



# CNI

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## **NEWS FOCUS - As murder returns to Ireland, so does the Sinn Fein nightmare**

**The sound of the Kalashnikov rifle has once again resounded across Ireland's political landscape. In a scene worthy of Chicago in the 1920s, gunmen in police uniforms last week assassinated a well-known Dublin gangster and injured two others at a boxing weigh-in. Gerry Adams was quickly out of his corner to condemn the shootings, jabbing with a sanctimonious left and swinging with a pious right in an frenzy of moral fisticuffs – despite the fact that the guns probably came from Sinn Fein IRA's arsenal in the first place - Kevin Myers writes in The Daily Telegraph**

On February 26, Ireland is going into a general election with Sinn Fein – which Adams has led as long as Joe Stalin ran the Communist Party of the USSR – doing well in the polls, and even

threatening to hold the balance of power. This quintessentially absurd possibility is the price that Ireland is paying for having refused to put the IRA out of business during its 26-year terrorist war against the Northern Ireland state. Yesterday was the 20th anniversary of the IRA's Canary Wharf bombing that killed two men and cost £100 million. That should have caused the British and Irish governments to take a sterner line against terrorism. In fact the bombing actually enhanced the IRA's negotiating position.

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Admittedly, a careless fingerprint led to the arrest of some of the perpetrators, and the capture of the dreaded South Armagh sniper, Michael Carragher, in a brilliant operation by the SAS. The officer who led the Special Forces' raid was under orders not to kill any terrorists. He duly rewarded with a humble Mention in Despatches instead of the MC he probably would have got had there been shooting. Keeping terrorists alive had become the ill-rewarded priority. Naturally, all of the captured terrorists, with much blood on their hands, were released within 18 months.

The Provisional IRA still exists, organically linked to Sinn Fein. It still has arms, such as the extraordinary Russian AN-94 twin-shot rifle: the first round shatters body armour, the next one blows the victim apart. Some IRA weapons were decommissioned. Others leached into the hands of the misnamed “dissidents”, who falteringly continue the terrorist campaign that the Provisional IRA started. Some of these “dissidents” are indistinguishable from drug gangsters. Last week’s use of police uniforms in the Dublin assassination was straight out of the South Armagh handbook. The initial claim of responsibility by the splinter-group the Continuity IRA (since denied) adds another element of surrealism in a society where the political wing of the Provisional IRA is calling for more police (real ones, that is) on the streets.

Indeed, IRA-watching is more a branch of theology than empirical observation. Eight years ago, the notorious terrorist leader Slab Murphy reached a one million euro settlement with the Irish tax authorities, and last December the no-jury, three-judge Special Criminal Court found him guilty of tax evasion. Naturally Adams defended Murphy, but so did the “respectable” face of Sinn Fein – Adams’s deputy, Mary Lou McDonald. She unashamedly described Murphy as “a good republican”, which threw yesterday’s

reiteration by Sinn Fein of its intention to disband the Special Criminal Court into even greater relief.

Or it should do. Yet Sinn Fein's violent past and ambiguous present seem to cast no shadow. Polls suggest that the party has 19 per cent backing overall. Among 18- to 34-year-olds, with 30 per cent support, it is the most popular party. Just as disturbing is that 18 per cent of women support Sinn Fein, though Adams has [never convincingly rebutted allegations](#) that he was responsible for the 1972 abduction, murder and secret burial of the widowed mother of 10, Jean McConville, and that he helped cover up for his brother Liam, who had been raping his own daughter, Aine Dahlstrom.

By any reasonable standards, Adams is an utter monster, yet one in five Irish people like him politically. Once the Semtex man whose chums blew people apart by the hundred, he is now the Teflon man, to whom nothing sticks. As the centenary of the 1916 Easter Rising nears, Sinn Fein might well benefit from the resulting emotional backwash – not enough to get into government, but maybe enough to make it Ireland's largest opposition group. The nightmare deepens.

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/northernireland/12149147/As-murder-returns-to-Ireland-so-does-the-Sinn-Fein-nightmare.html>