

Gerry Adams Calls for 'No' Vote on Treaty

May 28—*In a speech to the National Convention (Ard Fheis) of the Irish party Sinn Féin on May 26, five days before the May 31 Irish referendum on the killer EU Austerity Pact, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams presented a searing indictment of the policies of the ruling parties, and called for a resounding "No" vote in the referendum. So far, polls tend to show the "Yes" ahead, but many voters are undecided—and the Irish have a way of springing surprises.*

Here are excerpts from Adams' speech (subheads have been added):

Yesterday was Africa Day, when that continent celebrated its freedom from colonialism. But today Western powers haggle while 20 million people in the Sahel region of North Africa face a severe famine. Thus far the international community has not provided the money urgently needed.

This Ard Fheis extends solidarity to the suffering people of Africa. We urge our government to do its best to encourage the international community to help the people of the Sahel...

Everything is relative, but in Ireland we also have our difficulties. Over half a million are unemployed—almost 450,000 in this state. Many citizens cannot pay their bills or mortgages.

Youth unemployment is especially high, North and South.

I recently spoke to one woman who told me that three of her brothers, all married, left two weeks ago for Australia. Her distress was plain and is shared by tens of thousands of other families.

The policies of Fianna Fáil, and now Fine Gael and

Labour, are responsible.

Forced emigration is one of the huge damning failures of this state.

Citizens are angry. Angry at the political and banking elite and the developers—the golden circle—that enriched itself through corruption, greed, and bad policies.

Angry at the government for failing to hold these elites to account. Angry at broken promises by Fine Gael and Labour not to pay one more red cent to bad banks and then handing over EU24 billion.

Many citizens thought they were voting for change in last year's General Election. But what happened? Tweedle dum has been replaced by Tweedle dee and Tweedle dumber.

Fine Gael and Labour were elected to change the disastrous policies of Fianna Fáil leaderships. Instead they embraced these policies.

They have cut public services and wages; attacked the rights of the most vulnerable; and introduced new stealth taxes. The household charge, water charges, septic tank charges, VAT and fuel increases.

What is the point of the Labour Party in this government?...

My commitment to you this evening is that Sinn Féin will not make any promises we will not keep. When Sinn Féin makes a commitment—as we demonstrated often during the peace process—we keep our commitments....

Breaking the Cycle of Austerity and Inequality

We have to break the cycle of austerity and inequality. We need to get citizens back to work. We need fair taxation. We need to eliminate wasteful public spending. And yes, it is crucial that we deal with the banking debt.

But these policies must be accompanied by a plan to get citizens back to work. And austerity won't do it.

In the North, the absence of fiscal powers and cuts by the British Tory government, have made the Executive's task more difficult. In this state the government gives fiscal powers away!



Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams

This state needs a government-led job creation strategy....

All citizens, throughout their lives, should have access to education at all levels based on their ability, but the cost of educating their children is increasingly a challenge for many parents. Education must give children, all our children, the best start possible. That also is good economics.

A public health service, free at the point of delivery, which provides for citizens from the cradle to the grave, and also funded by direct taxation, is good economics....

After one year of this government, the health service is worse, now because this government is doing exactly the same thing as Fianna Fáil. And patients and their families are paying the price, while those at the top award themselves obscene salaries and huge bonuses.

Citizens need to stand together against this. It is wrong. It must be stopped....

Unemployment is driving young people to far-off foreign shores. In Leitrim I was told that half of those between the ages of 22 and 26 have left. The heart is being torn from communities, as a whole GAA [Gaelic Athletic Association] generation leaves for Canada and Australia.

In this state around 70,000 people are emigrating each year. *That's nine citizens every hour* [emphasis added]....

Rural Ireland, and especially the West, is being devastated. Forced emigration is not a life-style choice. But it is an indictment of the two men from the west who lead this bad government....

The Austerity Treaty

I want to turn now to the Austerity Treaty.

When considering what way to vote, people need to ask themselves if the austerity of recent budgets led to jobs and growth?

The answer is obvious. The answer is no. If you accept that, you should vote No.

Austerity isn't working now and won't start working on 1st June. Neither will it bring stability or certainty.

Austerity means more cuts. And increased charges.

Right now, if you do not like the policies of the government, you can sack them or re-elect them. You won't be able to do that with unelected, unaccountable bureaucrats in Frankfurt and Brussels. That is undemocratic.

Don't give up your power.

Don't give your democratic rights away.

And don't write austerity into the constitution.

Fine Gael, Labour, and Fianna Fáil have not offered any positive arguments in favour of this Treaty. The Taoiseach [prime minister] won't even debate the issue! That's not leadership! That's not showing citizens the respect they deserve!

Instead Mr. Kenny, Mr. Gilmore, and Mr. Martin are trying to scare people into voting Yes.

Whether it was British rule or a domineering church hierarchy, Irish citizens have had enough of being ruled by fear. We are done with that.

The Irish government is also out of step with the rest of Europe. Other EU states are delaying ratification because they know the mood in Europe is changing. But not our government.

They settled for much less than anyone else, despite Sinn Féin's clear warning about the foolishness of accepting this bad Treaty. When the Taoiseach endorsed it in the Dáil, he never mentioned growth or jobs. Not once! Or a writedown of Bank debt.

The truth is Mr. Kenny and Mr. Gilmore are out of their depth. This Government simply cannot be trusted on this Treaty. It claims we will be locked out of funds if citizens vote NO. That's not true! The legal mandate of the ESM is very clear. Funding will be provided, and I quote, where it is "indispensable to safeguard the financial stability of the euro area as a whole and of its Member States."

So don't be fooled. Remember what Fine Gael and Labour said during the election. Remember all Fianna Fáil's promises. Don't be fooled. Be wise.

Join with the millions across Europe who are demanding an end to austerity.

It is a good and patriotic and positive action to say NO to a Treaty that is bad for you, bad for your family and community, bad for society, and entirely without any social or economic merit.

Next Thursday, vote No.

Irish people have the genius and the right to demand it.

In our time.

For all citizens, for all our communities.

So, now is the time for courage.

For commitment and patriotism.

For hope.

For all our children.

For our great country.

For Ireland.