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15 August 2007

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Lá Nua

Conrad Atkinson
EXHIBITION




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From the Balcony

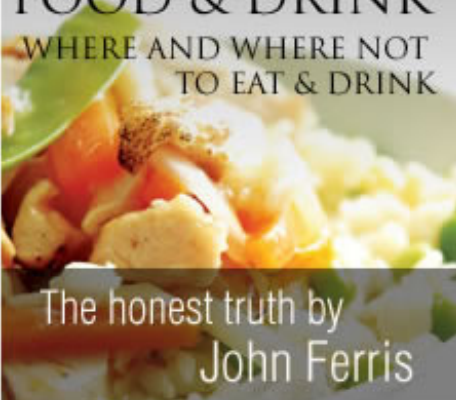


A publisher's blog

By Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

FOOD & DRINK

WHERE AND WHERE NOT TO EAT & DRINK



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Headlines

Thousands unite in call for truth



by **evan short**

The British government was challenged by thousands of marchers yesterday to reveal the full role it played in the murder of nationalists and republicans over the last 40 years. Upwards of 7,000 marchers from all over Ireland, including the relatives of victims, descended on Belfast City Hall to demand that the British government disclose the part it played in helping loyalist murder gangs.

Those gathered heard from representatives of a number of campaigns aimed at finding the truth about the killings of loved ones, and listened to Gerry Adams say Sinn Féin would be continuing to raise the issue with the British government.

"If there is to be an inclusive healing process and a genuine process of reconciliation then the British government must face up to its responsibilities," said the West Belfast MP.

"It is in the interest of all our people that there is a genuine and successful healing process [and] all political leaders have a responsibility to promote this.

"That means thinking beyond any sectarian, sectional, party political or self interest," continued Mr Adams.

Thousands of marchers from the four corners of the city descended on the City Hall yesterday to demand the British government own up to its role in the murder of its own citizens.

In bright sunshine up to 7,000 people of all ages, carrying placards and wearing black

ribbons, heard the families of the victims of state violence speak of their suffering at the hands of the British government and its policy of using loyalist proxies to attack the nationalist and republican community.

As the march passed, the names of West Belfast men Pearse Jordan, Pat Finucane and Tony Fusco loomed large among the hundreds who were remembered by their loved ones.

Recollections

The daughter of Donegal Sinn Féin councillor, Eddie Fullerton, was first to speak and told a tale familiar to many of those who looked on when she described how loyalists used a sledgehammer to break down the door of her father's home before shooting him as he lay in bed with his wife.

Her recollection of having to deal with a disinterested legal system, both North and South, was another part of the harrowing recollection that struck a nerve with the crowd.

"Several media investigations have revealed links between British army intelligence and their informers within loyalism that facilitated the murder of my father," said Amanda Fullerton.

"Four years ago we received information proving collusion between the loyalists and the RUC.

"We have also learned that the Garda Síochána were given this information but had not acted on it.

"We were always told the border was a major problem in the investigation. We know now the border was not a major problem."

Amanda was followed by Relatives for Justice Director, Mark Thompson, who himself lost a brother to a loyalist killer gang.

Murders

He said that republican and nationalist attempts to assert their rights as citizens with public rallies had always drawn a sharp response from the British and their proxies within loyalism.

"The UDA and UFF murdered over 100 people in this city - most of whom were killed by informers working for the British government - that was policy.

"These agents helped bring in consignments of weapons that were used to kill over 300 people across the North - that was policy."

Delivering the keynote speech, Gerry Adams said the truth issue would be central to future negotiations with the British.

"The objective of this march and rally is to draw attention to collusion and British state violence; a policy which resulted in many thousands of victims who were killed or injured or bereaved; and the administrative and institutional cover-up by the British government and its state agencies.

Black ribbon

"The black ribbon is the symbol of this event.

"Wearing it today is an act of solidarity with the victims, their families and the campaign groups.

"It also sends a clear message to the British state that we are determined to pursue the

truth," he added.

"We are determined to campaign even though it may take a long time, until the British state acknowledges its administrative and institutional use of state violence and collusion."

He also said that the issue of the British manipulation of members of the republican movement should be put under the same scrutiny.

"Yes the British recruited, blackmailed, tricked, intimidated and bribed individual republicans into working for them and I think it would be only right to have this dimension of British strategy investigated also.

"If the British state used former republicans to do its killing for it, then the victims of that policy have the right to truth also.

Collusion

"The infiltration of organisations, the tactic of divide and conquer, of counter gangs, has long been a hallmark of British policy.

"But to compare, as anti-republicans do, this policy with the structured control and direction of unionist paramilitaries in the conduct of their war is disingenuous."

Mr Adams added that the presence of so many at a rally in the city centre showed that the strategy of collusion, like British militarism in Ireland, was a failure.

"Both strategies have a number of things in common - they were about the defeat of republicanism.

"And they failed.

"That objective has not been achieved. And it never will be," he added.

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