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Recommended Citation

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - March 2001" (2001). *American Irish Newsletter*. 14.

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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 26, Number 3

March 2001

New Jersey Nixes Racist Police Exam Question

PEC MEMBER **Kathleen Fearon** informs us that the State of New Jersey Department of Personnel has removed from its Law Enforcement Examination a question that links drunkenness with St. Patrick's Day (See Jan. *Newsletter*). Thanks to Fearon, the PEC conducted a letter-writing campaign to the Department of Personnel advising it to remove the question from its exam.

Fearon received the following reply from Commissioner **Janice Mitchell Mintz**:

"Governor [Christine Todd] Whitman has asked that I respond to your recent letter regarding the Law Enforcement Examination. Your letter states that you understood that there was a question on the test which was demeaning and disrespectful to the Irish.

"There was a reading passage on the examination that described a scenario which took place late on St. Patrick's Day in which a driver is stopped at a traffic light. When asked if she had been drinking earlier, the driver admitted to having been at a Valentine's Day party. Through a series of other questions, the police officer determines that she is intoxicated and takes her to jail. There were then a series of questions asked about the situation that followed. At no time, other than setting the time of the incident as late on St. Patrick's Day, was there any reference to the Irish.

"However, once this situation was brought to my attention, I immediately directed our Selection Services staff to contact the consultant we used to prepare this examination to have the question removed from all future uses of this test. Since this was a test we purchased and is proprietary, we did not have the opportunity to review all the questions prior to the examination. Let me assure you, however, that my staff is very sensitive to any potential ethnic slurs and carefully reviews our testing materials to ensure situations like this one, that might even be perceived as being uncaring, are not used.

"Being of Irish ancestry, I certainly would feel pained if I thought I had allowed the Irish to be ridiculed under my watch. I apologize to you and any who may have been offended by this situation. I can assure you that it was not intentional and my staff will even be more vigilant in the future."

Bush Promises to Support Peace Process

PRESIDENT **George W. Bush** has indicated that his administration will continue to support the Irish peace process. In letters to Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern** and Sinn Féin leader **Gerry Adams**, the 43rd president says that his Administration and all the players in the peace process far will successfully meet the challenges currently facing the peace process.

Bush says that he remains dedicated to supporting the peace process. His letter to Adams says: "As you noted, I remain dedicated to supporting the peace process in Northern Ireland. We will undoubtedly face a number of challenges in the years ahead. I am confident that with a spirit of mutual respect, cooperation, and open dialogue, we can successfully meet these challenges. But the future also presents enormous opportunities, and I share in the hopeful spirit that was so evident in your letter."

Many Americans fear that the Bush Administration might push Northern Ireland down its foreign policy agenda. However, a number of congressmen—including **Ben Gilman**, **Peter King**, and **Jim Walsh**—have been briefing the new Administration on the problems still ahead, such as the contentious issue of policing.

Relaying good wishes to Bush, Ahern impressed upon the new president the "invaluable" role of the backing of successive American administrations in the bid to secure peace in Northern Ireland.

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Our View: *Enough Ain't Enough*

DR. JOHN Reid has the temerity to say in public that he has only a "passing knowledge" of Northern Ireland but knows enough about the situation to have confidence about the way ahead.

How does one land the Northern Ireland Secretary's portfolio at a sensitive time in a peace process almost 30 years in the making with a "passing knowledge"? Was Reid being coy or is he truly a blockhead? Does British Prime Minister Tony Blair need a dodo so he can get on with the peace process without some Secretary of State's interfering with annoying opinions on the matter? Does Reid really matter?

Sinn Fein's Martin McGuinness in his Bloody Sunday memorial lecture in Jan. gives Blair credit for being "honest and honorable" but adds that the prime minister has a knack for making commitments without taking "into account the agendas of the British Militarists and the securocrats in the political establishments both in Whitehall and in the NIO." Blair forgets there's a war going on.

This is particularly troubling considering Reid's military background (see story, Page 6). Reid has shown himself to be a military man with opinions he likes to share with the world. He has endorsed the freedom of two men found guilty in British courts of murdering an Irish Catholic teen. This alone suggests Reid might suffer from anti-Irish, anti-Catholic prejudices that could make his role in the peace process an unproductive one, to say the least.

Robert Heatley has over the years pointed out that Northern secretaries have a history of doing their time before they move on to bigger and better or--in former Northern Secretary Peter Mandelson's case--are suspended from school. Let's hope that during his stint in the North, Reid will learn more than enough to get by and will ace the test of making peace a reality in Ireland.

Peace Process Update

January 22

THE IRISH and British governments postpone a meeting of the North-South ministerial council in an effort, they say, to assist efforts to break the peace process impasse. Sinn Fein claims, however, that the governments are covering for First Minister **David Trimble**, who refuses to sign papers to allow Sinn Fein's **Bairbre de Brun** to attend the meeting.

January 23

British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** meets with Northern party leaders at Downing Street.

January 24

Northern Secretary **Peter Mandelson** resigns amid sensitive negotiations in the peace process. His resignation follows allegations that he issued a British passport to an Indian businessman as part of a million-pound deal. Businessman **Srichand Hinduja** became a British citizen in 1998 and later made a million-pound donation to the failed London Millennium Dome project for which Mandelson had been responsible.

January 16

High-ranking White House officials are involved in talks to try to end the deadlock over policing, demilitarization, and decommissioning.

January 19

Leader of the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland Archbishop **Sean Brady** says he cannot back the policing reforms outlined in recently enacted British legislation.

January 25

Dr. **John Reid** arrives in the North to replace Mandelson as Northern secretary. Reid says he has a "passing knowledge" of Northern Ireland but knows enough about the situation to have confidence about the way ahead. Although the UUP welcomes Reid to the North, Sinn Fein assembly member **Mitchel McLaughlin** says the party has doubts about Reid as a result of his record as armed

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American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

*A non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization
founded 1975*

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From the North: *Britain, UUP are Right Back Where They Wanted to Be*

By Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization, Belfast, Northern Ireland*

EVER since the Mitchell Agreement was signed three years ago, we have been highly critical of the British government's tunnel-vision approach to it. Downing Street has behaved as if it had one purpose: to maneuver the Irish Republican Army into a position in which it would be coerced into giving up its arms.

Even before the parties signed the Agreement, Britain began to use First Minister **David Trimble's** wing of the Ulster Unionist Party for this purpose. Since Britain clued in the Trimble "pragmatists," their misgivings have been overcome; they are happy enough to play their part in it. This explains a lot about what has happened over the past three years.

The Britain-UUP duo have been under an illusion that they can remove the IRA's weapons while they concede a minimum of Mitchell Agreement reforms—which the duo have been gutting in the process.

However, until now, the solidarity of the elements comprising the Irish government, the SDLP, and Sinn Féin has proved to be somewhat more persistent than Britain and the UUP had bargained for. The reason is that all the elements of this so-called pan-nationalist front agree on political means as the way in which to pursue Ireland's legitimate quest for reunification and self-determination. Nationalists need a bona fide political roadway to achieve credibly these aims in British-ruled Northern Ireland, however.

That is what the reforms specified in the Agreement were supposed to provide—albeit in their undiluted implementation. If that political road did not exist, how could anyone expect to resolve an arms question?

The plan implicit in the Agreement has been to implement, in good faith, the Agreement's reforms; and the mainstream republican movement, which wishes to go down the political road, will reciprocate with measures that ought to lead to the removal of guns from Anglo-Irish politics, provided the British do likewise.

The British-UUP response has been different: the use of diktat and arbitrary time scales, which the duo deliver belligerently, in exchange for watered-down concessions. The excuse for such a response has been that Trimble can do nothing but placate the rejectionists of unionism—who abhor the Agreement in any case. Is it any wonder that for the past three years the peace process has stumbled from one crisis to another?

Recently-departed proconsul **Peter Mandelson** played this game to the utmost for the very short time he was here. His replacement, Dr. **John Reid**, is unlikely to be any tougher with the Northern Ireland Office bureaucrats and top-brass militarists who are at one with the rejectionists.

Mandelson left these cliques in reasonably fine fettle with high hopes of getting their way in the end. In a matter of weeks now, a general election for the Westminster parliament is expected, and the No-men inside and outside the UUP hope for an outcome that will topple Trimble if their candidates romp home in unionist constituencies. Trimble and his dependents are running scared of this onslaught from their own side and—for appearance's sake, anyhow—have stepped-up their truculence.

One so-called moderate unionist, **Chris McGimpsey**, says that Sinn Féin has been put into detention (that

is, banned from North-South bodies) and that it will stay there until the IRA decommissions. With loyalists throwing more than 50 pipe bombs into Catholic homes in recent weeks, this narrow focus on weapons that have been silent for years reinforces everything we have written in the foregoing text.

Since Mandelson's departure, British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** has become very much alive to the seriousness of this crisis in the peace process as the UUP threatens to make things worse by imposing further sanctions on Sinn Féin. The question is: Can Blair allow the UUP to bring about a further suspension of the Mitchell Agreement institutions without collapsing this whole process for good?

As of Feb. 14, there are intensive talks involving the British and Irish governments and all the parties to rescue the Agreement from what appears to be its approaching death. The issues that require immediate resolution are not confined to IRA decommissioning. They include: British and loyalist demilitarization, the establishment of equitable policing reforms, and the stabilization of Agreement institutions.

If there is any hope for the Agreement's survival, then pro-Agreement parties must go into the Westminster election demonstrating that the cross-party Assembly works and is a vehicle for reconciliation.

Rumor has it that Blair and Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern** will fly into Belfast to tie matters up, should there be a breakthrough in the peace process talks in the coming weeks. Should that happen, then perhaps real progress will come about.

Newsbits

NEW POLICE Ombudsman, **Nuala O'Loan** has received more than 700 complaints against the RUC in her first two months in office. O'Loan, who initially anticipated she might receive 3,000 complaints against the RUC in her first year in office, is now revising her estimate upward to 5,000. Included among the complaints are 274 cases of assault by RUC members and more than 160 complaints of failure of duty. Among those cases the Ombudsman's Office is investigating is that of a defense solicitor who has complained about RUC threats to her life. The RUC had been investigating the complaints lodged by the defense solicitor but, under new legislation, the Ombudsman will now handle the case. O'Loan [has] expressed concern over the deaths of defense lawyers **Pat Finucane** and **Rosemary Nelson** and said she wants to investigate the cases. Prior to their deaths, both Finucane and Nelson had been threatened by the RUC. Recently, in the case of **Rosemary Nelson**, it was disclosed that the Six-County Human Rights Bureau had lodged an official complaint over the lack of a proper investigation into RUC threats against the Lurgan solicitor. (*RM Dist.* 1/8/01)

The leader of the Catholic Church in Ireland said today that he was not prepared yet to back new policing arrangements in Northern Ireland. Archbishop **Sean Brady** said a number of roadblocks still existed but he was hopeful they could be overcome. He said: "We need patience, great patience. This prize has been a long time coming. Better get it right than get it quick...." Archbishop's Brady's comments withholding his support for the new service are bound to be a blow to the

Northern Secretary. Brady told reporters: "We want to support this police service. The elements must be in place. This is not a party political matter; far from it. This is above politics. It's an essential element of the common good. We are engaged in discussions with various parties because we're vitally interested. We know it's of grave concern to all parties. People are saying that, because of this difficult history, they are suspicious, there's great distrust. They want to be sure that it is right." He said he was also concerned about the "transparency" of past events, such as the cases of Catholics **Robert Hamill** and **Pat Finucane**. Nationalists have called for public independent inquiries into both deaths. The cases are being linked to attempts to persuade the SDLP to take up seats on the new police board, set up to oversee policing. Hamill was kicked and beaten to death by a loyalist mob in Portadown, County Armagh, in full view of an armed RUC patrol in May 1997. Attorney **Pat Finucane** was shot dead in his north Belfast home in 1989. (*IAIS* 1/19/01)

Two RUC Special Branch officers may face prosecution for their role in the assassination of Belfast defense lawyer **Pat Finucane**. The Stevens team has sent papers to the Director of Public Prosecutions, who will decide whether the RUC handlers of **William Stobie** will be prosecuted. As an agent working for the RUC, Stobie is currently awaiting trial for his role in the Finucane killing. As a UDA quartermaster, Stobie has already admitted supplying and disposing of the weapons used in the shooting. Crucially, Stobie has said that he warned his handlers on at least two occasions "that a murder was about to be committed." At first, the RUC claimed it could not act on the

information it received because it did not know who was the intended target. Stobie has claimed that he was also unaware of the intended target, but according to another witness—former journalist **Neil Mulholland**—Stobie knew the target was Finucane and might have told his handlers. Another British agent, **Brian Nelson**, in his role within the UDA supplied a photograph of Finucane and his personal details to the loyalist gang that carried out the killing. Nelson says he alerted his British army handlers that Finucane was being targeted. Now, according to a senior source within the Stevens team, the two RUC handlers are claiming that no such conversation with Stobie took place. Detectives working within the Stevens investigation have questioned the handlers, known only as **Ian** and **Raymond**. News that the two RUC handlers might face prosecution came as legal insiders are predicting that the case against their agent is about to collapse. Judge **Liam McCollum** is expected to rule within days on whether Stobie's defense team is entitled to medical reports on the chief prosecution witness. Last year the former journalist and present NIO press officer, Mulholland, at the center of the case against Stobie, dramatically signed himself into a psychiatric unit. At the time, it was predicted that the case might collapse. (*RM Dist.* 1/28/01)

Congressman **Ben Gilman** has again called on British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** to adhere to Patten's recommendations and produce a "working, good police reform program" for the North. Meanwhile, Rep. **Peter King** has pledged the support of President **George W. Bush** to the peace process "when asked." (*AIN-PEC* 2/5/01)

Offensive Situations

Portland, Maine, Allows Dogs to Defecate on Irish Graves

THE CITY council of Portland, Maine paid a consultant \$50,000 to help it find a solution to the controversy surrounding the city's off-leash dog park in its historical Western Cemetery, PEC member **Dan Engler** reports.

After eight months, the consultant has suggested that dog walkers keep dogs tethered to leashes while in the park. The problem remains an offensive situation for Americans of Irish descent.

Last June, **Paul O'Neill** of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Portland published the following information in an online special interest journal.

The Western Cemetery is Portland's second oldest cemetery and was Portland's primary burial ground from 1829 until about 1852. There was a burial as recently as 1987.

Many of the Irish people who had to immigrate during the Great Hunger in Ireland in the mid-1800s are buried in the Catholic Ground of the Western Cemetery. Two years ago, Division 1 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Portland dedicated a stone marking the Catholic Ground on one side

and remembering the Great Hunger Irish on the other side.

Nevertheless, the City of Portland designated the Western Cemetery not a park but an off-leash dog park. This means that instead of spending a few dollars to fence in an appropriate area for dog walking and running, the city is inviting dog owners to bring their dogs into the Western Cemetery to romp about and relieve themselves on graves.

The dog walkers who make up Portland's infamous Doggy Brigade file into the cemetery starting at the crack of dawn to launch their daily assault on the graves.

Maine recently passed a law that requires every town and city to decorate veterans' graves with a flag on Memorial Day. If the Western Cemetery remains a dog toilet, then this will add flag desecration to the city's list of policies that make Portland the desecration capital of the world.

Portland's government must be told that cemeteries are sacred and must be treated with respect (*See Action Request, Page 8*).

Letter to the Editor

PEC MEMBER **John Thornton** writes:

WELL done in speaking out against racist images. However, you've missed the main target in citing the Notre Dame bookstore for action (See Jan. and Feb. *Newsletter*) [based on its selling a porcelain figurine of an Irish Guard football cheerleader whose costume recalls Irish regiments of the British Army].

You should be targeting Notre Dame and its demeaning Irish elf logo. The image is straight out of the Punch cartoons of the 19th and early 20th centuries that portrayed the "fighting Irish" as barroom brawlers ready at the drop of a hat to "put 'em up."

The American Indians have done an excellent job of eliminating the stereotype of the Indian on the war path as a school mascot. Maybe it's our turn to get rid of the Punch drunk Irishman? Thank you.

Web Links

AIEF-PEC

<http://aipec.homestead.com>

Bloody Sunday

<http://www.free-eire.org/Free-Eire/sunday/sites.html>

Committee on the Administration of Justice

<http://www.caj.org.uk/>

Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

<http://www.equalityni.org/>

Pat Finucane Center

<http://www.serve.com/pfc/>

Rosemary Nelson Campaign

<http://www.rosemarynelsoncampaign.com/>

Pat Finucane Center Challenges Reid's Support for Murderers

THE DERRY-BASED human rights group the Pat Finucane Center (PFC) has published a series of questions it would like newly-appointed Northern Ireland Secretary of State Dr. **John Reid** to address.

Reid was Minister of State for the Armed Forces during a crucial period in the campaign to free Scots Guards **Mark Wright** and **James Fisher**, who were convicted of the 1992 murder of Peter McBride. Fisher and Wright were released early and then allowed to rejoin the British Army.

Reid's critics have accused him also of "stonewalling" in relation to the safety of British Army helicopters—particularly in relation to the helicopter crash in which 24 key members of the British security forces died.

During his period as Armed Force Minister, Reid and his officials provided false information to campaigners for the McBride family; delayed the decision on the future of the Guardsmen—contrary to Queens Regulations; intervened publicly and inappropriately on the Guardsmen's behalf; and justified the use of Ministry of Defense facilities by campaigners for the two convicted murderers.

The PFC is therefore seeking responses to the following questions.

On May 13, 1998, Reid, as Minister of State for the Armed Forces, met with representatives of the Guardsmen Wright and Fisher Release Group but refused two subsequent requests for meetings with the McBride family. His successor as Armed Forces Minister, **Doug Henderson**, agreed to a meeting following representations from

Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern**, however. Why did Reid refuse meetings that his successor agreed to?

Following the meeting with the Release Group, Reid expressed concern over the continuing imprisonment of the Guardsmen. Was it appropriate for a minister to support publicly two convicted murderers, given his role as minister in deciding their future in the army?

In a May 29, 1998 letter to the PFC, Reid's military assistant stated that no decision had been made on the retention of the Guardsmen in the army because the case had "been under consideration by the Northern Ireland judicial process for some time" and claimed that the two "have been either appealing against the decisions of the court or seeking judicial review of their cases."

This information was false, and Reid's officials knew it. Leave to appeal the convictions had been denied in March, 1996. Why did Reid issue false and inaccurate information to justify his own inaction as minister?

In a July 23, 1998 letter, Reid again endorsed this view, stating, "...[T]he Army Authorities have taken the view that it would be inappropriate for the future of the two Guardsmen to be considered until all judicial debate ceased." There had been no judicial debate on the issue of the guilt or innocence of the two Guardsmen since March, 1996. As the minister with ultimate responsibility in this matter, Reid was duty-bound to ensure that Queen's Regulations be applied. Why did he delay the decision on the Guardsmen's future, contrary to

Queens Regulation 9.404 ?

In a Nov. 30, 1997 letter to a constituent, Reid justified the Release Group's using Scots Guards' headquarters property and telephones. He stated, "...the group no longer uses the Wellington Barracks address as their point of contact. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that whilst consideration is being given to their future in the Army, Gdsm. Fisher and Wright remain members of the Scots Guards and are entitled to support from their Regiment." Why did the armed forces minister believe that two men who were convicted in a court of law of murder were "entitled to support from their Regiment"?

The minister and his officials repeatedly sought to influence the early release of the Guardsmen and to delay improperly a decision on their future. The Ministry of Defense strategy was to delay an Army Board hearing until the two had been released, thus creating circumstances that would allow for their retention. Was it appropriate for the armed forces minister to be involved in a strategy that effectively sought to overturn the judgement of the court?

Reid's officials informed the PFC that the Army Board hearing on the future of the Guardsmen was a "quasi-judicial process." Two of his successors actually sat on the army boards that decided on retention of the Guardsmen. Was it appropriate for the minister who would be involved in a decision-making capacity in a "quasi-judicial process" to show such bias in favor of two convicted murderers?

(continued from Page 1)

Ahern said his government looked forward to working closely with Bush on a whole range of common political, economic, and cultural issues and to "strengthening the

close and mutually beneficial links between us."

He added: "President Bush wrote to me confirming his personal interest in and ongoing commitment to the peace process."

Prison Protests Were a Lesson in Political Education

By **Jim McVeigh**, *a former commanding officer of the H Blocks of Long Kesh*
(Reprinted from Jan. 20 RM Dist.)

All of us are Capable

HOW DID WE GO from standing naked in cells with [excrement] on the walls to having full control of the wings in the H-Blocks? [A look at that time in our history can show us how we might achieve new political goals.]

Consider Ray McCreesh, who was 24 when he died on hunger strike, the second youngest of four brothers and three sisters. He was an ordinary person driven into a position of leadership. He took difficult decisions, dealing with opponents, media, and propaganda; negotiating with some of the most skilled and duplicitous politicians. The prison protests proved that all of us are capable.

Betrayal of Principle? The end of a Phase

It was a difficult period after the hunger strikes. Some saw it as a betrayal of those who had died—even a capitulation. Others saw it as a protracted and indefinite protest going nowhere. We decided to end that phase and fight for segregation [from loyalists and nonpolitical prisoners]. We took a decision to avoid being locked behind the doors. We won that battle after a year of battles, bombs under beds, heavy stuff.

False Sense of Security

The screws believed we'd been defeated after the Hunger Strikes. They were lulled into a false sense of security that opened the way to our intelligence gathering. Who were the hard men? Who weren't? Who would buckle? We had enough information to compromise individuals. We confused them. Then followed the 1983 escape from the highest security prison in Europe.

This led us into a phase in which the prison staff went on the offensive against republicans. Republicans were forced onto the defensive, against the constant effort to reintegrate the wings. The question was, How do we get the initiative back? We needed to regain a strategy.

Everyone was asked to set objectives and set what was primary or secondary. Free association was one. Education was another. Our long-term goal—a democratic, socialist republic—was clear, but we set 100 demands, from porcelain plates and steel knives to an end of the lockups.

Experience told us that under pressure the British would move on some demands—a few Mickey Mouse concessions. We identified our primary objectives: end of lockups, end of the red book system (in which the screws shifted high security prisoners from wing to wing every couple of weeks), and the reintroduction of association between the four wings of each H Block.

Reform or Revolution?

We decided not to let up until we won these objectives. This led to intense debate: reform or revolution? Did accepting concessions weaken our position?

For example, after six months, they gave us Sony Walkmans—a typical British strategy. Once we would have said, "F— off. We demand political status." Instead, our response was, "That was fantastic, but what about political status?" We had nothing to fear from accepting concessions because we never lost sight of our objectives.

Range of Tactics

We needed to plan: What tactics would shift our opponents? This led to a range of tactics used in a flexible way over time. We drew up a document and gave it to everyone—the Board of Governors, the prison administration, church people, screws. Then we moved into a campaign of intimidation and psychological battles, destroying the screws' morale. We kept the tension up on them. It led to many nervous breakdowns, and the screws went crying to the governor to concede, complaining they feared for their lives.

We also needed to create a better understanding outside of how things really were in the jail. We decided the red book prisoners would refuse to move; so when 10 were told to go one evening, they refused in a peaceful protest without physical resistance. The screws trussed them up, beat them, moved them in a van. People were outraged.

A prison officer called Red Rat, a particularly nasty screw from the Hunger Strike days, was killed. Others fled the country. Some told us they were sorry at what had happened in the blanket protest years, but they'd had to follow orders. Propaganda is critical.

The Struggle Goes on

By the 1990s, the NIO conceded our demands. Because the prison staff were demoralized, they became persuaded of the merit of the demands.

I returned to the blocks in 1992. The jail was completely transformed. The POWs ran the jail with full control of the wings, with free association. Our camp staff went formally to the prison administration to negotiate and discuss our points. It was a POW camp.

It all makes us seem to be very clever. In fact, with hindsight, we realize that we made some bad decisions, but there was also intelligent thinking and planning. People in the jail learned a great deal to continue the struggle today.

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Action Requests

*Please take the actions recommended below.
Mention that you are a PEC member.*

Contact: **Secretary of State Gen. Colin Powell**,
U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC 20520,
fax: 202-261-8577; email secretary@state.gov

Message: I urge you to follow up on President George W. Bush's campaign promises and recent pledges to the Irish people to support the Irish peace process by making that process a foreign policy priority for this Administration. The US has achieved significant successes thus far in that fragile process, and continued US involvement will play a key role in seeing it to a conclusion. The Irish people have made it clear they are counting on the White House for its help. Please use your good offices to help Mr. Bush keep this campaign promise.

Contact: **City of Portland**, City Hall, 389 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101; email Mcd@ci.portland.me.us

Message: I urge you to change your policy of allowing people to walk their dogs in the Western Cemetery. The Western Cemetery deserves respect; also, it is an historically significant site, not least because it is the final resting place of many Irish people who fled Ireland's Great Hunger of the mid-19th century. Your off-leash dog park indicates the city has no respect for the dead or for its own history. Such a policy is insulting to everybody, especially those who seek to commemorate the dead and remember their gifts to the development of this nation.

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forces minister and support for the two Scots Guards convicted of the murder of north Belfast teenager Peter McBride in 1992.

January 29

Reid meets Northern party leaders.

January 30

The Belfast High Court rules that Trimble acted illegally when he prevented two Sinn Féin Ministers from attending meetings of the cross-border ministerial bodies. The court rules that **Trimble** must nominate representatives to meetings of the North South Ministerial Council, although they need not be the two Sinn Féin Ministers. The UUP plans to appeal the ruling.

January 31

Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern** and Blair hold a summit to take stock of the peace process impasse.

February 3

Commenting on talks between Sinn Fein and the British government aimed at breaking the impasse on decommissioning, demilitarization, and policing reform, Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams** says: "[The] gap between the British government's proposals on policing and the type of policing service agreed on Good Friday [in 1998]...remains as wide as ever." Adams says republicans will continue talking with Britain. A Catholic family escapes a UDA pipe bomb attack on its home in the New Lodge area of north Belfast. The attack is one of many loyalist attacks on Catholics in the North this year.

**Renew Membership in the AIEF-PEC
and Make Peace a Priority
for Ireland in 2001**