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by 4. Kennedy
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Analysis of published paramilitary comment
fortnight ending 3 February, 1989

Adams at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis

In his Ard Fheis speech Gerry Adams led on the issue of prisoners. He welcomed the increased levels of Christmas parole but credited the prisoners' "incorruptibility" and campaigns by their relatives. He next addressed the issue of sectarian attacks "in some cases by assassins wearing RUC uniforms and in other instances where the assassins have left their uniforms at home". Commenting on the IRA campaign he endorsed it as "a necessary and morally correct form of struggle" but made a direct appeal to "active service volunteers of Oglagh na hEireann" for "more circumspection than ever before". He also stated that he had had a series of discussions with a number of Northern Protestants. "The discussions crystallised for me the need for Republicans to understand the perceptions and fears of this section of our citizens... Our search for peace has to rise above the consequences of imperialist rule if a post-partition independent Ireland is indeed to be based on the unity of Catholic, Protestant and dissenter".

Martin McGuinness on the Bloody Sunday anniversary

Speaking at the Bloody Sunday commemoration march McGuinness said that the IRA had made mistakes but had had the integrity to admit them and that in future the IRA "will have to be careful and be careful again" (an exact repetition of a phrase from Adams' Ard Fheis speech).

Sinn Fein electoral chances

An interview with "party spokesman" Richard McAuley in the Sunday Life on 29 January quotes him as saying that the "obvious" threat to Sinn Fein electoral chances is "another Enniskillen" but that in addition "if the British Government were to bring in changes which they said were the result of the London-Dublin agreement then we would be worried that that would effect our vote". (He qualified this by noting that "We don't think this is very likely"). He sees the party objective in the 1989 elections as being to hold the vote. "If our vote holds it will be a major victory which the British will have great difficulty explaining away". Manifesto issues will be house searches; the new Prevention of Terrorism Act; and health cuts and privatisation. The Irish News of 2 February reports Sinn Fein Councillor Gerard McGuigan as saying that "all the people who stand for Sinn Fein in the elections will make it very clear where they stand in support for the IRA. Afterwards I will say I understand IRA violence and those who challenge us can interpret that".

IRA on standing down of Fermanagh Brigade

Following the killing of Harry Keyes in Co Donegal earlier this month, the IRA announced that its Fermanagh Brigade had been disbanded and disarmed. The full text of the 'GHQ' statement appears on the cover of An Phoblacht. It notes that "there is a greater realisation than ever of the need for the IRA to avoid civilian casualties... We realise that we have a responsibility to correct the problems and refine our activities so that they do not hinder but complement efforts to build a broad-based front against imperialism. We will always be striving to place the

struggle on ground which republicans can unhesitatingly, and without great difficulty, defend".

IRA Death Threats

The Belfast Brigade of the IRA issued a threat to the removals firm Pickfords on 27 January stating that "the firm has been assisting British Army families to flee Ireland following recent attacks on housing estates inhabited by British Army personnel. In recent days Pickfords had agreed to ship in personal belongings and military equipment vital to newly-installed regiments."

This followed a warning on 26 January to any contractor who undertakes repair work on the Derry courthouse similar to that issued after the bombing at the courthouse in Dungannon last week.

Seal and Search Operations

Danny Morrisson is quoted in the Irish News of 1 February as criticising RUC claims that a recent large arms and explosives find in a Twinbrook house 'vindicates' the seal and search tactic. He claimed that the search in question was "clearly specific and fell outside.. tactics of random searches... The facts speak for themselves. Last year the RUC forcibly entered almost 5,000 households, 1,100 of them in a five week period at the end of the year. Only in .. less than five percent was anything found."

'Death on the Rock' Inquiry

An Phoblacht, reporting on the outcome of the Windlesham Inquiry notes that although the programme had been vindicated the whole controversy and the huge costs of the inquiry "will serve as a deterrent to..... challenging the British government about its handling of security matters or its policy in Ireland".

Rh Anne

Anglo-Irish Section
3 February, 1989

cc AI Section; AI Secretariat; Mr Nally; Mr O' Brien;
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