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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 23, Number 9

September 1998

Great Hunger Stamp Campaign Is a Winner

Letter-writers have again achieved a notable victory. After four years of hard campaigning, the United States Postal Service (USPS) has announced it will issue a stamp honoring the contributions of the Irish who emigrated to the US during the Great Hunger of 1845-50 and their ancestors to this nation.

Postmaster General William J. Henderson approved in August the recommendation of the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee (CSAC) to issue the stamp. The CSAC called the PEC's letter-writing campaign "very effective," adding that the Irish "would not accept no for an answer." The CSAC had rejected letter-writers' calls for the stamp on several occasions, though it acknowledged the public's interest in the stamp and the volume of correspondence in support of it.

The news follows the USPS's earlier announcement that it would issue a stamp to honor St. Patrick's Day. When the PEC announced this breakthrough in its July issue of the *Newsletter*, we asked you to continue writing letters and push the USPS, specifically, to honor the achievements in America of Irish immigrants to the US during the Great Hunger. One member says she wrote to the USPS 23 times to press this issue.

"The people across America who would not give up and continued to participate in our letter-writing and postcard campaign made this effort a success," said PEC National President John J. Finucane.

Congressman **William O. Lipinski**, senators **Dick Durban** and **Ted Kennedy**, and members of the **Ad Hoc Irish Famine Committee** and the **American Irish-Celtic USA Stamp Committee** were also instrumental in this campaign for a commemorative postage stamp.

Following the USPS announcement, Sen. Kennedy said, "It's gratifying that the Postal Service is using this significant anniversary to honor the many contributions that Irish immigrants and their descendants have made over the past century and a half to all aspects of American life."

Rep. Lipinski added, "Nearly 300 [256] Irish-Americans have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the largest number awarded to any ethnic group in America. This stamp will pay homage to the courage of those Irish emigrants and their descendants."

We urge members to write to the Postmaster General William J. Henderson and thank him for approving the stamp. (*See Action Request, Page 6.*)

Bomb Kills 28, Injures More Than 200 in Omagh

Dissident republicans calling themselves the Real IRA claimed responsibility August 18 for a bombing in Omagh, County Tyrone, that killed 28 people and injured more than 200 others. *See Page 3 for Robert Heatley's analysis of this atrocity.*

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

Potential presidential candidate Steve Forbes will get an Iowa boost next month from former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher and Forbes will combine their financial muscle to raise money for Republican legislative candidates in a state where precinct caucuses begin the presidential nominating season, said the Iowa Republican chairman, Steve Grubbs. Iowa Republicans were seeking to capitalize on Thatcher's prominence to raise money, and issued an announcement declaring "The British are coming!" She will appear at an Aug. 13 fund-raiser. Money raised will go to legislative candidates seeking to maintain a GOP majority. (*Associated Press 7/28/98*)

Newt Gingrich has decided that it is now safe to speak out for peace in Ireland. Throughout the PEC's letter writing and postcard campaigns, not a word was heard from Newt. However, he recently visited Ireland and is now even seeking his Irish roots in Donegal. (*Belfast Telegraph, 8/11/98*)

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OUR VIEW

Since the British and Irish governments signed the Mitchell Agreement with the blessing of the main Northern political parties, human rights groups have been calling for greater official human rights protections on both sides of the border.

Over the past 30 years, both states have enacted, enforced, and abused emergency legislation designed to make efficient the capturing and prosecuting of paramilitary suspects. In addition, censorship laws have limited the quality of political debate and public understanding of issues that created the emergency situation in the first place.

A recent report that the British media cover conflict-related deaths with different levels of concern and depth illustrates the effects of repressive legislation on the intellectual climate of a nation. Roy Greenslade, a former editor of London's Daily Mirror newspaper, found there are five ranks of victims in terms of media coverage. In the first, receiving most coverage, were British people killed in Britain. In the fifth, getting least coverage, were victims of loyalist violence, whether they were Catholics, Protestants, IRA members, or passersby.

The use of a sliding scale to measure the value of life has no place in an Ireland where political parties and paramilitaries have had the courage and vision to risk a new political scenario in which peace can take hold. As the British and Irish governments acknowledge that the war is over and begin to release paramilitary prisoners, they must also dismantle the legislative framework of war.

PEACE PROCESS UPDATE

July 10

The RUC believe a gun attack on them and the spent casings they find are proof that loyalist paramilitaries are playing a significant role in the violence at Drumcree.

July 12

First Minister David Trimble and his deputy, Seamus Mallon, urge the Orangemen at Drumcree to end their protest after loyalists firebomb a home in a loyalist area in Ballymoney and kill three Catholic children.

July 16

President Clinton pledges to redouble his efforts to see peace in Ireland following the deaths of the Quinn boys. Women involved in a black flag protest against an Orange march in Belfast are horrified when elderly Orange marchers shout, "3-Nil, 3-Nil" and "f— your children."

July 18

Loyalists force 53 RUC families from their homes during the Drumcree crisis, the *Irish News* reports. They are among 79 RUC households subjected to attacks and threats.

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July 20

Human rights groups oppose the principal legislation to implement the Mitchell Agreement as it begins its passage through the British parliament. The Committee on the Administration of Justice reacts with "profound disappointment" to the human rights and equality provisions in the bill, which it says fail to reflect the content of the talks deal. The bill contains none of the proposals set down in the agreement to promote the Irish language, official use of public symbols and flags, measures to tackle employment discrimination, and an all-Ireland human rights body.

July 22

UUP leader David Trimble tables an amendment to the Northern Ireland Bill to ban Sinn Fein from taking government office in the new Assembly.

July 29

The British government presses ahead with plans to see more than 200 IRA and loyalist prisoners released from prison in Northern Ireland before Christmas under the terms

continued on page 4

From the North

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

There is no excuse whatsoever for the mass killings that took place in Omagh, County Tyrone, on August 15.

The splinter group calling itself the Real IRA claimed responsibility on August 18 for killing 28 people—Catholic and Protestant—and injuring hundreds of others. These hardliners broke away from the Provisional IRA, the reason being Sinn Fein's adherence to the Mitchell Agreement.

No republican or genuine nationalist accepts that the Mitchell Agreement is the ultimate settlement of the Anglo-Irish question. That will come when Ireland is united and politically independent. What is generally accepted within the nationalist/republican community (which comprises elements of the Protestants) is that the Mitchell Agreement creates a new dynamic—a transitional framework within which the inferior politics of unionism can be defeated by the anti-colonialist, democratic aspirations of *bona fide* nationalism and republicanism.

It had become abundantly clear that alternative methods of struggle—abstracting them, for a moment, from their moral justification or otherwise—were deadlocked and not delivering the desired result. Indeed in many respects they were proving to be counter-productive, given the superiority of Britain in the worldwide media where the case was presented of a fair-minded, democratic, government laboring to contain a situation in which two warring Irish "tribes" were using the despicable methods of terrorism in their irrational, primitive, conflict. The preponderance of media attention on the methods eclipsed Ireland's political case.

It was only when politics took the upper hand, with the coming together of Fianna Fail (former Irish Prime

Minister Albert Reynolds), the SDLP (John Hume) and Sinn Fein (Gerry Adams) in the nationalist alliance that some worthwhile progress began to be made. International support increased and the British had to deal. The unionist splits intensified, and the parties fell into disarray. They still don't know how to cope with the advances of nationalism in the North and the infusion of Sinn Fein into the institutions of government at the six-county level.

With the IRA conducting a protracted cessation from armed struggle and Sinn Fein playing an indispensable part in the search for a new basis from which to proceed, matters then deteriorated even further for the unionists this summer, with the loyal orders displaying themselves before the whole world at Drumcree. Few in Britain itself can make head or tail of the so-called "British culture" that these strange, foreign beings—the Orangemen—declare themselves to be defending. Never had their esteem fallen so low in the estimation of the British public.

Then, along comes an equally strange brand of "Republicanism" to rescue them from their plight with the atrocity at Omagh. It might turn out to be the case, of course, that the Mitchell Agreement is fool's gold but, as one Sinn Fein leader has implored the dissident faction, "at least stand back and give it a chance. If it fails, then everyone will reappraise the situation."

At this stage, I should say that my outrage at what was done at Omagh is not merely because of the political damage that was done to republicanism throughout Ireland, although to be a democrat in Ireland implies an identification with that tradition.

Like Liam de Paor, whose tragic death recently took place, I regard myself to be a republican in the revolutionary French mould and in that of the United Irishmen, the bicentenary of whose 1798 rebellion we have been commemorating this year.

Aside from being morally indefensible and politically lunatic, the Omagh bomb went against the whole spirit of the founders of republicanism, which was thoroughly anti-sectarian. They stood for the bringing together of all categories of Irish people, but not as at Omagh, where 28 Protestants and Catholics were killed and more than 200 more mutilated.

Backward elements of the British establishment whose views were given ample space in the media were thereby enabled to call for the re-introduction of internment (North and South of the border), the freezing of prisoner releases, and the exclusion of Sinn Fein until the IRA begins decommissioning its weapons, and Sinn Fein makes a declaration that the "war is over"—demands designed to blow the peace process to pieces.

But then, many commentators have argued that that was precisely what the Omagh bomb was intended to do. If that is the case, then those who set the bomb owe everyone an explanation: how would the slaughter of innocent Irish civilians, Catholics and Protestants, children and adults, hurt the British establishment hard enough to cause them to forsake their political interest for remaining in Ireland?

The slaughter might not have been intended, but then, if you engage in this activity, there is always the risk.

The question remains, what causes people who describe themselves as republicans, and who probably believe that they are in some kind of true tradition, to carry out such acts?

Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

In an effort to allay unionist fears about the possibility of a united Ireland, opinion-formers have begun to discuss the proposition that the Republic rejoin the Commonwealth.... Rejoining could reassure unionists who fear that their identity is ignored in the Republic and might be further ignored as the two parts of the island draw together. Rejoining could come to symbolize the South's understanding of British identities in both parts of Ireland.... The beleaguered people of Northern Ireland have taken great risks for peace in recent months. Isn't it time the Irish government seriously considered making a move to rejoin the Commonwealth? (*Irish Times* 8/10/98)

A potentially troublesome parade passed off relatively peacefully after a residents' group and parade organizers agreed on a compromise. Ten thousand marchers took part in the Apprentice Boys parade in Derry, which began by walking the city wall, the band falling silent as it passed the Catholic Bogside area. Later, the marchers gathered at Craigavon Bridge and marched through the city center. As agreed, the Apprentice Boys did not march around the Diamond, avoiding the side overlooking the Bogside, and only 13 members laid a wreath at the cenotaph. Both sides had asked their supporters to avoid trouble and, except for some hecklers, they complied. (*International Orange Watch Commission*, 8/8/98)

Elizabeth O'Brien Brownlow of Tennessee

by Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

Throughout the American Civil War, the American Irish influence was felt in the tens of thousands of Irish immigrants who fought in that tragic episode in American history. One of those American Irish was Elizabeth O'Brien Brownlow of Tennessee.

Elizabeth O'Brien, the descendant of Irish immigrants who came to America from County Clare, was born in 1819 in Tennessee. In Elizabethton, Tennessee, she and her family were considered to be a part of Southern antebellum society. Her father, James, became prominent in that community. Elizabeth's ancestors were heroes in the American Revolution and served in the Continental Congress. However, despite being a true daughter of the South, Elizabeth strongly opposed slavery and supported the preservation of the Union.

In 1836, Elizabeth married William G. Brownlow, who was a highly respected statesman in Tennessee. They had seven children, and two of her sons—James and J.B.—served as full colonels in the Union Army.

When the Civil War broke out, Elizabeth and her husband openly opposed the breakup of the Union, supported President Lincoln, and worked to assist escaped slaves. When Confederate Gen. James Longstreet and his troops captured the Brownlows' hometown of Knoxville, Elizabeth stood in front of the flag pole at her home to prevent the confederates from tearing down the Stars and Stripes that she proudly flew. Elizabeth also tended to the wounded at the battlefield of Fort Sanders. She braved the mountains to warn her husband that he was going to be arrested by Confederate spies. Confederate authorities held Elizabeth and her husband as prisoners of war.

After the war, she counted Texas hero Sam Houston and presidents Johnson, Grant, Hayes, McKinley, and Teddy Roosevelt as friends who visited her in Knoxville. Gen. Sherman and American Irish Gen. Sheridan would also visit her and her family. In her later years, she was an advocate for workers' rights, thus continuing her struggle to defend people who deserved protection in our nation. Elizabeth O'Brien Brownlow died in 1909 in Knoxville.

Source: Library of Edward Kelley, Dorchester, Mass.

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of the Mitchell Agreement. Secretary of State Mo Mowlam names the LVF, INLA, Continuity IRA and Real IRA as ineligible for early release. An LVF source says its members on the outside would not be "tricked into a massacre of innocent Catholics" as a result of this decision.

July 31

A large majority of British MPs pass legislation setting up the Northern Ireland Assembly. The bill passes almost unaltered, despite UUP and

DUP MPs' attempt to make it difficult for members from Sinn Féin to join the Assembly's executive. The bill now goes to the House of Lords. The Assembly could be up and running early in the New Year.

August 2

Dissident republicans set off a 500-pound car bomb in Banbridge, County Down, and fire bombs in Belfast.

August 5

Mowlam declares she is satisfied IRA violence is over for good.

Assembly Will Echo the Past as Change Rolls on

by Brian Feeney

Excerpt from the June 30, 1998 Irish News

The papers have been stuffed with articles asking whether the Assembly will work, whether the DUP will wreck it, whether it will be a circus or a zoo.

The people who agonize over these questions see the world in terms of a set-piece Assembly modeled on the archaic arrangements of the British parliament which at different times resembles either a zoo or a circus and is a source of wonderment to observers of elected assemblies around the world.

First of all, this Assembly doesn't resemble anything concocted in any former British possession and is less like a British model than any ever devised in these islands....

It isn't going to be arranged in the adversarial rows which became established after the English civil war, where Whigs and Tories who'd recently been trying to kill each other still carried their swords just in case the war wasn't over....

The Assembly is going to be organized with the 80-odd members from the various parties who want it to work sitting in a crescent alongside the defeated minority who want to wreck it.

More important, only unionists regard the Assembly as the centerpiece of the Good Friday agreement.

Think Italy, think France or the European parliament where the vast bulk of the business will be done in committees and councils. The business will be arranged between the UUP and the SDLP, and it will be ratified by votes in the Assembly pre-arranged by these parties.

Sure, the DUP and UKUP will want to turn it into something like the monkey house at Belfast Zoo, where the apes show off to the visitors by throwing faeces at each other while the big cats squirt putrid fluid from their scent glands at anyone rash enough to get close to the railings of their pen.

The only disappointment for observers at Stormont will be that most of the rabid members are too old to swing from the lights or perform cartwheels over the desks to provide a truly accurate simian simulation. In the end, who cares?

The majority of members don't need to be present for the tedious, predictable exhibitions. They will just troop in and vote down the proposals. Paisley and McCartney are going to be in permanent opposition, never winning a crucial vote. They might seduce a few of Trimble's lukewarm members into supporting them. Who cares?

If necessary for a majority, the NIO's front party will zig-zag between designating themselves 'other' and unionist which is their true state, anyway. Besides, unionists can do nothing without nationalist consent. New concept, eh?

No question of a tricky midnight vote called without warning as all the Fenians drive home to Tyrone and Armagh. If it's a key issue, the majority of Fenians have to agree.

The Assembly is important to unionists. It allows them the illusion they own something, they control something. They don't.

Set piece debates will be just a giant amplifier for the bigotry and prejudice of the DUP/UKUP axis. Soon the media will realize these guys are a new minority, animated fossils as politically impotent as a Conservative MP.

For nationalists, the reality is the Assembly is the mechanism which sets up the executive committee, a legion of committees, cross-border bodies and the Council of Ministers. In these groups the business will be done. The executive committee will decide the budget, and the Assembly will ratify it. In effect, the leaders of the UUP and the SDLP will cut a deal their parties will support.

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There should never be an occasion when a minister proposes a key issue to the Assembly which the pro-agreemer parties haven't already agreed. It sounds remarkably like politics, though it won't happen until next year.

Trimble doesn't like it, but he has no alternative. If he yields to his own prejudices and bottles out, he has nowhere to go.

Few people have realized that... Northern Ireland elected a coalition government which will last for the foreseeable future. The government has 80 per cent of the seats and no election in sight—indeed no provision for facing an election, for none is described in the agreement.

All that makes you wonder if the Assembly's not designed exactly for Paisley, a place he can rant and rave, where he can doze to the Bob McCartney 10-hour course for insomniacs but where he doesn't have to come up with anything that works.

Is it not a fitting end to a life of political irresponsibility? A place where he can always gulder 'NO' in the knowledge that nobody cares what he says, but he can believe he was righteous when he said it. Surely, permanent opposition was always what he craved since it's debatable if he ever proposed a workable political idea in his life? So there's your answer. The assembly in full session is an echo chamber for Paisley to listen to his voice as he approaches 80.

Will it work? As an echo chamber, of course it will. Listen to him whistle while he rants. But you won't hear the changes taking place elsewhere. Wait till next year.

For more information, contact the
American Ireland
Education Foundation-PEC
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10980 or call 800-777-6807

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In all the tens of thousands of words written about the Mitchell Agreement, hardly anyone seems to have noticed that it contains important rights commitments for the Republic of Ireland as well as for Northern Ireland.

Dublin Must Make Rights Changes

Michael Farrell, Co-chair, *Irish Council for Civil Liberties*

Reprinted from the June, 1998, Just News, newsletter of the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice

The human rights section of the Agreement pledges the Dublin government to establishing a Human Rights Commission equivalent to the one to be established in Northern Ireland; re-examining the question of incorporation of the European Convention of Human Rights; ratifying the European Framework Convention on National Minorities; bringing in new employment equality and equal status legislation; and taking undefined steps to show respect for the different traditions in the island.

The new Human Rights Commissions, North and South, are to set up a joint committee and in the section of the Agreement dealing with Security, Dublin pledges itself to initiate a wide-ranging review of the Offences Against the State Act. There is also a general pledge to provide "at least an equivalent level of protection of human rights as will pertain in Northern Ireland." This can be read as obliging the Irish government to take equivalent measures in areas such as policing where the Agreement contains no specific reference to the Republic....

Looked at more closely, however, the pledges on rights in the South have the appearance more of an afterthought than an enthusiastic commitment by Dublin to a new rights-based order in the Republic. The very formulation used—"an equivalent level of protection of human rights"—is responsive, not proactive. There is a certain irony in the fact that it seems to set Northern Ireland up as the exemplar of the human rights standards

that the Republic should aspire to.

Also, some of the commitments are less fulsome than they might have been. Where the British government is clearly committed to incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights, thus giving Northern citizens direct access to the domestic courts for breaches of the Convention, the Irish government has promised only to further examine the question of incorporation.

In fact, Dublin has previously rejected the idea of incorporating the Convention in favor of piecemeal amendment of the Irish constitution to include any Convention rights not already covered there. It is an oddly isolationist stance that will leave the Republic as the only European Union state not to provide direct access to Convention rights in its own courts. This is a strange position for a state that usually prides itself on being very "communitaire" in its approach to all things European.

The commitment on the Offences Against the State Act is similarly half-hearted. It promises a review "with a view to both reform and dispensing with those elements no longer required as circumstances permit." This suggests they might have in mind dropping sections of the Act that are no longer in use and have become an embarrassment, such as the power to intern without trial, but keeping the non-jury Special Criminal Court to try serious "ordinary" crime and the odd dissident IRA case. In the

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ICCL's view, there is no justification for the continued use of the Special Criminal Court, there has not been for quite some time, and it should simply be scrapped.

As noted above, there is nothing in the Agreement about policing in the Republic. However, if a new policing service in the North is required to have "open, accessible, and independent means of investigating and adjudicating upon complaints against the police," then the Republic, too, should be required to set up a genuinely independent and credible complaints mechanism to replace the ineffective Garda Síochána Complaints Board.

It is again ironic that with an updated and expanded Employment Equality Bill going through the Oireachtas just after the conclusion of the Mitchell Agreement, the government has refused to add political discrimination to the other prohibited forms of discrimination. They have also retained a clause permitting discrimination in certain circumstances in church-run institutions, which sits uneasily with the new, non-sectarian society we are all supposed to be striving for.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the powers that be in Dublin have not yet fully thought through the implications for the Republic of the changes they are—rightly—seeking in Northern Ireland. However, the Agreement commits them to parity of human rights protections, and it is now for the human rights community to make sure they live up to that commitment.

For more information, contact the
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10980 or call 800-777-6807

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British Must Examine Collusion Claims

by Sandy Carlson

As Northern Ireland emerges from conflict, victims of state violence deserve to be remembered as well as victims of paramilitary violence. Truth revealed is a fitting memorial to those victims as well as a key to a lasting peace.

That's why the American Irish PEC is adding its voice to the growing number of human rights organizations calling on the British government to conduct a new inquiry into the 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane.

With the help of the British military, loyalists shot Finucane dead in front of his wife and children in 1989. The murder remains an open case.

International calls for a new investigation have followed the publication on April 1 of a report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Dato' Param Cumaraswamy. Cumaraswamy conducted a fact-finding mission to Northern Ireland and England last October. In his report, the Special Rapporteur calls on the British government to invoke the Commissions of Inquiry Act to open a new investigation into the Finucane case, as it had done with Bloody Sunday.

Immediately following the publication of the report, the Northern Ireland Office said there was no justification for such an inquiry because, it said, there was no new evidence.

Although the loyalist paramilitary UDA/UFF claimed responsibility for his killing, Cumaraswamy found "information that seriously calls into question whether there was official collusion."

Amnesty International, the International Commission of Jurists, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Human Rights, the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, and the PEC also say that the British government colluded with loyalists in Finucane's murder.

The civil rights and defense lawyer's clients have alleged that RUC officers had told them when they were in custody that Finucane would be killed. The lawyer also received threatening phone calls at his home. Shortly before Finucane's murder, RUC roadblocks had been in place near the lawyer's north Belfast home. The RUC removed them just before the murder, prompting allegations that the police cleared the way so the gunmen would have unhindered access to the house.

Brian Nelson, the British military intelligence agent who also served as chief intelligence officer for the UDA, alleged after his conviction on other charges that he had directly assisted in the targeting of Patrick Finucane. According to Nelson's prison journal, loyalists asked him to gather information about Patrick Finucane some weeks prior to his killing, and he informed military intelligence officers of this request.

"Brian Nelson claimed that he passed a photograph to UDA operatives just a few days before the killing. Loyalist sources claimed that Brian Nelson pointed out Patrick Finucane's house to the gunmen," a 1994 Amnesty report said. Nelson was never charged with the killing, and his claims have never been examined in open court.

Finucane's widow has issued a civil suit against both Nelson and the

Ministry of Defense for damages for allegedly failing to pass on intelligence warnings that her husband was the target of loyalist killers.

The Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) has also criticized the British government's response to the Finucane murder and other cases in which evidence suggests collusion took place.

The organization has pointed out that in many of the cases where collusion is alleged, there have been no or very few prosecutions (for example in the cases of Patrick Finucane, the Dublin/Monaghan bombings, and the murder of Patrick Shanaghan). This is also the case in relation to approximately 40 murders committed in the mid-Ulster area between 1989 and 1994.

The PEC urges its members to contact Northern Secretary of State Marjorie Mowlam to urge her to conduct a new investigation into the Finucane murder so that the truth can be established and the bereaved accorded the dignity they deserve. (*See Action Request, Page 6.*)

For more information about British government-loyalist paramilitary collusion:

The Committee

by Sean McPhelimy

Available hardback, 368 pp.

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Action Requests

Write the messages below, preferably in your own words. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, work associates, and others do the same. Please mention your membership in the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC.

Write: Rt. Hon. Marjorie Mowlam, M.P., Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AZ, UNITED KINGDOM

Message: As a member of the American Irish PEC, I urge that your government set up an independent judicial inquiry into the 1989 killing in Belfast of attorney Patrick Finucane. In the interest of establishing a just and lasting peace in Ireland, the British government should also reconsider its limited reaction to the report of UN Special Rapporteur Dato Cumaraswamy and implement all of the recommendations in his report.

Write: Mr. William J. Henderson, Postmaster General, United States Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W., Washington, DC 20260-2437

Message: Thank you for approving the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee's recommendation that the USPS issue a commemorative stamp to honor the contributions to the development of this nation of the Irish who came to this country during the Great Hunger of 1845-50 and their descendants. Please be sure to recognize the role of the Great Hunger in this stamp and all publicity connected to it. Thank you.

Baltimore Plans Irish Immigration Museum

Plans are underway in Baltimore, Maryland, to commemorate the legacy of the thousands of Irish immigrants who came to Baltimore over the past 150 years.

The Railroad Historical District Corporation (RHDC) plans to create educational memorials to both railroaders and immigrant families by reconstructing their homes to portray the everyday lives of American Irish workers in the 1840s, the circumstances and history surrounding their immigration, and the legacy to Baltimore and the nation of that immigration. The project is under the direction of artist Wayne Nield.

The Irish immigrants who arrived in Baltimore in the 1830s and during the Great Hunger disembarked near the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad terminal at Locust Point, where many of them would turn for work. In 1848, the B&O built several row houses on Lemmon Street, near its roundhouse in southwest Baltimore. By September, 1848, all the houses had been sold to individuals of Irish descent. Thomas McNew, a watchman at the B&O Depot; Thomas Medcalfe, a fireman; and Dennis McFaddon and Cornelius McLaughlin, laborers, paid \$400 each for their 6-room houses.

Within a few years, the Irish workers there would begin volunteer work in their neighborhood and construct St. Peter the Apostle Church to accommodate the growing Catholic population. The Sisters of Mercy, an Irish order brought to Baltimore by a granddaughter of Charles Carroll of Carrollton, would establish a local mission at the church to teach and tend to the needs of those newly-arrived Irish.

The Museum Committee of the RHDC seeks Irish family histories and immigration stories, memorabilia, and other assistance. Call 410-254-1355 or write Fiddler's Green Cultural Center, 2916 Gibbons Ave., Baltimore, MD 21214 or RHDCmuseum@aol.com.

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