

# EUROPA ÜBER ALLES?

**EU Commission President von der Leyen has launched the project of a Conference on the Future of 'Europe'. Of course, it is not the real Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals but, more specifically, the European Union. To begin with, it is worth reminding ourselves what the EU is basically all about. A succinct and pointed summary in answer to this question was given by Gerry Adams in his 2005 book *The New Ireland* [updated references inserted in square brackets].**

"The desire to turn the EU into a superpower under the hegemony of the big states, a European super-power that would dispute the world with the US superpower and other such rising powers as Japan, China and India is central to understanding the politics of the EU. ...

"This, of course, is the polar opposite of the democratic and anti-imperialist outlook of Irish Republicanism, as well as democrats and progressive people all over Europe. .

"The EU provides ideal terrain for the West European-based transnational firms. ...

"They see this is the best way of undermining workers' rights, labour standards and national welfare states ...

[One might elaborate that EU measures on equal pay etc only derive from the need to equalise the terms of competition.]

"The more policy-making is shifted from the [27] member states to Brussels, the more power a few hundred politicians, bureaucrats and judges get to make laws and decide things for the [437] million people [in question] ...

"And then we have the drive towards

militarisation. ... Sinn Fein believes that there is no legitimate role for the European Union in military and defence matters, which should be left to individual States. International peacekeeping and conflict should happen under the auspices of the United Nations. ...

"I do not believe that the EU can be made more democratic by giving more powers or proposing utopian schemes for restructuring the Brussels machinery. In order to increase democracy in the EU, or rather to reduce its lack of democracy, power must be shifted back from losses member States. ... "Sinn Fein campaigned against membership of the EEC in 1973. Our view was that as a small partitioned island we would not benefit from what was essentially a rich man's club led in the main by the former colonial powers.

"Since then, each successive European treaty has taken further powers from the Irish State and the other member States and transferred them to Brussels, where the Irish people and the peoples of the other member countries no longer are in control of them. ...

"Our approach to the EU is one of critical engagement: those things that are in the interests of the Irish people, we support and seek to further; those things that are not, we oppose and campaign to change. However, we do not delude ourselves or the Irish people that we can enjoy full democracy and national independence as long as the majority of the laws that now bind us are made by people whom we do not elect and have minimal control over."

