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04 July 2007

Search Site

Lá Nua

- Home
- News
 - Headlines
 - Features
- Opinion
 - Letters
 - Your Texts
 - Editorial
 - Columnists
- Features
- Sport
 - GAA
 - Soccer
 - Bowls
 - Boxing
 - Darts



Nuachtán Laethúil na Gaeilge

From the Balcony



**A publisher's
blog**

**By Máirtín
Ó Muilleoir**

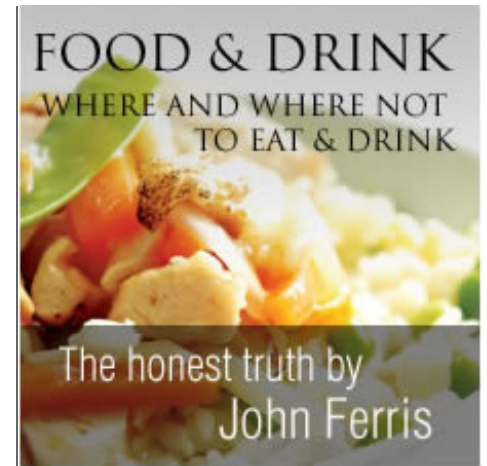
- **Notices**
- Public Notices
- Classifieds
- Deaths
- Memorials
- **In The Community**
- **BelfastPropertyOnline.com**
- Property Guide
- **Business and Recruitment**
- News
- Comment
- This Week's PDF Edition
- **Aisling Awards**

Columnists

No peace for the north as long as justice is gagged

BY Martin Morgan

I am sure that many of you have heard time and time again that things are changing for the better in the north of Ireland. We have a new Assembly, the paramilitaries are thinking of retiring - well at least they are doing it publicly anyhow - the loyalists are having a rethink (major challenge for them) of their own role in the north and the army are leaving south Armagh - and by that I mean the British army, not the brave lads and lassies of the flying columns - heroes them all - I don't think so. However, have some of the most important things really begun to change, such as policing and public confidence in the justice system?



Achievement

The policing is getting better, no doubt about that. It still has a long way to go but in fairness to the Chief Constable he has managed to do things that none of his predecessors could achieve.

He didn't have the baggage (and some of them had a lot of baggage) that other post holders brought to the job and therefore we as nationalists and republicans could never have confidence in them.

Many unresolved problems remain, but the most significant problem in the north of Ireland is the justice system, but more specifically those in the justice system who hang on to the coat tails of the government, MI5 and the Special Branch.

These people are too easily influenced by the mandarins in Whitehall, Stormont and Lisnasharragh (PSNI), those members of the security forces - covert departments found in their dens of deviancy - plotting against the people of the north and other places.

Decision not to prosecute

Whilst the Public Prosecution Service took the decision not to prosecute anyone from the security forces for the plotting and carrying out of the murder of Pat Finucane, who is really responsible for this decision?

Well, the Public Prosecution Service will no doubt express at length their independence in reaching this conclusion. They have already argued that there wasn't enough evidence to prosecute, those who may have been investigated, however, as history has shown, shadowy figures lurk in the background, attempting to exercise undue pressures on those who generally are hard-working, decent people.

The truth of the matter is that Pat Finucane was murdered by loyalist gunmen, but these individuals were ably assisted by elements in military intelligence and the then RUC Special Branch. Some of the government-paid individuals remain in publicly paid jobs. Some remain employed across the north of Ireland, remaining in the now PSNI and the British Army.

This is a tragedy on a number of levels; a father murdered in his home, guilty of nothing, a seeker of justice and equality striving for a better way of life for those who he represented as a lawyer and in turn for us all.

It is a tragedy that the family, friends and the entire community m,will probably never see justice achieved. This may sound defeatist, it is not and the campaign must go on, new evidence and old being searched, analysed and turned over time and time again.

It is a tragedy that those left living and who are responsible for this man's murder, will not see the inside of a courtroom, to sit in front of Mrs Finucane and her family, and to face the wrath of justice.

Tragedy

It is a further tragedy for us, every one of us, that the lives of the Irish or those who are British in the north of Ireland are not valued nor protected by a British establishment, that in no small way contributed to the mayhem of what was known as the "troubles".

Whilst other ways of life in the north are moving forward, where our two main political parties are working together on common themes and issues, the issue of a public confidence in the justice of the north remains questionable and unresolved.

As long as this issue remains then there will always be doubts, there will always be concerns and the final chapter of the "troubles" will remain uncompleted.

In a different context in a different time, Pearce stated at the grave of O' Donavan Rossa, that "whilst Ireland holds these graves. Ireland unfree shall never be at peace".

Responsible

In this modern age, Ireland, north, south, east and west, can not achieve the peace that it deserves as long as those responsible for many of our grave sites remain at large, particularly, those paid by the government.

Neither, will the families, friends of the dead and the dead themselves, have peace and rest as long as justice is gagged.-

29/06/2007