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By Chris Thornton
Thursday, 25 September 2008

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams called today for a truth commission on the Troubles — saying it should be helped by “all relevant parties”.

Mr Adams appeared to include the IRA in his call for all groups to come clean about the conflict, raising the spectre of specific explanations about episodes like the 1987 Enniskillen bombing that killed 11 people.

But he also indicated that the success of such a venture would be dependent on full cooperation from the Government, and accused London of resisting a number of attempts to address unanswered questions about the Troubles.

Mr Adams' call — made in today's issue of An Phoblacht/Republican News — sets the republican bar for the upcoming report by the Consultative Group on the Past, the group led by former Church of Ireland Archbishop Lord Eames and ex-Policing Board vice chairman

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Denis Bradley.

What are these?

The Eames-Bradley group is due to make recommendations for dealing with the past by the end of the year.

The Sinn Fein president said that his party, after meeting a number of victims groups, has decided "that the establishment of an Independent International Truth Commission is the best way of taking this issue forward".

Mr Adams had previously said there was "merit" in the idea of a truth commission, but had stopped short of giving it full backing. But now he is endorsing the idea, adding that there "must be a process that can deliver the truth to bereaved families as a result of independent investigation".

"Key to the success of such a Commission is the full co-operation by all relevant parties," he wrote.

That would appear to include the IRA, which has previously issued a blanket apology to "non-combatants it has killed or injured and their families", but has not involved itself in detailed explanations of particular incidents.

But Mr Adams particularly highlighted the role of the Government, saying that there had been official attempts to cover up incidents like the deaths of 11 people in Ballymurphy 37 years ago.

"For our part Sinn Fein is very mindful of all of the difficulties involved in truth recovery, particularly for victims and their families," he wrote.

"But we believe that as society seeks to leave conflict behind and to move forward there is a requirement that all of us address the tragic human consequences of the past."

Mr Adams said "the willingness of individuals to voluntarily participate will be greatly enhanced if the Commission is seen to be independent, have an international dimension and be fair and equitable".

"Of course, it won't be easy," he added.

"There are vested groups who will not want the truth; and who will oppose the creation of a meaningful truth recovery process.

"So this is going to be an immensely difficult and painful process and experience. It must therefore be conducted in a sensitive and generous way.

"Building a united harmonious society demands that these difficult issues are dealt with in an inclusive way as a necessary part of putting the past behind us. Looking after victims and victims' families and survivors is a significant and important part of this."

He said any truth process would have to examine the issue of collusion.

"Brushing it under the carpet, revising our history to exorcise the role of the British state in fomenting and prolonging conflict in our country, is in no ones interest — especially the families," he wrote.

"Republicans have clearly acknowledged many times the hurt they inflicted during the conflict.

"I have expressed my personal and sincere regret and apologised for that hurt.

"The IRA has also acknowledged what it has done. That is the right and proper thing to do."

Mr Adams said Sinn Fein believes a truth process should be "victim-centred", that there should be "no hierarchy of victims" and "all processes should be politically neutral".

He indicated a commission could be an important step towards reconciliation, but indicated that key components would be independence and an international aspect.

"Those of us charged with political responsibility must agree and deliver a process that is meaningful and substantive," he said.

"There is an onus on all political leaders to promote this."

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Remember Me

 Unionists all seem like bigots to me. Adams fought against the intolerance, immoral domination and prejudice of Orangism and won. That is the TRUTH you all seem to want to deny.

Posted by Colin | 25.09.08, 23:08 GMT

 WHY WOULD REPUBLICANS BE REPENTANT?
the provisional ira would never have been formed if the unionist government had treated all the residents in the north of ireland in equality,they never did ,segregation,discrimination,ulster is protestant,internment,murder,hate,just a few of the obstacles presented by unionists,thank god


Posted by phil murphy | 25.09.08, 21:46 GMT

 very rich words comming from gerry does he understand the word truth? Sinn fein are getting funnier by the day

Posted by Matt | 25.09.08, 17:50 GMT

 Unrepentant republicans wouldn't know the truth if it bit them on their behinds. More publicity seeking from a marginalised man. Gerry, they haven't gone away you know!

Posted by Gary | 25.09.08, 17:10 GMT


 Without Justice it is rather meaningless

And I see nowhere in this report stating that he thinks those who confess to their crimes or "truths" should be up in court


Also we will have the absurd nonsense of an IRA man being on the same level as the actual innocent victims of "the troubles" as this is the way Adams thinks

A comission that deals with murders of the innocent victims would be welcome, but only innocent victims, not terrorists who go their just deserts. and those who are found to have murdered innocent people should stand trial. as without justice it is all pointless


Posted by Gary | 25.09.08, 14:44 GMT

 Maybe Mr Adams would like to start first !!!!!


Posted by Gregg | 25.09.08, 14:20 GMT

 I recall that our Deputy First Minister had every opportunity to tell the truth about Bloody Sunday to that very expensive enquiry in Stroke City. All we heard from the man as he left the enquiry was something saying nothing that would harm the Republicans' code of silence. I don't think a Truth Commission is going to get anything else from these people.

Posted by Thos | 25.09.08, 13:58 GMT

 How much more time are we going to spend raking the past over and over and over? Whiel I have full sympathy with all the innocent victims of terrorism this country needs to move on, get economics and politics working, put pressure on the "Fools on the Hill" to act like a government and sort out the economic timebomb we are all sitting on

Posted by Jon | 25.09.08, 13:42 GMT

 How much more hypocritical can this man be? I don't believe that he nor any other politician in this country would even know the meaning of the word truth. These people have told lies for so long the only people who believe what they say are themselves and the terminally thick.

Posted by Robert | 25.09.08, 13:14 GMT

 That would mean that the RUC and Maggie would have to fess up. That would be great.

Posted by McRee | 25.09.08, 12:57 GMT

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