

# NEWS RELEASE

The Workers Party

PEACE: WORK: DEMOCRACY: CLASS POLITICS - FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY



## SUBSTANTIVE TALKS SHOULD BEGIN IMMEDIATELY, SAY W.P.

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" It is beyond the comprehension of all rational observers that talks crucial for the future of Northern Ireland have been held up for a week now over matters which are, at the most, symbolic. " Proinsias De Rossa, President of The Workers' Party said at a Press Conference in Belfast this morning. " The first point to be made is that since these parties are agreed on the venue for this first stage of the talks, - and they are all present in Stormont this morning - then they should get that dialogue started right away. If more negotiations are necessary to sort out the arguments over the venue for the second stage, then those could go ahead in parallel while the substantive negotiations continue."

" Last week I proposed as one possible option that the Dublin leg of the second phase should take place in the British Embassy there. The reality is, that I share the widespread and profound exasperation of most people viewing this stubborn display of petty pointscoring on all sides. " Mr. De Rossa said." The importance of these talks should need no repetition. People in Northern Ireland in particular, and also in the Republic and in Britain, have been looking towards this dialogue with anxiety and with hope. The very fact that agreement to negotiate had been reached was seen as an encouraging sign. Now the most cynical views of the most gloomy pessimists seem justified. If such a trivial issue as the venue can lead to such bitter divisions, what are the real prospects for compromise and progress ? "

" As everyone knows The Workers' Party in Dail Eireann proposed last December that Articles 2 & 3 be amended to retain the aspiration to unity of the people of Ireland while removing the territorial claim. That proposal received widespread support amongst the public and from all opposition parties including the Progressive Democrats, who are in government with Fianna Fail. It is clear therefore that Articles 2 & 3 should not be seen as a barrier to progress in these talks.

" Have the participants to these talks no understanding of how much is at stake now that this process has been embarked upon ? " Cllr. Seamus Lynch, N.I. Chairperson of the W.P. , asked at the same Press Conference. " Do they not see what a boost for the terror gangs, what a setback for hopes of democratic progress, it would be if this whole venture breaks down in acrimony and intransigence ? Do they think they could step back to their previous positions as if nothing had happened ? "

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" People in this community have been suffering death and the agonies of bereavement for decades now while their public representatives have clung to petty dogmatic points to justify a refusal to talk out their differences. The tasks facing politicians here are enormous - winning peace, eliminating terrorism, tackling the immense economic crisis which exists and the huge social problems that brings in its wake. If we can achieve the establishment of a democratic government structure within Northern Ireland, then there will be great challenges facing us all to make that work effectively, to make it work for the benefit of all our people. It is intolerable that petty intransigence, typical of all the worst features of the sectarian politics of the past seventeen wasted years, should now threaten to derail this process before it even gets under way.