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Adams calls for truth but keeps past secret

(Brian Feeney, [Irish News](#))

On Sunday Gerry Adams addressed a crowd estimated at 2,000 at Belfast City Hall where they had gathered after a 'March for Truth' timed to coincide with Sinn Féin's annual Hunger Strike rally.

He told the rally that "we are determined to pursue the truth" about collusion between loyalist death squads and the British state. He called on the British government to acknowledge its role in state violence and collusion.

Worthy sentiments but he is the very worst person to express them since he refuses to tell the truth about his own role in the IRA or even to admit he was a member despite compelling contemporary evidence that he was.

Here's one piece of evidence. At 3pm on June 20 1972, at the home of Colonel McCorkell in Ballyarnett near the Derry/ Donegal border, two British government officials held a secret three-and-a-half-hour meeting with the IRA. Who were the IRA representatives? Daithi O Conaill and none other than Gerry Adams.

One of the British representatives, Philip Woodfield, made a report of the meeting which is available in the British Public Records Office and has been public knowledge for five years.

In the report Woodfield and his colleague Frank Steele from MI6 are quite clear they are dealing with the IRA. They would have been extremely annoyed if they hadn't been. Why risk the meeting otherwise?

They say this is "our first encounter with the Provisional IRA". O Conaill and Adams spoke, acted and presented themselves as IRA men. Adams and O Conaill "let drop several remarks about the life of the Provisional IRA man on the run".

Woodfield and Steele were impressed with the demeanour of O Conaill and Adams.

"Their behaviour and attitude bear no relation to the indiscriminate campaigns of bombing and shooting in which

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they have both [sic] been prominent leaders."

In truth Gerry Adams's credibility as a negotiator with the British and Irish governments then and later rested on his prominence in the IRA. Why else did the IRA make such a song and dance about having him released from the Maidstone to attend meetings with the British in June 1972?

Others in the IRA in 1972 might have been less than delighted that O Conaill and Adams told the British officials in Donegal that they wanted a "ceasefire and a permanent end to violence" but that's another story.

We could go on to the details of the IRA meeting with northern secretary William Whitelaw which Adams attended in London on July 7 1972, but the point's made.

Why would anyone have bothered talking to Adams in the 1980s and 1990s if he couldn't deliver the IRA?

The IRA was an organisation which until the late 1980s gave no credence to members of Sinn Féin unless they had been prominent members of the IRA. Ask yourself, is the IRA likely to have allowed a non-member to make representations on their behalf to the British and Irish governments?

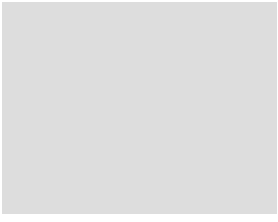
Yet to accept Adams's denials of his IRA past is to have people believe the IRA perhaps selected him to deal with the British because of his unsurpassed prowess in knitting those Aran sweaters he used to wear or because of his renowned ability to keep his pipe lit during long meetings.

Whatever the reason he would like us to accept for his unexplained prominence in republicanism, the fact remains that he must think people are awful stupid if he believes he can be taken seriously standing on a platform demanding the British tell the truth while keeping decades of his own past secret and unbelievable.

Adams also knows that were the British to reveal all, it would include stacks of shelving containing intelligence and other reports of his IRA activities as well as his meetings and dealings with the British.

The only reason he risks making such a demand is that he knows the British will not reveal their dirty deeds of the past 40 years until we are all dead. Remember, they revealed official attempts to smear Parnell a mere century after his death.

Therefore, Adams can urge them to come clean certain in the knowledge it will not happen in his lifetime.



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