

## Questions for today's meeting

### The People's Movement poses the following questions to all participants in today's meeting.

- ▶ Can a “new alternative” politics ignore the fact that two-thirds of the laws that we must obey are enacted by the European Union in Brussels, with the Irish people having only a minor say in determining these laws?
- ▶ How does this square with the claim of the Irish people “to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies”?
- ▶ Can a “new alternative” politics ignore the fact that Ireland has no control either of its rate of interest or of its currency exchange rate, both of which are the classic economic tools of all independent governments that seek to advance their people's welfare?
- ▶ How is it compatible with “the unfettered control of Irish destinies’ to have lost the right to sign trade treaties with other states and to have a legal obligation to work towards a common foreign and security policy?
- ▶ How independent is a country that has a legal obligation both to progressively improve its “military capabilities” and to aid and assist other EU member-states experiencing armed attack “by all means” in its “power”?
- ▶ How free are Irish citizens, owing, as we do, obedience to the laws of the European Union and loyalty to its authority over and above our obligations as citizens of Ireland, in the event of any conflict between the two? How sovereign is our parliament when it must “contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union”?
- ▶ Is the provision of our Constitution that “commits” the country to the European Union a real manifestation of our self-determination or a slavish “oath of true faith and allegiance” to the EU?
- ▶ Having to obey laws made mostly by others means being ruled by others. It is the opposite of a country being independent, sovereign, and democratic. Is that a concern, or are “bread-and-butter” issues the only really important ones?

- ▶ Does it matter that we have one member out of twenty-seven (3.7 per cent influence) in the EU Commission, the body of non-elected officials which has the legal monopoly of proposing all EU laws?
- ▶ We have one Minister out of twenty-seven (3.7 per cent influence) and seven votes out of a total of 345 (2 per cent) on the EU Council of Ministers, which decides EU laws on the basis of a simple majority (14) of the 27 EU states, as long as that majority is also a “qualified majority” of 255 votes out of a total of 345. This arrangement is fully supported by Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, and the Labour Party. Would it be supported or ignored by a “new alternative” politics?
- ▶ From November 2014, EU member-states will vote according to their population, just as they would in a unified state. The change in the voting system to one where countries vote according to their population size benefits the larger states, while a “one country one vote” system benefits the smaller ones. In Ireland's case, the arrangements will more than halve the Irish state's vote, from 2 per cent to 0.8 per cent. Again, will a “new alternative” politics line up with Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Labour Party in acceptance of this arrangement?
- ▶ The Republic elects twelve MEPs out of 736 to the EU Parliament. These are no longer “Irish” representatives but rather “representatives of the Union's citizens,” but they are only 1.6 per cent of the representation in the EU Parliament. The European Parliament and national parliaments such as the Dáil cannot propose European laws. The European Parliament can veto a law or may propose amendments to EU drafts but if the Commission does not support an amendment it can be approved only by a unanimous vote of the 27 member-states. Is this internationalism or the democratic façade for a 21st-century form of imperialism?
- ▶ The thrust of the EU integration process is to erode as much of the democracy and independence as states like Ireland possess. The champions of EU integration are seeking in effect to erode the democratic heritage of the French Revolution in order to clamp a form of financial feudalism on Europe. Hence, democrats in every country have an internationalist duty to defend democracy against such forces. What stand will the “new alternative” politics take on this fundamental issue?