

MOVE ON WITH THE SEA

VOTE Eamonn McCANN

The gap between the rich and the rest of us keeps growing. But the main parties keep their focus on Orange-Green relations. The SEA is a voice for all who have been left behind. We don't represent one community against the other. We believe that, in politics, class is more important than creed. The other parties fight separate contests in different communities. For them, the question is, who'll win the best deal for "our side" in comparison with "the other side". The result has been stalemate. Put them back in, and stalemate will continue.

The SEA offers a better way. The more emphasis we give to the issues which unite us, the better we can handle the issues which divide us.

EAMONN McCANN, 62, has been active in left-wing politics for more than 40 years. He was a member of the Labour Party in the 1960s and provided a strong socialist voice in the early civil rights movement. He first stood for Foyle in 1969.

He has been involved ever since in challenging the abuse of State power, particularly in relation to Bloody Sunday. He is a campaigner for the rights of children and disabled people, and against sexism, racism and homophobia.

He is a member of the Socialist Workers' Party, chairman of the local branch of the NUJ, vice-chairman of Derry Trades Council and a member of Amnesty International. He is father of Kitty, Luke and Matty, grandfather of Rosie and lives in Derry with his partner, Goretti Horgan.

To support the SEA
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Seven years into the Agreement, the walls of sectarianism are not coming down, but are being built higher. None of the main parties has a remedy for this.

Our remedy is to make the class we belong to more important than the community we come from.

We put the emphasis on the fight against poverty; defence of the public service; opposition to privatisation; union rights for all; protection of the environment; support for civil liberties.

Our strategy is for people to organise from below---not to look to politicians or paramilitaries.

I'll use Westminster as a platform to mobilise support for all those--Catholic, Protestant, immigrant, gay, straight, whatever---who are abused by State or other agencies.

I will be a voice against the big-business agenda which has given Ryanair more say in how Derry is developed than any local community---and seen our publicly-owned railways systematically neglected. Behind the scenes, the main parties all operate as local managers of capitalism.

I will use my position as MP to rally support for all workers denied decent pay or dignity by companies which care only for profit.

I will organise against the arms trade and work to undermine the scoundrels who have spent billions on an illegal war on Iraq while crying poverty when it comes to health and education. They can pay for the bombs which flattened Fallujah---but not for speech therapists for children in need. There's billions for the Eurofighter and the Trident submarine---but not for a proper ambulance service or free tuition.

The main parties believe these issues don't matter here. This is insulting and stupid. Insulting because it depicts us as a petty people. Stupid because it defines us entirely by reference to religion---the recipe for the sectarian stalemate they have created.

Water charges make the point. Only a mass campaign of non-payment holds out hope of defeating privatisation and saving the water service jobs. But such a campaign would have to mobilise across the board. This would directly challenge parties which are based on mobilising one community in competition with the other.

It's for this reason all the main parties say they are against water charges---but are all against a non-payment campaign, too. There's the difference in a nutshell.