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Monday, September 29, 2008

Adams directs call for truth commission to republicans

GERRY MORIARTY

SINN FÉIN president Gerry Adams has called for the creation of an independent international truth commission to deal with the legacy of the Troubles, in a message directed specifically at Sinn Féin and IRA members.

Mr Adams has used the current edition of the republican weekly newspaper, An Phoblacht to back the setting up of a truth commission. Mr Adams does not specifically state that the IRA must co-operate with such a body, but it appears implicit in one of the nine principles which Sinn Féin proposes should underpin an "effective truth recovery process".

He proposes that all processes should be victim-centred and deal with victims on an all-Ireland basis. Mr Adams adds that "full co-operation by all relevant parties is essential to the success of any commission".

This logically should include the IRA as it is self-evidently a "relevant" party to the conflict, being responsible for some 1,800 of the 3,700 deaths in the troubles. The fact that Mr Adams's article first appeared in An Phoblacht - whose main target audience is Sinn Féin and IRA members - would appear to reinforce the suggestion that the IRA should co-operate with any such commission.

Outside of the principles, Mr Adams further states that "there is a requirement that all of us address the tragic human consequences of the past".

A victim-centred process "means that it must embrace all the victims, all the protagonists, whether they live in Ireland or England or elsewhere", he adds.

This appears to be the first time that Mr Adams or other senior Sinn Féin figures have definitively called for a truth commission.

Earlier this year the IRA said it was "highly unlikely" that it would meet the Eames-Bradley Consultative Group on the Past, which is due to report at the end of this year. So far the IRA has not met the group.

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Mr Adams in his article says Sinn Féin has opted for a truth commission-type process following a process of "consultation and discussion, particularly with victims and victims' groups".

"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. The IRA has apologised to all those non-combatants it killed or injured and their families," he adds.

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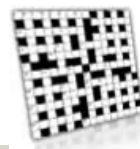


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