

The Plough, Number 11
24 October 2003

E-mail newsletter of the Irish Republican Socialist Party

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IRSP MEETING CULTURLANN (1ST FLOOR) FALLS ROAD BELFAST TUESDAY
OCTOBER 28TH 7.30-9.00

OPEN TO ALL IRSP MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS
(If you wish to attend either contact John Martin Or ring O28-9032-1024)

TOPIC -- THE CURRENT SITUATION: What should be our response?

Sectarian Watch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

19 October 2003
Irish Republican Socialist Party

PSNI Cover-Up of a Loyalist Sectarian Murder Attack Outside Lord Mayor's Home on Saturday

The IRSP in North Belfast have publicly accused the PSNI of deliberately hushing up a sectarian murder attempt by loyalists, probably the UVF, outside the home of the Belfast Lord Mayor Martin Morgan on Saturday afternoon.

The IRSP's North Belfast representative Paul Little said: "The murder bid happened on the Somerton Road on Saturday afternoon, a local builder who was in his van when a armed man fired two shots at him. Fortunately the man was not hit but two bullets entered the van through the rear window. The car used in the sectarian attack was found burnt out in the Mount Vernon area, which leads us to believe that the attack was carried out by the UVF, who control that area. The PSNI sealed off the area around the attack on the Somerton Road just off Fortwilliam on the Antrim Road."

In conclusion the IRSP representative said: "The North Belfast branch of the IRSP in condemning the murder bid are asking a number of questions of the PSNI and the DPP. Why

have the PSNI hushed up and blacked media coverage of the attack? Whose agenda are they working to in hushing the murder bid up? Have the DPP authorised a general hushing up of sectarian attacks in North Belfast? In raising these serious questions, it is hard not to conclude that the PSNI, either of their own volition or on the direction of the British government or DPP, are deliberately down playing sectarian attacks by loyalist murder gangs due to the sensitivity of the current negotiations. Peace will not be built on lies and cover-ups; there is a very real need for peace to be built from the ground upwards, with some degree of honesty. Only the cause of sectarian division is served by state cover-ups."

Contact North Belfast IRSP on 028 90 747513.

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And the Groom Left Standing at the Altar

The carefully planned day of agreements on Tuesday the 21st of October became a farce as the bride, David Trimble, failed to join groom Gerry Adams and his extended family of de Chastelain, P. O'Neill, Bertie Ahern and Tony Blair at the altar of compromise. All were left with even redder faces than Trimble's normally is. The media trotted out every cliché in the book while the general public yawned. Those of us critical of the whole Good Friday Agreement could be forgiven our wry smiles - we did tell you so.

But the pantomime is to continue and even the most recent events could still be part of a political choreography that will see the pro- Agreement parties through to the other side of an election intact. Trimble needs to fight this election as an agreement sceptic if he is to stand any chance of being the majority unionist leader after the election. For the last two years it was obvious that he could not enter into an election while in partnership with Sinn Fein. It was always the intention to do as he has done. He has pocketed the already achieved PIRA disarmament without any unionist commitment to govern. Blair's comments in Westminster show that his intention is to achieve the public outing of the PIRA inventory. Ahern comments in the Dail that he had not wanted to go to Hillsborough because of the vagueness of the decommissioning component speaks volumes on the level of distrust not only between Adams and Trimble but between Blair and Ahern. It is now clear that not only has Blair lied about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq but also he and Ahern have lied about what John de Chaistelain told him. It was clear that the bottom line for the Trimble Unionists was clarity and transparency on the decommissioning issue. Unfortunately for them the PIRA stuck rigidly to the letter of the law and allowed no clarification of the whole weapons issue. The British and Unionists can be quite happy with the fiasco, for they gained much and lost nothing. Also it will not do the Provos any harm going into this election as having been slighted once again by the Brits and Unionists (the sympathy vote). Yet they have decommissioned on a large scale without getting the real credit (if that is the word) from so-called public or world opinion.

People are now to be asked to vote for process rather than government. The electors will be asked not to vote for a government, not to vote for policies not to vote for their class interests but to vote for negotiating teams. This farcical process is indeterminate and food and drink to the political elites involved. It does nothing to protect the interests of working class Catholics or Protestants.

While all this was going on the British Security Minister met with the representatives of the UDA and offered to recognise their cease- fire within hours of them decommissioning a substantial amount of weapons. The offer was rejected.

Capitalism and Health

George Monbiot, a leading writer on sustainability and the environment, says in his book: Captive State (the Corporate Takeover of Britain) Chap 2: Hospital cases -Corporate takeover of the NHS

1993-conservative introduced concept of Private Finance initiative (PFI)-Private companies building and running hospitals and leasing them back to the state.

Labour party opposed saying: State would become dependant on short- term priorities of private companies and NHS employees would be public servants in private companies

Labour then came to power and in 1997 said 'PFI or bust'

A few negative results of PFI

- ÿ Reduction in hospital beds
- ÿ Cutting corners in wages and cleaning
- ÿ Sell off of land cheap to private companies
- ÿ Increased day procedures
- ÿ Focus on specialist surgical work, thus creating specialisms, and reducing access
- ÿ Green site hospitals excluding 33% of people who don't drive

Many believe that private companies will soon have monopoly of NHS and that government will be in debt to them

Chap 5

Economic cleansing-how the superstores conquered Britain

Big superstores enjoy more political influence than any other corporate sector David Sainsbury is a government minister and six Tesco executives on government working parties, including one on supermarket competitiveness!! Supermarkets create new jobs but only at the expense of lost local jobs.

Out of town supermarkets decimate small towns through ruining social cohesion. They make impossible demands of local farmers and force them to use dangerous chemicals to produce 'attractive' food, all same size shape and colour.

Supermarkets end up buying mostly from biggest providers, so claim that they use small local providers is untrue

Wal-Mart, big US food giant now in UK, used forced labour of Chinese prisoners for cheap food production.

Tesco, Sainsbury, Safeway Waitrose and M&Ss united with food suppliers to create monopoly and supply 75% of all food.

Poor people are charged 69% more for food because in poorer areas there is less competition and less people mobility, also local small shops close-reducing choice.

Middle class shop at out of town supermarkets where shops buy land at knock down prices from bankrupt farmers and government

Chap 8-A padlock on the food crisis

GM foods-no demand ever expressed by consumer for this, yet government spends millions researching it-government directly involved with big chemical companies who stand to benefit from gm crops

Food, which is GM, is labelled; Food that contains Gm products is not labelled, because GM breaks down when processed.

Much of our processed food contains GM already-it is just not labelled as such.

Denmark, Sweden and Italy want all ingredients listed on label-UK opposes this

In 1999 demand for organic food exceeded supply by 200%

In 1997 government allowed increase of chemical glyphosate in Soya beans

In 1999 Us cancer society report increased danger of Non Hodgkin's lymphoma (NHL) NHL has increased by 80% in USA since 70's.

Even if GM foods are processed, the chemicals still remain Soya is the basis for a large number of processed foods we eat today

Monbiot says "Bio technology Corporations are still attempting to take over the food chain and turn the genes of plants, animals and humans into private property"

Book available from www.panmacmillan.com

Irish Coca Cola Boycott Spreads

The Irish response to the call for a boycott of Coca Cola because of the ongoing campaign of murder of workers in Coca Cola bottling plants in Colombia is spreading. On Saturday 11th October 2003 the John Hewitt Bar and Restaurant one of Belfast's best known and most prestigious bars became the first public house in Ireland to remove Coca Cola from its shelves.

Then it emerged that the Cultúrlann McAdaimh Ó Fiaich an Irish language cultural centre and one of the foremost tourist centres in Belfast has also stopped serving Coca Cola to its customers.

Now the students of University College Dublin the largest student campus in Ireland have voted in a referendum not to serve Coca Cola in any student union outlet on the campus.

Campaigners for the boycott are buoyed up by the growing success of the call to boycott Coca Cola and are seeking to spread the boycott as quickly as possible to other drinks outlets.

The quicker Coca Cola get the message and take steps to stop the murders and ill treatment of workers in their subsidiary plants in Colombia, the better for all concerned.

Now is the time to spread the boycott as far and as fast as possible. Individually each of us can stop drinking Coca Cola and urge others to do likewise. Make your view known to your local drinks outlet and ask them to withdraw Coca Cola from their shelves and stock an alternative.

Among the alternatives available are Mecca Cola (www.mecca-cola.com) which can be ordered at TOPMARK, Carry and Carry distributors Linfield Industrial estate, Sandy Row, Belfast, 02890 435870.

BRIEFING NOTE - Coca-Cola's Bottling Companies

Coca Cola's website page on Colombia states that: "The Coca-Cola Company has bottler agreements with independent companies that own and operate 20 bottling plants that manufacture and distribute Coca-Cola products."

This note looks only at company ownership, let alone common branding, company policies and practices that bind contracted bottlers to Coca Cola. Let us investigate just how "independent" Coca-Cola's bottlers really are.

Coca Cola's main bottler in Colombia is called Panamco Colombia; it operates 17 out of the 20 plants, and is a subsidiary of Miami based Panamerican Beverages Inc, (Panamco). Panamco was one of Coke's strategic "anchor bottlers". In December 2002 another major bottler, the firm Coca-Cola FEMSA announced it would buy Panamco for \$3.6 billion. This acquisition was completed six months later.

Since, according to the South Florida Business Journal "Coca-Cola owns about one-fourth of Panamco", the buy out involved Coca-Cola Co. receiving about 304 million shares of Coca-Cola FEMSA worth \$674 million, in exchange for its Panamco shares.

While Coca-Cola Co. owned 25% of Panamco; it also already owned 30% of Coca Cola-Femsa. The buy out leaves Coca-Cola Co. with 40% of the combined entity Coca-Cola Femsa-Panamco.

Coca-Cola FEMSA-Panamco will have revenues estimated at \$4.6 billion and estimated annual gross profits of \$1 billion. It is the leading bottler of Coca-Cola products in Latin America, and with about 10 per cent of Coca-Cola's worldwide sales, the second-largest Coca-Cola bottler (the largest is Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Enterprises).

The significance of the overseas bottling subsidiaries for group profits is immense. According to industry analyst Milton Boki "Coca Cola obtains 75% of its profits outside the US, a considerable proportion of this comes from Latin America".

The merger is seen as complementary in two respects. Geographically, FEMSA already dominated the Mexican and Argentine markets. Panamco has brought with it a leading position in Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Venezuela. Through FEMSA-Panamco, Coca-Cola bestrides Latin America.

As far as product lines are concerned, FEMSA is already strong in beer as well as soft drinks in Mexico, where there is a high consumption of soft drinks due to lack of adequate drinking water. With limited public services breaking down, and with service privatisations, failure to provide drinking water from the tap is a continental issue, especially for the poor. Public services are deteriorating, and the sale of bottled alternatives is an expanding market with the potential to increase even more rapidly. Access to the water market is part of the attraction of Panamco, and perhaps why FEMSA paid so much for it. As noted by Boki "the purchase of Panamco opens the possibility of using its enormous distribution and marketing system to sell bottled water and other soft drinks that are alternatives to the classic Coca Cola."

The Coca-Cola FEMSA Panamco takeover was completed in June 2003. On 11th September, Panamco Colombia announced it would "stop production at 11 of its 17 plants to boost efficiency".

We have seen that Panamco the bottling company is a vehicle for Coke's expansion into the Latin American drinks market. But this expansion only makes commercial sense so long as it is profitable for the parent company.

(From Andy Higginbottom <ahigginbottom@blueyonder.co.uk>)

Coca Cola have launched a major fight back against the boycott and the organisations, which have spearheaded it here. Their reps have been contacting the John Hewitt and the Culturlann on an ongoing basis trying to convince them that the boycott is wrong, that coca cola is not responsible for the problems in Colombia and that the boycott is endangering local jobs. The reps

themselves are civil and plausible local reps that it would be hard to take offence at but who nevertheless are lobbying hard for Coca Cola and putting management in the two local outlets under considerable moral pressure. It is important therefore that we show maximum support to both the John Hewitt and The Culturann to strengthen the hand of those who are arguing for the boycott. People should talk to the management of both places and express their support. Spread the word verbally, a letter or two to the local press supporting the boycott and the two places carrying it out in Belfast on a human rights basis and asking the local Coca Cola company to use its clout with the parent company to use their undisputed power to resolve the issue in their bottling plants in Colombia, a petition on the same basis and any other methods of showing support should be used. Try to acquaint yourself of the arguments re coca-cola, Colombia etc.

Here are a couple of sites to look at if you need to.

<http://www.killercoke.org/>

<http://www.sinaltrainal.org/>

<http://www.colombiasolidarity.org.uk/>

(From Fearghas OhIr - foh@ireland.com)

Anti Fianna Fail Posters Removed in Dublin City

Posters critical of Fianna Fail, produced by the Working Class Action (WCA) Group, have begun to disappear from part of the Dublin Central constituency.

Large numbers of the posters have been ripped down (and taken away) in the North Inner City. The posters have now been erected, removed and replaced on two occasions across North Strand, East Wall and Sheriff Street. The posters were produced to refute the claim from Bertie Ahern that ordinary working class people were "spongers" for opposing the Bin Tax. The eye-catching posters describe Fianna Fail as Criminals, Drunk Drivers and Tax Cheats. It goes on to list recent large price rises for basic services, which must be paid by PAYE taxpayers.

VHI increased by 44%

ESB increased by 13.5%

Eircom bills increased by 6.3%

Bus Fares increased by 9%

TV licence increased by 40%

Members of the WCA have been erecting the posters in areas across the Northside over the past week. They have also been carried by protestors on Anti-Bin Tax marches and pickets.

Campaign Co-ordination Eoin Candon said: "We accept that Fianna Fail may not be very happy with our direct approach, but we felt it important to bring these price rises to the attention of the public. No one from Fianna Fail has contacted us about the posters, even though the WCA phone

number is printed on the posters. Public reaction to them has been excellent and many people have contacted us asking for posters to put up in their own communities."

(From: Mags.Glennon@dcu.ie Subject: Anti Fianna Fail Posters Removed in Dublin City Date: Thu, 16 Oct 2003 15:16:31 -2300 Working Class)

Subject: Anti Racist Network

The list below is continually being updated as others sign up to the statement. Please continue to circulate.

Several organisations involved in the Anti Racist Network hand delivered the statement personally into the hands of leading members of the Ulster Unionist Party, including that of David Trimble, Steven King, Reg Empey etc, at their party conference. TV and radio have also interviewed us over the last few days. The Irish News and the Newsletter also covered the issue with others hopefully to cover it later in the week.

With ICTU's welcome statement we have also now seen one of the leading churches as well as NICVA {umbrella body for voluntary and community sector} now speaking out. We are competing with the issue of the peace process for media access but we are doing well to date. A number of groups that we set up from the previous meeting I think are to meet in the next day or to and will report back at the next meeting. I will post the minutes of the previous meeting shortly with details of the next one.

>From Davy Carlin - ARN

Statement updated.

Jeremy Hardy - Comedian

Patrick Yu - N. Ireland Council for Ethnic Minorities N. Ireland Traveller Movement

Chinese Welfare Association

The Belfast Islamic Centre

Islamic Students Association of N. Ireland The Belfast Indian Community Centre

Paul Noonan - Director, Belfast Travellers Education and Development Group

Belfast Travellers Support Group

Multi Cultural Resource Centre

Paul Yam Wah Hep, Chinese Community Association, Craigavon Mel Corry, Craigavon Trades

Union Council The One World Centre

Marian Farrell - The Welcome Committee Derry All the staff of P Drinan Solicitor

The Pat Finucane Centre

Yamila Petrushansky - Women's News

Maria Ellis - Women of the world

Brenda Torley - Co-ordinator - The Centre for the Promotion of Civil, Political and Human Rights

Ronan Lavery Barrister at Law (PC)
Finbar Lavery Barrister at Law (PC)
David O'Sullivan Barrister at Law (PC)
Mark Mc Avoy Barrister at Law (PC)
West Belfast Economic Forum
Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign
Democratic Dialogue
Stephen Alexander - Alliance Party
John Barry, Green Party
Irish Republican Socialist Party
Daithi McKay - Sinn Fein
Socialist Environmental Alliance
Barbara Muldoon, Socialist Workers Party Belfast Trades Union Council
Damien Wall, Chair Derry Trades Union Council E McCann - Vice Chair Derry Trades Union Council and Journalist Strabane Trades Union Council
Jim Quinn - FBU Chairperson NI Region
Jim Barbour - FBU Executive
Brian Campfield - President Belfast Trades Union Council John McCloskey - Nipsa Section Secretary Peter McGarrigle - Secretary Nipsa Branch 8 Ryan McKinney - Chairperson Nipsa Branch 8 & Belfast Trades Union Council
Louise McMillen - Nipsa union rep
Brian Stewart - Nipsa union rep
Maria Morgan Nipsa Officer
Pat Torley - TGWU Union Rep
Brian Crawford - Secretary Nipsa Branch 6 Valery Guiney - Multi-Cultural Resource Centre (PC) Dr Dara O'Hagan MLA
Sean McAughey - Volunteer Co- Ordinator Mornington Community Project Breandan MacCionnaith - Chairperson Drumcree Community Trust Paddy Murray -Chair Rathenraw Community Association Shane O Curry - School of Law Magee
Tools for solidarity
Michael Goodman - Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group Councillor John O'Dowd
Councillor Maurice Magill
Councillor Brian McKeown
Councillor Francie Murray
Falls Women's Centre
Globalise Resistance
Emily Kawano
Sara Boyce
Tony Longiois
Thierry Michel

And hundreds of other individuals.

What's On

Northern_Ireland_Inbox@amnesty.org.uk

Boothby Graffoe & Friends ... Stand Up for Justice!

Amnesty International is famous for making people laugh in the face of oppression. We've had phenomenal success with our annual comedy benefit at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. And now we're taking it to the Belfast Festival at Queen's.

Amnesty supporter and award-winning Radio 4 comedian Boothby Graffoe will host this unique comedy benefit at the Belfast Festival. "Stand Up For Justice" is the only show as part of the Festival to offer a variety of top-quality comedians on the same bill.

Stand Up for Justice features:

Boothby Graffoe as compere

"Daftness combined with clear-headed comic thinking... Irresistible" Time Out

Adam Hills, 3 times Perrier nominee

"Hills delivers stand up so effortlessly brilliant you wonder why some comedians even get out of bed." The Guardian

Nina Conti, the hilarious monkey-owning ventriloquist and winner of the 2002 BBC New Comedy Award.

"Stunningly sassy...had us in stitches." (The Scotsman).

Kevin McAleer, Ireland's king of deadpan and RTE/BBC TV star "Laughter barely the safe side of hysteria" The Irish Times

Tim McGarry star of The Hole in the Wall Gang's hit BBC TV sitcom "Give My Head Peace" and a massive success during their recent two-week run at the Grand Opera House.

The show starts at 8pm on Tuesday 28 October at the Whitla Hall. Tickets for this unique comedy benefit are selling quickly, so book yours now! Tickets cost from £10 (that's only £2 per comedian!!) and are available from the Belfast Festival box office on 028 9027 2626 or online at <http://www.belfastfestival.com/>

This show will be dedicated to Burmese prisoner of conscience U Win Tin. On the night, people will not only have the chance to enjoy an amazing line-up of five top comedians, but also to join the campaign for his release.

Journalist and writer U Win Tin has been imprisoned in Burma for daring to defend human rights. For years he has suffered serious illness - made worse by ill treatment in jail.

More info available from: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk/ni>

James Byrne Commemoration Committee

1st November 2003-09-11 Monument Unveiling & 90th Anniversary Commemoration

Assemble 2pm Main Entrance Deansgrange Cemetery, Deansgrange, Co. Dublin, Ireland. The newly-commissioned monument over the grave of Trade Union Martyr, James Byrne, District Organiser, ITG&WU, who died on 1st November 1913 following a hunger & thirst strike during the Great Lock-Out 1913 will be unveiled by Des Geraghty, President, SIPTU. All trade unionists, political activists and members of the Public welcome!

[No Party Political Banners, please!]

The James Byrne Commemoration Committee has organised the erection of a fitting memorial over the grave in Deansgrange Cemetery [Co. Dublin, Ireland] of James Byrne, a trade union martyr who died on 1st November 1913 as a result of the effects of a hunger and thirst strike during imprisonment for his role in the Great Lock-Out of that year. James was District Organiser of the Irish Transport & General Workers Union and held leadership roles in both Bray and Kingstown [Dún Laoghaire] Trades Councils.

In the course of James Byrne's funeral oration James Connolly said: "James Byrne truly died a martyr as any man who ever died for Ireland".

The Committee believes that the monument is a fitting tribute to James Byrne and hopes that his grave may become a place of pilgrimage and source of inspiration for trade unionists and socialists in the future. We are particularly pleased that the descendents of James Byrne are fully supportive of the work of the Committee.

Jason Mc Lean, PRO - James Byrne Commemoration Committee.

Vol. Neil McMonagle - New Memorial

There will be another memorial unveiling, part of the Teach na Failte campaign to commemorate fallen republican socialists, in Derry on Sunday November 9th. The impressive new memorial is dedicated to the memory of INLA Volunteer Neil McMonagle who was killed by the SAS on 2nd February 1983. Anyone attending is asked to assemble at Carnhill Resource Centre at 2pm. A march will then take place across Racecourse Road and towards Leafair Park where the new memorial will be unveiled. A function will then be held locally, details on the day.

For further information please contact:

Derry IRSP
PO Box 1981

Derry
derryirsp@hotmail.com

European Social Forum Paris, St Denis 12-15 November

Please feel free to comment on the contents of the Plough. If you know of anybody who might wish to receive the Plough please send his or her e-mail address to johnmartinps@eircom.net

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<http://www.wageslave.org/jcs/> (James Connolly Society)

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/connolly/> (James Connolly Archive)