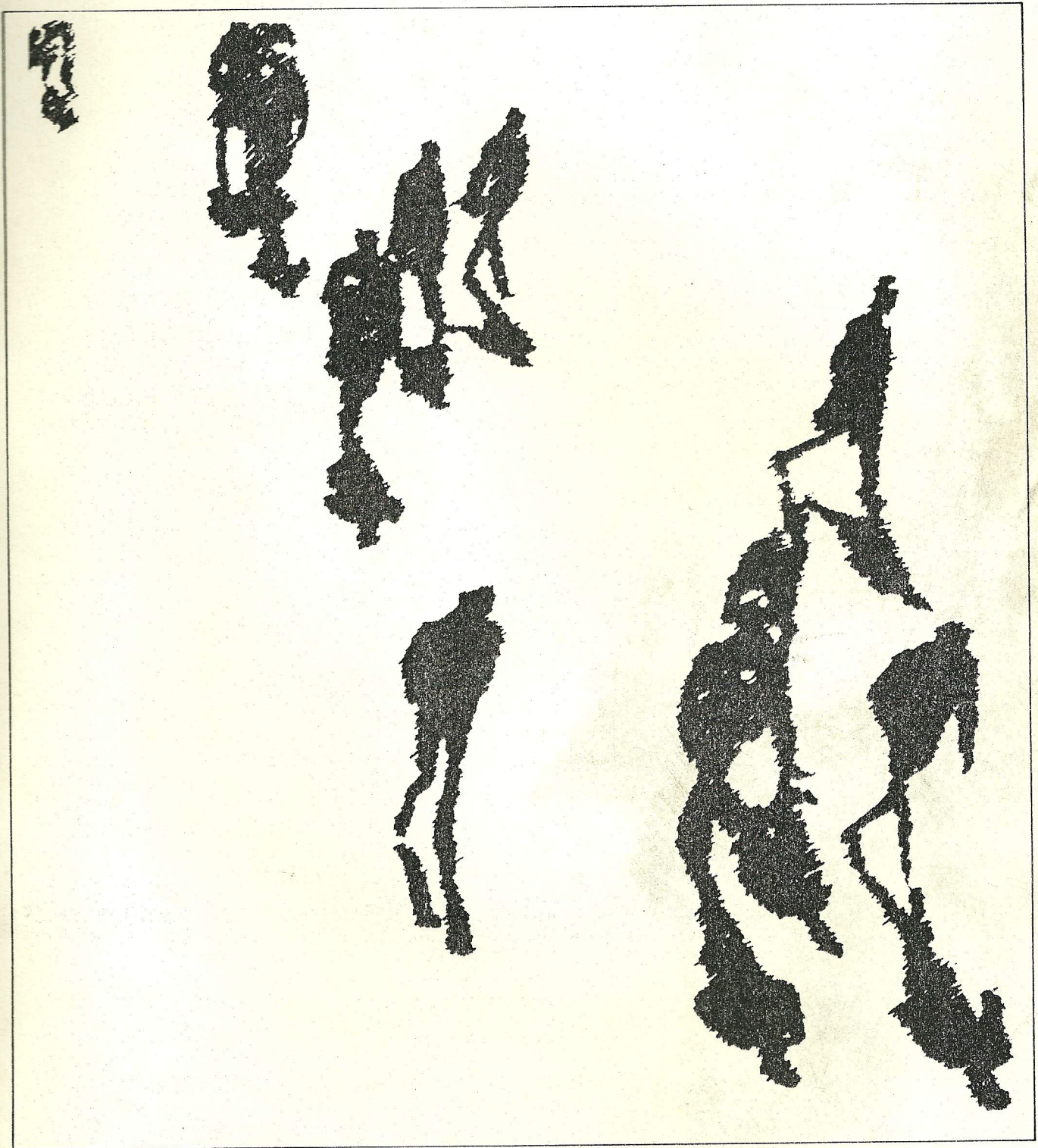


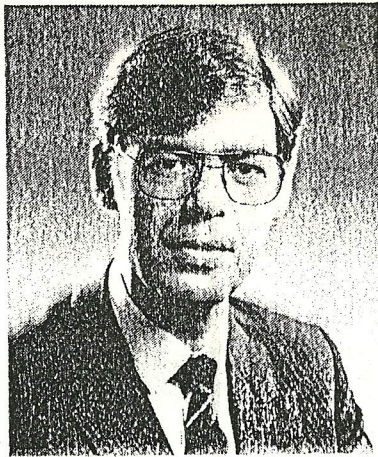
A New Generation



FG
FINE GAEL

FINE GAEL YOUTH PROGRAMME

Election 1989



FOREWORD

'A NEW GENERATION'

Fine Gael in this election is offering the Irish people a New Generation of Leaders. We are offering a fresh approach to the many problems that face our people and we are offering them hope for a better and brighter future in this country.

Our youth have suffered greatly under the last two and a quarter years of Fianna Fáil Government. The failure of this Government to tackle the real problems has meant that many young Irish people have been driven to the margins of Irish society or simply forced to emigrate in search of employment elsewhere.

Fine Gael offer Irish youth a New Generation of Leaders who are prepared to listen to what young people are saying about how they wish to see their country develop in the future.

In this document Fine Gael offer young people a say at the highest level in our society. To those who are disadvantaged it offers hope and a promise of greater equality and cohesion in our society in the future.

ALAN M. DUKES T.D.
Ceannaire, Fine Gael

EMPLOYMENT/SOCIAL WELFARE

Fine Gael believes that the creation of employment must be the major priority. Fine Gael is particularly concerned with the problem of Youth Unemployment and view the creation of jobs as being essential to stem the flow of emigration.

Fine Gael in Government will work to create the economic conditions in which growth can take place and employment can be created. This will be achieved through the reduction of personal taxation, reform of Ireland's industrial policy etc.

Fine Gael in its Election Programme 'Putting the Country First', outlines the areas in which Fine Gael in Government will create employment. These include Industry, Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry, Telecommunication, Services Industry and Tourism.

BASIC INCOME SCHEME

Fine Gael in Government will move gradually towards a Basic Income Scheme. Because the Basic Income payment would be the same for all (and would not be taken away from an unemployed person once he/she found employment) unemployed people would have a full incentive to seek employment. For those without work the social stigma attached to unemployment and dependence on the State would be removed.

Fine Gael recognises that many young people feel alienated by the social welfare system in this country. Fine Gael in Government will seek to create the situation where information on personal State Benefits is more easily available by establishing dispensing and information services in a single location on a "One-stop-basis".

EMIGRATION

Emigration is one of the most important issues facing this country at present. Every year over 40,000 young people leave the country in search of employment. Fine Gael recognise that the only real solution to emigration lies in the creation of employment and in the creation of a fairer and more equitable tax system.

Recognising the existence of these major problems Fine Gael will, upon returning to Government, implement the following proposals:

- Fine Gael have proposed major tax reform and income tax reductions in its Election Programme 'Putting the Country First'. This will have a major impact on emigration by removing the incentive to emigrate because of high tax rates.
- One Government Department will assume responsibility for all emigrant matters. At the moment four Government Departments are involved in emigrant matters, in an uncoordinated way;
- VECs will be asked to set up Adult Education Courses dealing with all aspects of emigration. These courses should be brought to the notice of all school leavers and their parents.
- The remit of DION will be expanded to include the funding of hostels and increased funding of Advice Centres. We will establish a new system of assistance for Irish Emigrant Welfare activity in the United States;
- Joint initiatives on Community Training Programmes involving FAS and the YTS in Britain (of vital importance to the sub-18 years of age category who do not qualify for DHSS payments);
- Compilation and updating of a dossier of the number of spare beds available. This could be done under the aegis of CARA, which currently has an application for £27,000 with the Department of Labour;
- The Anglo-Irish Conference shall highlight the problem of emigrants from both traditions from Northern Ireland who are viewed as Irish when they arrive in England and who are reluctant to use Irish Advice Centres;
- A Task Force composed of Oireachtas members, members of voluntary groups and the churches should be established to examine the situation, assess the needs and draw up an appropriate response which would be implemented by the Government of the day;

- The Government will seek to monitor the emigration figures accurately on a monthly basis; these figures should be published in conjunction with the monthly live register figures;
- The Government will enter into negotiations with the British Statutory agencies and the London based voluntary organisations to provide accommodation vouchers, in registered hostels or houses, to young Irish emigrants for a limited period of time (say four weeks);
- The Government will ask the Commissioner for Social Affairs in Brussels to draw up a programme of assistance for migratory workers in the E.C.;

EDUCATION

Fine Gael is deeply concerned with the unplanned manner in which the government have dealt with the Education System over the last two and a quarter years. The victims of the unplanned and ill thought out cutbacks have in most cases been the most vulnerable in our society.

Fine Gael in Government is determined to restore a sense of purpose and to target our resources to those most disadvantaged and to those activities which will most enrich the lives of the young people in the educational system and so equip them to contribute to the development of their country. Fine Gael in Government will:

1. Reverse with effect from the 1st of September 1989 the disimprovement in the pupil teacher ratio in our primary schools decided upon by Fianna Fail while in Government.
2. Dropping numbers also means that in many areas that are now redundant education facilities, many schools having classrooms and sometime full corridors not in use. Fine Gael is determined that greater use in the public interest would be made of these facilities and indeed that there will be greater community access to school facilities generally and will for the purpose enter into discussion with the school authorities. This will ensure that youth organisations and youth clubs will have greater access to facilities.
3. Fine Gael recognises that there are now serious maintenance problems facing many of our schools. One effect of this is that substantial capital investment is frequently wasted or put at risk. This requires a review of how capital is allocated and Fine Gael will undertake that review. Fine Gael is also determined that the various temporary employment schemes operated by FAS will be available to schools right throughout the country. This will assist schools with maintenance and decoration.
4. Fine Gael will re-establish the Curriculum and Examination Board and put it on a statutory basis with a view to developing a more relevant curriculum for schools.
5. Fine Gael will carry through the proposed new Junior Cycle Certificates for which they had laid the foundation while in government.
6. Fine Gael will promote the teaching of modern continental languages within and without the formal education system as set out in our published document "Language Learning and Teaching".

7. Fine Gael is concerned that the Higher Education Grants System contains many anomalies - we propose to review the system with a view to eliminating these as far as possible. We are concerned to ensure that the funds allocated will be available to those whose need is the greatest. A particularly heavy burden rests on those parents with more than one child attending college. Fine Gael is also concerned at the injustice in the present qualifying rules with its requirement for four honours even when this is higher than the entrance requirements for college.
8. Fine Gael will afford autonomy to the Regional Technical Colleges. Fine Gael is particularly anxious to increase the capacity of these Colleges to undertake research and consultancy.
9. Fine Gael will address the organisation of Third Level education. The objective will be to increase the number of places in Third Level. Options to be considered include a 4 term year to increase throughput and the sharing of facilities.
10. Fine Gael in Government will maintain and develop the positions of Political Education Officers as part of the development of a Political Education Programme.

THE YOUTH SERVICE

Fine Gael recognises the important role played by the Youth Service in this country and acknowledges its importance in the development of Irish Youth and Irish society.

Fine Gael believes that it is essential that the Youth Service maintains its voluntary character backed up by proper statutory support.

1. Fine Gael in Government will seek to implement a National Youth Plan for the development of the Youth service in the future. This plan will be developed and implemented in co-operation with the National Youth Council of Ireland and Youth Organisations in general within the framework of a National Youth Board.
2. Fine Gael in Government will re-establish base funding for the Youth Service from the Government Exchequer. This will be topped up by monies from the National Lottery as money becomes available after our priority health funding. This will ensure that youth organisations will be in a position to plan their activities on a more long term basis than is possible under the current situation.
3. Funds for Youth Activities from the National Lottery will be allocated by the Department of Education in consultation with youth organisations. A proper set of conditions for application and allocation of resources will be developed to ensure proper allocation of funds.
4. Fine Gael in Government will make the establishment of services for disadvantaged youth a priority. The concentration on disadvantaged youth in education will aid this development.
5. Fine Gael is committed to the development of a Local Voluntary Youth Service.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE LAW

Fine Gael in Government will tackle the rising problem of youth crime by tackling the root causes of the problem, i.e., socio/economic problems, through the creation of greater equality in Irish society.

In addition to this Fine Gael in Government will:

1. Introduce a Juvenile Justice Bill to modernise the criminal law as it presently applies to children, which will provide a statutory role for the Juvenile Liaison Officers.
2. Provide adequate resources for the proper development of the Juvenile Liaison Scheme.
3. Make adequate resources available to our Courts and Probation and Welfare Services to allow for suitable alternatives to imprisonment for lesser offences. (This could include general powers for Courts to require attendance at treatment centres, residence in approved hostels, participation in training programmes and restriction of juvenile offenders at specified times to their places of residence.
4. Introduce a new Rape Bill to ensure that punishment for crimes of a sexual nature should reflect the abhorrence in which society holds these horrible deeds.
5. Provide every support for sexual assault victims including, where necessary, legal advice before and during any Court case.
6. Give greater support to organisations which provide help and counselling to victims of crime.
7. Introduce a Marriage Bill increasing the minimum age for marriage from 16 to 18 years.

DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

Fine Gael is determined to ensure that the needs of young people, especially those most disadvantaged, are adequately met both in and out of school and in training and employment opportunities. In all areas Fine Gael will seek to create greater equality and cohesion in Irish society.

Young Disabled

Fine Gael in Government will seek to complete the work started by Fine Gael when last in Government.

Fine Gael in Government is committed to the introduction of a Bill of Rights for the Disabled to ensure that those who comprise that 10% of the population can live their lives with the maximum participation in society. This legislative reform will include such issues as access to buildings, rights of employment in the Public and Private Sector, the recognition of careers and income maintenance.

Young Travellers

Fine Gael recognises the needs and rights of the Travelling Community as an ethnic minority in society.

Fine Gael in Government will:

- continue the work started by Fine Gael under the National Youth Policy 'In Partnership with Youth';
- introduce anti-discrimination legislation which will include a section regarding discrimination against the Travelling Community;
- in co-operation with the Travelling community draw up a Charter of Rights.

Homeless Young People

Fine Gael is deeply concerned about the increase in the numbers of the young homeless and poor. Fine Gael, through its reforms of the social welfare system and through its programme for the creation of employment, will seek to alleviate these problems.

Fine Gael will, through the education system, prepare young people to leave home through the development of a lifeskills programme. The development of a new curriculum under the Curriculum and Examinations Board will offer alternative and more relevant education and training prospects.

Fine Gael is committed to the provisions of increased emergency accommodation for the Homeless.

Substance Abuse

Fine Gael in Government will continue the work started by Fine Gael when last in Government in tackling the problem of substance abuse as outlined in the National Youth Policy 'In Partnership with Youth'.

In addition Fine Gael will establish a Drugs Intelligence Agency to keep in touch and co-ordinate with a Central Agency in Europe. This is urgently needed in view of the international dimension of this particular crime and the advent of 1992.