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Adams to challenge Blair on Collusion

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Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams will lead a party delegation tomorrow to hold a meeting with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the issue of Collusion.

Mr. Adams said:

"The O Loan report is the tip of the iceberg. Collusion was an integral part of British policy. It existed under the Tories and Labour in the 1970s but became a more focussed weapon of state terror under the Thatcher government.

"Not only did MI5, the Force Research Unit, Special branch and other state agencies run informers and agents but they trained, equipped and supplied specific information on potential targets. The Glenanne gang which carried out the Dublin Monaghan bombings is one example, but perhaps the example which best exposes the extent of institutionalised collusion was the murder of human rights lawyer Pat Finucane.

"The British government and its agencies also encouraged and facilitated informal acts of collusion which were always part and parcel of the relationship between the RUC and UDR and unionist paramilitaries.

"It isn't good enough for Hugh Orde to express support for the O'Loan report and then criticise Sinn Fein for condemning those who carried out these actions, and others, some still within his organisation who covered them up.

"Neither is it enough for this British government to express concern and do nothing to right this wrong. British government ministers who sanctioned collusion must face the consequences of their actions.

"We intend telling Mr. Blair tomorrow that British government figures, including successive Prime Ministers who sat around the British Cabinet table, and who sanctioned collusion, and received reports on its implementation, must be held accountable. 10 years ago when we first met Mr. Blair in Downing Street we gave him a file on Collusion and specifically the case of Pat Finucane. Years later he told me that since his time in Downing Street he had not authorised any such activities in Ireland.

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Then who did authorise the killing and the cover-ups, which have occurred while he has been British prime Minister? Who authorised the running of the drug pushers, or the payments of these killers?

"Who authorised their non-prosecution by the DPP? Who within the British establishment thinks they are more powerful than the British Prime Minister? Moreover, four years ago the Stevens Inquiry sent files on 25 individuals to the DPP with a view to charging them. Four years later nothing has happened. This is the same DPP office that made a sordid little side deal with Brian Nelson, the UDA/British agent who helped kill Pat Finucane and many others. What does Mr. Blair intend doing about the DPP?

"These are questions which demand answers. Mr. Blair must be prepared to open up this can of worms to public scrutiny. And as a first step he should accede to the Finucane family's request for a proper public, international based, enquiry.

"But Mr. Blair also has to acknowledge the great hurt successive British governments have inflicted on almost a thousand citizens who were killed, and their families who have suffered directly, and all the thousands of others who had their rights undermined and subverted by a policy, which encouraged paramilitarism and violence and which in turn corrupted Protestant working class communities.

"The reality is that Collusion is a symptom of a bigger problem; British rule in Ireland. The RUC Special Branch, British intelligence and their agents were doing exactly what they were paid to do. It was a political policy decided in Downing Street by the British government and implemented by the Special Branch, FRU and others.

"Collusion and State terrorism was used by the British government to uphold the Union; to defend and assert British government involvement in Irish affairs. The history of that involvement is littered with examples like this. Sinn Féin remains resolute in our determination to end that involvement." ENDS

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