointed out the need for a Rural Investment Bank which would offer to farmers and agribusiness the same access to cheaper money which is available to other industries from the European Investment Bank. We will continue to press for this. Equally we have campaigned for years for a realistic forestry policy based on the principle of annual payments. The framework now exists in Europe for such a policy to be put in place and we will continue to demand that the British government move forward on this issue.

There are a number of smaller areas where government could assist the farming sector, especially in the less favoured areas. Resources should be allocated to assist in the creation of machinery pools, the sinking of artesian wells, and for the use of slurry digesters. It is likely that the European Community would assist, under the new structural funds, a programme of assistance for these and similar projects. And work should begin now on the preparation of a new ADP programme to follow on when the present programme expires in 1991, so that necessary improvement of farm structures in the less favoured areas can continue.

The special case of Northern Ireland in respect of fisheries must be constantly projected within the EEC. The strengthening of our fishing industry, the modernisation of our fishing fleet, and the expansion of fish processing offer a source of considerable employment based on the use of our own resources.

We reiterate that there is a growing need for harmonisation of the agricultural regimes north and south, so as to achieve parity of treatment for farmers in all parts of this island. The Anglo-Irish Agreement is a ready framework within which progress can be made in this direction.

Finally, more importance must be given to the relationship

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between agriculture and the environment. Food production, treatment, processing and distribution must be carried on in ways which respect the environment. Clear air, clear water, unpolluted soil and natural foods are an absolute priority. Farmers must be employed not only in the production of food, but also in protecting and enhancing the countryside.

The Natural Environment

In common with our sister parties in the Socialist Group we want a 'cleaner, greener Europe' as a basic condition of civilised life. The sheer size and scale of recent environmental catastrophes, and the steady, remorseless pollution of our planet, make it clear that action to counter this threat is only possible in the international sphere. The European Community is, in fact, an ideal instrument in this regard. Attention has focused on a number of major areas:

- air pollution from large combustion plants.
- air pollution by motor-vehicle exhaust gases.
- ozone layer depletion as a result of CFC emissions.
- pollution of rivers, lakes, and inland waters generally, by chemicals and fertilisers used in farming, and by industrial effluent.
- pollution of seas and estuaries by untreated sewage, discharges from nuclear power stations, and the dumping of radio-active and other toxic waste at sea.
- accidental spillage of hydrocarbons and other toxic materials at sea.

A number of Community Directives and Regulations have been adopted in relation to these matters and a number of international conventions have been signed. The problem is that the conventions do not cover all aspects of the problem, and are not even functioning effectively in relation to those problems they do cover, because of lack of political will on the part of many governments. The same lack of political will has meant that even within the EC certain Community Directives have not been properly written into member state law. What is needed is more binding international conventions,

and acceptance by the Council of Ministers that European legislation must be enforced and extended. Along with our Socialist colleagues we will be pressing for the adoption of the 'polluter pays' principle. We will also be pressing for the introduction of increased financial incentives to encourage the recycling of waste, the use of waste for energy generation, and reduction of the use of non-recyclable materials. Finally we will be pressing for much stricter international control of the movement of dangerous substances, so as to reduce the risk of accidental discharge.

The most potent threat of all to the environment of this planet is from nuclear power. Absolute priorities for Socialists are the finding of alternative cheap energy from renewable sources, the dismantling of nuclear installations, and outlawing the production of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

The Social Environment

As well as a clear and beautiful natural environment, a proper social environment is vital to the construction of a 'People's Europe'. Every citizen of Europe, and of the world, is entitled to a full education, a job with a fair wage, a decent home to live in, a comprehensive system of social security and health insurance, and freedom to live without fear. The creation of employment continues to be our greatest priority, and that is why our central proposal is a co-ordinated policy of expansion of the European economy. However, as well as creating jobs we must guarantee equality of rights and opportunities for all citizens, and especially those who have experienced special disadvantages in the past, such as young people; women; racial, linguistic or religious minorities; the disabled.

Today unemployment hits hardest those whose level of education and training is insufficient. The European Community must promote, along with the social partners, plans for training young people, women, and other disadvantaged groups, and also for the prolongation of professional training within employment. In particular, every school leaver should be given a firm 'Social Guarantee' of an immediate two years of employment and/or training.

The term 'Social Europe' is inextricably linked with the proposals of President Delors made to the European Confederation of Trade Unions in May 1988. We welcomed these proposals, and we regard them as the cornerstone of a 'People's Europe'. In particular socialists believe and will work for:

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- the rights of workers and their representatives to participate in company decision making.
- the prioritisation of health and safety measures to protect the workers in the workplace.
- the right of every worker to life-long training.
- the right of every worker to a comprehensive system of social security.

Europe and the World

The reduction of antagonisms and armaments in Europe, and the world, is an absolute priority for member parties of the Socialist Group. The EC is the nucleus of the peaceful and free union of the democratic states of western Europe. As such it can play a key role in creating rapprochement between East and West, and must pursue that role by more positive and active diplomatic means. Our purpose must be to bring about nuclear disarmament, to revitalise the process of negotiations on the reduction of conventional weapons and forces, and thus to make the world a safe place to live in.

The people of the world are entitled to live in freedom from fear. They are also entitled to freedom from hunger, disease and

poverty. Simple justice dictates that we cannot continue to tolerate the social economic and cultural exploitation of the Third World. We in the Socialist Group will continue to demand that the EC give a consistent and meaningful level of development aid as a basic feature of its common external policy. Our aim must be the launching of an emergency development plan for the Third World based on the UN target of an all-round contribution of 0.7% of GDP. Such a strategy must go hand-in-hand with a financial strategy to remit the debts of the poorest countries, and to renegotiate the overall debt by increasing repayment periods and reducing interest rates.

The European Community must be a pillar of human rights in the world. The European Parliament has been and will continue to be an important forum within which constraints can be exerted on the member states to observe proper standards of human rights within their own jurisdictions. It has also offered an important forum for the discussion of human rights issues in the world at large, and the increasing number of world leaders who have travelled to Strasbourg is proof of that.

In relation to all of these matters the work of the Socialist Group has been central and often decisive. In relation to Northern Ireland and the EC the role of John Hume has been central and often decisive. The citizens of Northern Ireland can support the work both of John Hume and the Socialist Group on June 15th.