Richard Behal in Court

Sinn Fein candidate censored in 1984 European elections

Refuses to purchase TV licence in protest for past 24 years

Richard Behal was a candidate for Sinn Fein in 1984 European Election in Munster. This was an international election. He was prevented from appearing on RTE, due to a Ministerial Order under Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act. His policies were misrepresented by RTE on a special Munster constituency programme, which gave the other eight candidates extended airtime. At the end the programme purported to give the audience a very brief summary of Behal's platform, but misrepresented it. Behal was never contacted by RTE.

This action, primarily by the Irish state but also as aided and abetted by RTE, was a denial of democracy and of Behal and Sinn Fein's right to put policies to the electorate on the most important medium of public opinion. Despite this, Behal received nearly 13,000 first preference votes. How different things might have been had a democratic election been held.

After that experience Behal publicly refused to buy a television licence. Before and during the election he had one - see 1983, 1984 copies below.

Behal served 15 days in Cork Jail in 2005 on foot of his refusal on principle to pay a fine imposed by the courts for not having a TV licence. He has been convicted again in 2007, and presently is facing and preparing to appeal another Circuit Court conviction in Killarney on November 25. This is a personal decision, but an important one in defence of the principle of free speech. Media self-censorship continues to the present day. It affects reporting the north and campaigning groups.

RICHARD BEHAL (LEFT) AT MUNSTER EURO ELECTION COUNT 1984 WITH OTHER CANDIDATES
THEY WERE ALLOWED ACCESS TO RTE - BEHAL WAS CENSORED UNDER SECTION 31

Behal will consent to buying a licence when:

He receives a proper apology and acknowledgement from the Irish state that it undermined the principle of informed consent by banning him from appearing on RTE during the 1984 European election - contrary to Section 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;

He receives from RTE an acknowledgement and apology for their censorship and misrepresentation of his policies under their draconian and illegal interpretation of Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act.

Behal states:

I am taking this stance in defence of freedom of speech and democracy. This was a direct interference in an election. The censorship of that era prolonged violence by disaffecting many from the political process. It also poisoned media practice up to and including the present day.

I have maintained my stance over the years. While I am prepared to face the consequences, I invite those working or writing in, or commenting on, the media to assist this campaign by supporting my two demands.

Individuals and organisations can support me by email and/or by standing for freedom of speech in Killarney on November 25.

Contact Richard Behal
richard.behal@gmail.com
087 4100691 (preferred), 064 32723

Support Richard by email
Show your solidarity at
KILLARNEY COURTHOUSE
25 NOVEMBER 2008
Support
Freedom of Speech
Oppose Censorship

BEHAL — RICHARD

RICHARD BEHAL (46), an electrician, married with three children and lives in Killarney Co. Kerry. He joined the Republican Movement in 1957 and was involved in the "Border Campaign" being sentenced to a term of imprisonment in Mountjoy in 1959.

During further terms of imprisonment in 1963 and 1964 he took part in a hunger strike for political status. Imprisoned again in 1965 for his part in opposing the visit to the Free State of the British royal family's Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon, he was later charged with involvement in an attack on the Royal Navy torpedo boat, Brave Borderer, in Waterford Harbour—more than £1½ million worth of damage was caused in the attack.

While on remand in Limerick Jail on this charge, Richard escaped. In February 1966 and while on the run he organised widespread protests to highlight partition and Free State collaboration with Stormont during the 1966 Golden Jubilee celebrations of the 1916 Rising. He developed a keen interest in promoting the republican cause on the international stage during this period as he spent some time on the Continent and in the United States.

When the North erupted in 1969, Richard was active again, in the early 1970's he returned to the Continent as a representative of Sinn Fein, co-founded and became head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau (FAB).

The highlight of his involvement in the FAB came during the H-Block hunger strike of 1981 when he became the first non-governmental Irishman to address the general assembly of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, arguing the case of Irish POWs in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh.

Richard Behal enjoys fishing, Irish and International music and culture. Keenly interested in environmental and natural energy projects, antiques, old metalwork and the conservation of historic monuments and buildings.

National Manifesto

Tá SINN FÉIN ag dul sa iomaíocht i dToghchán seo na hEoraipe ar bhonn 32 Condae agus fíor rogha á thabhairt againn do phobal na tíre.

SINN FÉIN is contesting the EEC elections in all five constituencies in the 32 Counties, putting before the people a real alternative.

● We are the only all-Ireland party with an unapologetic stand in support of National re-unification and in defence of the right of the Irish people to resist British occupation.

● Sinn Fein has consistently been opposed to membership of the EEC and we believe that it is more than ever obvious that the EEC has not only failed to produce the economic miracle promised on entry but has proven disastrous.

NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

● EEC membership has meant that National sovereignty already assailed by British occupation and partition—has been voluntarily surrendered to Brussels. Dependency on Britain is now shared with dependency on the EEC.

Neutrality, a principle strongly supported by Irish people, both North and South, has been eroded within the EEC by intimate foreign policy and defence co-operation with the NATO nuclear military alliance.

ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

● The EEC represents an economic power-bloc set up to serve the needs of multinational capital, not the interests of any small country. The gap between rich and poor states within the EEC is growing.

● Irish based industries have been destroyed by the opening up of the economies, North and South, to the unfettered competition of the richer states. Unemployment has risen by more than a quarter of a million since entry to the EEC.

● Independent Irish economic planning is impossible within the EEC, even a "Buy Irish" campaign is illegal.

● Agriculture, the area where most benefits were promised in the EEC, is, instead, in chaos. EEC policy favours the large factory-farms or ranches, not the smaller farms. Since entry, 84,000 farmers have left the land; 10,000 jobs have been lost in food-processing; food imports in 1983 to the 26 Counties were £200,000,000. Irish farmers are now worse off in real terms than in 1972. The milk super-levy, even as restricted, will hit the main potential development area promised to Irish farmers.

● The EEC's common fisheries policy allocated a mere one twentieth of the total EEC catch to Irish boats although more than one quarter of the waters in the EEC are around Ireland. Irish fishing and its processing industry, which could have unlimited jobs and development prospects, is deliberately hindered by EEC policy.

Sinn Féin
VOTE No. 1
BEHAL

SOCIAL ISSUES

● The EEC treaty does not allow its social fund to alleviate the most crushing social problems, such as housing, basic education and health care, but only funds projects directly related to its economic objectives. The EEC is dominated by right-wing conservative parties and governments totally opposed to radical social improvements.

CULTÚR

● Ritheann feallsúnacht an CEE go hiomlán i gcoinne gach gné den gcultúr agus náisiúnachas—pe ití atá i gceist. I gcás na hÉireann ní thugann sé aitheantas dár dteanga dúchais ach mar "mhíon teanga agus ansin fós glactar an meon ina leith nach bhfuil fiúntas ar bith ag baint leis. Agus i gcoimhthéacs an CEE, níl.

The economic philosophy of the EEC runs counter to a strong independent Irish culture. Irish is not an official working language of the EEC, the stronger cultures will dominate and finally smother the weaker ones.

THE ALTERNATIVE

The EEC is obviously not working for Ireland. Sinn Fein is confident that in all the areas adversely affected there is major potential for employment and development, once free of the EEC's restrictions and exploitative interests. European countries which stayed outside the EEC have fared much better and show that external co-existence with the EEC is a real alternative.

Sinn Fein urges a negotiated withdrawal from the EEC, with the substitution of external trading agreements. In the meantime, Sinn Fein will campaign for the maximum benefits available and against all detrimental measures.

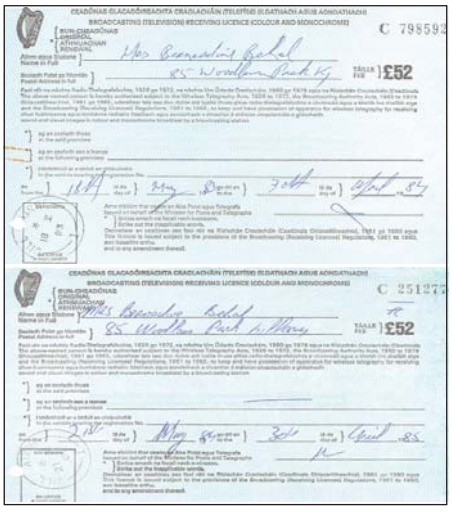
The Strasbourg parliament will also be used to highlight, outside Ireland, the brutal reality of British rule and loyalist sectarianism and repression in all parts of Ireland, including the censorship of Sinn Fein on RTE and the disgraceful extradition policy of the Dublin government. Sinn Fein will campaign for the repatriation of Irish political prisoners from British jails and against the system of paid perjurers and show trials.

SinnFein asserts that the sovereignty of Ireland, political, economic, social and cultural, rests with the Irish people and that only a united independent Ireland, in the form of a democratic socialist republic, can secure a future for ourselves and our children.

Dearthaíonn Sinn Féin gur le muintir na hÉireann amháin saoirse polaitiúil, eacnamaíoch, sóisiúla agus cultúrtha agus gur ní neamhoibleachas iomlán a bhuafar poblacht deonlathach sóisialach duinn féin agus d'ár bpáistí.

ONE IRELAND, ONE PEOPLE—THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE

BEHAL MANIFESTO - MISREPRESENTED ON CENSORED RTE - STATE AND SELF-CENSORSHIP COMBINED TO DENY ELECTORATE INFORMATION



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C 251275
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BEHAL TV LICENCE, 1983, 1984 - NONE PURCHASED SINCE