



# An Chartlann Náisiúnta National Archives

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Analysis of published Provisional IRA/Sinn Fein  
and UDA/UVF comment (for the two weeks ending 1 March 1987)

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1. Gerry Adams on post-election Sinn Fein

After Sinn Fein's poor showing in the General Election, Adams has been giving a number of interviews on the general theme "whither Sinn Fein".

- (a) He told "An Phoblacht" of 26 February that although the result was unsatisfactory for Sinn Fein, it was not surprising given the "difficulties" they were forced to work against. He said that the votes went to the big parties who were seen to be relevant (a key Adams word) on issues affecting people in the 26 County state: the economy, unemployment, taxation and emigration. While Sinn Fein has sound policies on these issues, "who knows about them?" (a reference to Section 31).

He rejected as "nonsense" the suggestion that the fall in Sinn Fein's vote resulted from the dropping of abstentionism. "Indeed", Adams said, "with a great deal of hindsight, I am sorry that abstentionism wasn't dropped years ago. High points of the last 20 years could have been properly consolidated and developed by a radical, non-abstentionist Sinn Fein organisation".

As to the future, he said that in the months ahead they would be implementing the lessons learned and the "small but valuable gains" made. He repeated his familiar line that there were no magic formulae or easy options. "Only hard work of the most mundane and tedious nature, intelligent planning, patience and involvement on a daily basis with the electorate will lead to the electoral gains we require". Meanwhile, in the North, Adams said, there was a "pressing need to forge ahead with preparations for the forthcoming British General Election".

(b) In an interview in the Sunday News on 22 February, Adams expanded further on the Election outcome. Sinn Fein, he said was "steam-rollered by the big parties.... but I would say that those who dismiss Sinn Fein's electoral showing this time round are making a major mistake... It is a matter of making ourselves relevant despite censorship and isolation. That is going to take a few elections". Sinn Fein's performance in the General Election, he said, "must be seen in terms of building a 32-County national political struggle which will not restrict itself to parliamentarianism but will be involved in other forms of agitation and non-armed political struggle in the 26 Counties. This will marry into a general political struggle in the 6 Counties in support of the IRA".

## 2. INLA Feud

Wide coverage was given to Adams' appeal to the INLA to end its feud and disband. The Irish News of 28 February quoted extracts from his messages to both of the feuding factions. He accused the Army Council faction of "appalling ruthlessness and of treacherously abusing the mediation process". He also rejected their claim that after disbandment INLA weapons would be handed over to the IRA. "I, like most other people, can see no difference between your activity and that which you are condemning in the other faction". In his message to the GHQ faction - which is resisting disbandment - Adams said that there was no room in the nationalist community for another armed group.

## 3. Public Order

Adams told the Irish News of 25 February that the new Public Order Order "would be targeted at the traditional Easter commemorations". "The British Government is attempting to portray these new proposals as some sort of reform of the 6-County state aimed at the more unacceptable

aspects of loyalist triumphalism and provocative Orange parades through wholly nationalist areas. The real purpose of the Public Order Bill, however, is the further repression of republican and nationalist expression".

4. UDA

After a period of very favourable press following the publication of their "Common Sense" document, it was back to more familiar profiles for the UDA last week with the news of their suspected involvement in the Coleraine UDR arms raid. However, their press has not been exclusively negative. The Irish News of 21 February carried a headline "UDA praised for food service", a reference to the organisation's involvement in the distribution of the EC's free food recently. The praise came from a spokesperson of one of the agencies co-ordinating the food distribution, who said that the UDA had been helping Catholic families in loyalist areas and that they had "been one of the most effective groups in terms of getting the food to the people. There is no evidence that any foodstuff has gone astray".

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