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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 23, Number 12

December 1998

PEC Succeeds With Your Financial Support

The past year has seen successful results in two important areas of the PEC's work. Our members have pressured the USPS to issue a postage stamp commemorating the Irish immigrants who came to the US as a direct result of the Great Hunger, and we have pressured the federal government into attaching the MacBride Principles of Fair Employment in Northern Ireland to its allocation of funds to the International Fund for Ireland (*see story below*).

The stamp campaign took three years; the MacBride/IFI campaign took 14. Neither would have been possible without the perseverance and moral and financial support of our members. Throughout both campaigns, there were bleak times and progress seemed to be unbearably slow. Nevertheless, PEC members remained constant in their belief in a just and lasting peace in the North where discrimination against Catholics would be a thing of the past. PEC members remained firm in their demand that the USPS honor the role of Irish immigrants in the development of this nation.

The PEC has been successful with these and other issues because we have generated the support for them through letter-writing, postcard, and phone call campaigns. **We have been successful because you have supported us through financial donations that have made these campaigns possible.** Only the PEC discusses the issues and organizes direct, democratic, peaceful action. Only with your financial support can we continue to do so.

Please send the PEC a tax-deductible donation of whatever you can afford. Make your check payable to the American Ireland Education Foundation and mail it to AIEF-PEC, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980.

MacBride Principles are Linked to International Fund

Activists have won another victory over anti-Catholic discrimination in Northern Ireland. After 14 years of activism, the MacBride Principles for Fair Employment in Northern Ireland were written into US federal law on Oct. 21. The nine fair employment guidelines, named after late Nobel Peace Prize winner and former IRA leader Sean MacBride, was linked to the budget bill.

Now, any US company doing business in Northern Ireland will have to adhere to the MacBride Principles to qualify for money from the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

PEC National President John Finucane said, "Finally, the US government has vindicated the grassroots effort to highlight a root cause of the Northern conflict by acknowledging that employment discrimination against Catholics is a big problem that American dollars should not underwrite. Our determination has paid off."

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Newsbits By Kathy Regan

A stream of well-known faces are throwing their weight behind the drive to develop integrated education in Northern Ireland in what is being seen as a significant boost for the sector. Seamus Heaney, Kenneth Branagh, Brian Friel, James Galway and Barry McGuigan are among the high-profile names to support the lobby by agreeing to become patrons of the Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)...The sector is also receiving significant cross-party support, with the bid to get three more schools government funding having won support from members of seven political parties (IAIS 10/20/98)

On the outskirts of North Belfast, [the nationalist enclave of... Graymount] has in recent years become the focus of unrelenting sectarian intimidation and attack... In 1995, more than 40% of Graymount residents were Catholic; now fewer than 30 families remain.... Four years of loyalist intimidation has taken its toll. "Catholics here are very nervous," says one nationalist resident, "we're just waiting for our turn to come." The timing of this upsurge in sectarian intimidation

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OUR VIEW

MacBride Highlights the Importance of Teamwork

Americans united in their desire to see a just, permanent peace in Northern Ireland undertook the MacBride campaign 14 years ago. At the time, victories small and large came slow and steadily as activists faced an uphill battle and the concerted effort of the British government and their sympathizers in Washington and the US business world sought to stymie our efforts on the claim that the Principles were unnecessary and that we were IRA sympathizers.

Nevertheless, we saw state after state and town after town adopt the Principles because they made sense and because they reflected the basic (though hard-won) American value of equal opportunity.

The campaign united a vast cross-section of the American people. Though most activists are American Irish, not all are--just as a sense of fair play and equal opportunity are not the domain of one cultural group.

The MacBride victory in Washington (see Page 1) highlights the importance of perseverance, confidence, pure faith, and teamwork. The victory belongs to all of us, and the spoils will go to the Irish people. In the coming year, let us continue to work together and support each other in our united efforts to see peace come to Ireland.

PEACE PROCESS UPDATE

October 9

The unionist-dominated Northern Ireland Housing Council snubs NIO minister Lord Dubs's plea that it overturn its 25-year-old practice of ensuring that unionists monopolize key Housing Executive posts.

RUC officers will no longer have to swear an oath to serve the British monarch, according to a number of new measures contained in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act. The new oath states: "I hereby do solemnly and sincerely and truly declare and affirm that I will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of constable."

Five UUP MPs and former party leader Jim Molyneux join the new dissident pressure group, Union First. The group forms because it says it feels the UUP leadership is marginalizing views of UUP members who are skeptical of the Mitchell Agreement.

With strong criticism for the justice system in the North, a US federal appeals court overturns an extradition order for

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three Irish nationalists who escaped from a Northern Ireland prison 15 years ago. The three are released on bail Oct. 16.

October 10

Up to 50,000 young Irish people from the North and the border counties of the Republic will be eligible for US visas for training purposes. The Senate passes the Bill authorizing 12,000 one-year visas over three years under the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program. It had been approved by the House, where it had been sponsored by **Congressman James Walsh** and others.

Loyalist PUP leader Billy Hutchinson tells the Irish News that decommissioning of weapons will not come about before Oct. 31 but that over two years anything can happen.

October 13

Northern Secretary Mo Mowlam says that the signals she had been getting from both sides are that they are prepared to move on decommissioning but that neither side wants to move first.

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From the North

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

The peace process is in crisis. British Prime Minister Tony Blair's 'New Labor' government is primarily at fault. It has resurrected the Tory stalling device of its predecessor and, in calling for the immediate decommissioning of IRA weaponry, has enabled Northern Ireland unionists to take possession, in effect, of the Mitchell Agreement. They are being given the wherewithal to dictate when and how its provisions will be implemented. As a result, the deadline for the formation of the Assembly's shadow executive has been missed and there is, as yet, no indication from Trimble as to when it will be allowed to come into existence.

Deriving from this hiatus, the cross-border bodies scheduled in the Agreement for the end of November, are also making slow progress, and there is no certainty that a satisfactory outcome will be achieved by that date. That suits unionists perfectly. Here is what John Taylor, Trimble's UUP deputy, thinks of this element of the deal, of which he postured as a supporter. According to him, the SDLP and the Irish government have a 'wish list' in this regard. Only the unionists' list will be entertained, however, and this is in the areas of:

- Legal disputes as to where the border actually runs...in territorial waters in Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle;
- Plant and animal health;
- Food safety;
- Inland waterways (including canals and rivers);
- Environmental research (formalizing the existing university network on water and air pollution etc.); and
- Transport (excluding ports and airports).

When it is pointed out to unionists that immediate decommissioning of arms (republican or loyalist) is nowhere called for in the Agreement, they are much given to prattling on about the spirit of the Agreement, never mind the letter of it. The spirit is purported to be equal respect for the rights of both sides of the community in the North, and that includes the national rights of those who self-identify as Irish, more than 40 percent of the whole. However, when it involves this contemptuous list which we could regard as a joke, here is what Taylor has said: "The UUP leaves Dublin and the SDLP in no doubt that we intend to implement the agreement as it is—nothing more and nothing less."

One law for you and one law for us, it would seem—if his reading of the deal is sustainable. Absolutely nothing has changed. It is still, Croppies lie down! As if to reinforce this message, the sectarian killings have begun again. A mysterious loyalist group calling itself the Red Hand Defenders has lately surfaced and killed one Catholic man already while having come close to killing several others. It has said that it intends to continue this campaign.

The blame for this turn of events lies squarely at the doorstep of Mr. Tony Blair and his New Labor government in Westminster. Emulating Lloyd George, his colonialist predecessor of the 1920's who was the original architect of the present-day problem, he did a side deal with the unionists (in order to get them to sign up on the Mitchell Agreement) while mollifying their opponents in the actual terms of the document to which everyone else

subscribed. British governments will get up to every kind of knavery rather than stand up to their main garrison in Ireland, the Northern Ireland unionists.

He was revealed by the Unionists who publicized his letter to them. Here is what it said: "Dear David, I understand your problem with paragraph 25 of Strand 1 is that it requires decisions on those who should be excluded or removed from office in the Northern Ireland Executive to be taken on a cross-community basis.

"This letter is to let you know that if, during the course of the first six months of the shadow Assembly or the Assembly itself, these provisions have been shown to be ineffective, we will support changes to these provisions to enable them to be made properly effective in preventing such people from holding office.

"Furthermore, I confirm that in our view the effect of the decommissioning section of the agreement, with decommissioning schemes coming into effect in June, is that the process of decommissioning should begin straight away."

Like Humpty Dumpty, for him, words mean what he says they mean—thus a *scheme* means *actual*.

Deploring the stagnation which this chicanery has caused in the peace process, with a possible threat to its continuance, SDLP assemblyman Allister Mc Donnell (*Irish News* 3/11/98) pointed out that the role of General de Chastelain, whose remit it is to achieve decommissioning with a time limit of two years, as per the Agreement, is also being usurped by Blair and his crony, Trimble. Interesting: this letter, which puts six-county unionism in ownership of the process, is taking precedence over the actual deal itself, the one to which everyone else (barring the unionist 'No' men) actually put their names. What this says about British objectives in Ireland would take a book to discuss.

Newsbits *(continued from Page 1)*

is not coincidental. Nationalist residents in the...area and the residents in the adjoining loyalist White City cite Drumcree as a significant factor. As one loyalist resident told a survey conducted by North Belfast Community Development Center, "Drumcree sort of brought it to a head for the Protestants." (*RM Dist.* 10/20/98)

So much new material concerning Bloody Sunday has been uncovered that the new inquiry into the 1972 killings has been forced to delay public hearings beyond its scheduled start date of next February....Given the huge task of analyzing new material and tracing soldiers, the inquiry felt it would be impossible to start public hearings by the scheduled date. (*IAIS* 10/20/98)

Britain's Ministry of Defense (MoD) is to recreate the sound of exploding nail and acid bombs to help the new inquiry into Bloody Sunday. Lawyers involved have been invited to a police firing range in Nottingham on November 26 to hear the digitally recorded sounds of various weapons used in 1972....In a bid to clarify what weapons were used and by whom, the inquiry, headed by Lord Saville of Newdigate has established a new test of different rifles, pistols and other weapons. Britain's MoD has agreed to create a "mock-up" of a nail bomb. After the death of the youngest of the [14] victims, Gerard Donaghy, soldiers claimed they found nail bombs in his pockets, but those who assisted the victim at the scene were adamant no such bombs existed before he was removed to an ambulance. It was also claimed that nail bombs were too large to be carried in the victim's tight jeans. (*Irish News* 11/10/98)

Thomas Edward Murray Helps to Electrify New York

By Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

Thomas Edward Murray was born in Albany, New York, in 1860 to Irish immigrant parents who had fled the Great Hunger. Despite the poverty of his early years, he played a key role in the electrification of New York as an adult.

When his father died, Thomas was only 9 years old. At that age, Thomas had to quit school and work at the textile factories in Albany to support his family. At the age of 21, he was made an operating engineer at Albany's water pumping plant. His self-taught proficiency with machinery soon won him a job with Anthony Brad, an American Irishman who went from poverty to multimillionaire status with electric lights and railways in Brooklyn and Albany. In 1887, Thomas Murray assumed the manager's position at the Albany Municipal Gas Company.

In association with Brady, he moved to New York City to work on Brady power plants in that burgeoning metropolis. In 1900, Murray became general manager and vice-president of New York Edison, Co. Under Murray's direction, huge power plants were built throughout the city that brought electricity for the city and its suburbs. Murray designed most of these stations.

Murray was also an inventor. He invented electric switches, radiators, and welding equipment. Long before environmentalism was a byword, Murray invented a filter to reduce pollution at New York Edison plants. His inventions took Thomas Edison's invention of the light bulb from being a novelty to the source of light of the masses.

Fear Over Strength of Rights Authority

By Martin Anderson

Reprinted from the Oct. 27, 1998 *Irish News*

A leading human rights group has warned that the British government's proposals for a new Human Rights Commission are not powerful enough.

The Commission, to be established under the Mitchell Agreement, will not be able to effectively investigate breaches of human rights under the current proposals, according to the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights (SACHR). The group, established in 1973 to advise the northern secretary on the law outlawing religious and political discrimination, will be replaced by the Human Rights Commission.

Michael Lavery QC, SACHR chairman, said: "The public expectation of a new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, heralded as a powerful and completely independent body, will be very high. Should a commission be established in Northern Ireland which is less powerful than any other in the Commonwealth countries, it will not only reduce the body's effectiveness but will inevitably limit its credibility and foster public cynicism."

SACHR has urged the government to ensure the new commission has the power to take cases to court without having to wait for an aggrieved person to ask it to do so. The power was included in the Agreement but not in the recently debated Northern Ireland Bill.

It has also criticized the lack of a requirement that the assembly refer all draft legislation to the new commission.

Human Rights Must be Protected

By Fiona Doherty

Reprinted from the Oct., 1998, issue of *Just News*, the newsletter of the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice

The government's first encounter with the committee Against Torture in 1991 produced some of the strongest criticisms of the treatment of detainees and the emergency regime in Northern Ireland ever seen at the international level. The UK has now submitted its third report under the Convention at a time of very changed political circumstances and when it can expect to be closely scrutinized.

The UK last came before the Committee in Nov., 1995. At that stage, Committee members were critical of quite a few of the relevant laws in place here and recommended:

- ♦ the abolition of the detention centers in Northern Ireland and the repeal of emergency legislation;
- ♦ re-education and re-training of police officers, particularly investigating police officers, as a further step in the peace process; and
- ♦ the extension of taping interrogations to all cases, and, in any event, to permit lawyers to be present at interrogations in all cases.

The UK has complied with none of these recommendations.

CAJ has attempted to highlight the lack of progress on these and other issues...and has urged the Committee to once again play an active role in efforts to reduce the huge potential that still exists for breaches of the Convention. The result is a hard-hitting and shocking dossier that will jolt the reader back to the reality of human rights protection in Northern Ireland and out of his or her post-Mitchell Agreement complacency.

.... The submission notes that despite the fact that, until the [bombing

in Omagh in Aug. that left 29 people dead], violence has been at its lowest level for many years and a multiparty agreement for the future of Northern Ireland had been reached, the government is still in derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights. In addition, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Emergency Provisions Act are still in force and all indications are that their renewal might continue into the next millennium.

Deaths in Prison

The submission highlights a number of specific incidents. The first relates to CAJ's concerns about the number of deaths in Maghaberry prison recently. CAJ has carried out its own inquiries in this area and, in particular, into the death of James McDonnell on March 30, 1996. Although it appears that McDonnell died as the result of a heart attack, the state pathologist identified other injuries that he said could not be ruled out as contributing to the death. Statements from a number of prisoners indicate that before his death, McDonnell was beaten by prison officers and the additional injuries found by the pathologist were the result of the assault.

Torture

Next, the case of David Adams has been highlighted once again. Judgment in Adams's civil case against the police was delivered in the High Court recently. Adams's injuries included a broken leg, broken ribs, a punctured lung, injuries to his face, and a severe laceration to the back of his head. CAJ believes that "the actions in the case amounted to torture as defined in the Convention Against Torture."

Copy and Distribute

While the cases of McDonnell and Adams are important in themselves, they are also an indication of the inadequacy of the law as an instrument for protection, one of the key areas with which the Committee Against Torture is charged. The Committee will also be interested in the fact that, despite identification in the judgment of the perpetrators of the assault on Adams, no officers have yet been disciplined or subject to criminal proceedings. Similarly, there does not seem to have been an internal investigation into McDonnell's death.

Plastic Bullets

A third specific area concentrates on CAJ's long-expressed concerns about the use of plastic bullets. These concerns have been borne out time and time again since the Committee last considered the situation in Northern Ireland. Also, the use of plastic bullets has seen a massive increase over the past few years, particularly in the summer months. From our observations and eyewitnesses' statements, CAJ is in a unique position to highlight the, at best, reckless and apparently sectarian use of this weapon and the effect it can have on the lives of its victims.

....In the past, the Committee has not been afraid to tackle issues of concern head-on. This approach is perhaps even more important now, when the foundations for a peaceful society are being laid and the government needs to be reminded that rights issues must be placed firmly center-stage.

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Timing Counts in the Mitchell Agreement

By Charles P. Mullaney, *Professor, Legal Studies,*

Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Connecticut

Will someone please read the Mitchell Agreement and explain it to David Trimble. The first minister has difficulty comprehending key sections of the Agreement. Take the matter of North-South bodies, for instance.

When time is expressed in the vast law of Contracts, it defines a precise point or terminus or interval concerning a particular subject matter. Courts typically enforce specific time periods, or dates of performance, specifically as written.

Indeed, in certain clauses, the parties express themselves most definitely and quite explicitly. Hence, when Paragraph 8 in Strand Two of the Agreement specifies "October 31, 1998" to identify subject areas for cross-border cooperation, any first-year law student knows that parties must be held to that date. The language does not say "on or about." Nor does the language declare "or within a reasonable time thereafter."

Among the people who negotiated the Mitchell Agreement, David Trimble knows best that when a date is specifically expressed, then time is crucial. He is a law professor. He taught Contracts. He certainly knows, or he should know, that when parties to an agreement express themselves specifically, they must be held to the specifics. When a party to an agreement fails to undertake a specific obligation to the detriment of the agreement's beneficiaries, the non-performing party is in breach of the agreement. Maybe the First Minister is too politically preoccupied to comprehend what he himself negotiated.

Other important timetables in the Mitchell Agreement, though not exact, are linked to the Oct. 31 obligations.

For example, by late this year or early in 1999, legislation providing for

the formal establishment and transfer of powers to new institutions, including the Assembly and North-South bodies, must be completed at Westminster and in the Dublin Parliament. By February 1999, the Northern Executive ends its shadow period and acquires formal powers. In May 1999, amendments to the Irish constitution will lapse if new institutions have not been established.

These timetables mandate that the Assembly, the Executive, and North-South bodies be in place, ready to accept their charter. If there is no transfer of power, there is no local democracy. Surely, the Nobel Prize winning peacemaker understands that?

Subsequently, the Police Commission must publish its report by Summer 1999. By all reports, the commission will submit its findings and recommendations early. If Trimble acknowledges this timetable, then how did he miss Oct. 31?

By April 2000, more than 400 "qualified" prisoners must be released. More than half that number has been set free already. Despite condemning the early republican prisoner releases, no unionist spokesperson, Trimble included, argues about the mandate. In all likelihood the prisoner issue will be settled on time.

Last and most important, the First Minister believes decommissioning must take place by May 22, 2000 and should start now. He is incorrect. The Agreement provides: All participants accordingly reaffirm their commitment to the total disarmament of all paramilitary organizations. They also confirm their intention to continue to work constructively and in good faith with the Independent Commission and to use any influence they might have to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years following endorsement in

referendums North and South of the Agreement and in the context of the overall settlement.

Surprise. Decommissioning need not occur now or even in two years! In the first place, the parties themselves could not have agreed to decommission anyway because the parties do not hold the arms. They agreed to use their influence to get paramilitaries to disarm in two years. Maybe the paramilitaries will disarm, maybe they won't. If they do, maybe it will take eight years or ten.

In any case the act of disarmament, while desirable, is not obligatory at all compared to, say, fixing a date of Oct. 31, 1998 to have an Executive and a North-South Council in place, which is an unconditional promise.

The formation of the Executive does not depend on David Trimble. The language in Strand One concerning the Executive "allocates" Ministers as per party strength in the Assembly. The formation of the Executive is self-executing. The "Ministers will constitute an Executive Committee."

David Trimble may be head of his UUP, but he is first and foremost First Minister—the principal public official in Northern Ireland. His blatant disregard of the North's governing document places him dangerously close to violation of his Pledge of Office—itself spelled out in the Mitchell Agreement.

Sadly, his deficiencies insult the people of the North. Someone help this man.

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The appointment of Graham Gudgin, a hard-line unionist with controversial views on anti-Catholic discrimination, as the new advisor to First Minister David Trimble is seen as a sign that the UUP is ambivalent on the implementation of the Mitchell Agreement. Gudgin has courted controversy in economic circles by claiming low emigration and high birth rates—rather than systematic discrimination—have caused Catholic unemployment to reach between two and three times the unemployment level of Protestants. On Oct. 18, the Dublin *Sunday Tribune* reveals that a draft chapter of Gudgin's book exploring the Northern conflict claims that many Catholics preferred to live as second class citizens rather than work for Stormont.

October 14

The International Body on Decommissioning calls for round-table talks to resolve the stand-off that holds up the implementation of the Agreement.

October 16

Responding to news that SDLP leader John Hume has received the Nobel Peace Prize, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams says, "There would be no peace process but for his courage and vision. Despite great personal attacks on his integrity and humanity, John never wavered in his commitment to peace. No one deserves this accolade more." Trimble shares the prize with Hume.

October 19

Blair is unable to break the peace process impasse over IRA arms decommissioning following separate meetings with Trimble and Sinn Fein mid-Ulster MP Martin McGuinness.

October 22

The Portadown District Orange Lodge in Northern Ireland rejects the "three Christian pledges" that Church of Ireland Primate Archbishop Robin Eames asks them to make to help

resolve the Drumcree problem. The pledges are: the avoidance of any action before or after the service that would diminish the sanctity of that worship, obedience to the law of the land before and after the service, respect for the integrity of the Church of Ireland by word and action and the avoidance of the use of all church property or its environs in any civil protest following the service.

October 24

Blair and Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern hold talks in a bid to break the deadlock in the Northern Ireland peace agreement. After the 20-minute meeting, the leaders stress their views that all parts of the Mitchell Agreement must be implemented on all sides. They insist that goodwill is still there to reach the February deadline for the setting up of the new northern executive.

October 25

Ahern concedes that there is no chance of establishing a new Northern Ireland Executive by Oct. 31. His comments follow Trimble's speech to the annual meeting of the UUP in which he reiterates his refusal to compromise on decommissioning.

Conor Cruise O'Brien, the former Irish minister turned hard-line UK Unionist, says in a new memoir that unionists should seek inclusion in a united Ireland if the British government continue to "appease Sinn Fein and the IRA." He says such a deal would be necessary to prevent a British surrender of the North to violent republicanism.

October 27

Nationalists express dismay at the appointment of a former member of the Parachute Regiment as the new commander of the British forces in Ireland. The regiment was involved in the Bloody Sunday massacre of 14 Derry civilians in 1972 and a number of other controversial killings across the North. Lieutenant General Hew Pike was himself accused of collusion in the loyalist murder attempt at the home of

the then nationalist MP for Mid-Ulster, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey, in 1981.

October 29

Sinn Fein rejects Trimble's suggestion that the LVF's cease-fire claims should be taken seriously. Trimble's support for the LVF claims is in the hope that the loyalists' promised televised destruction of some guns will bring pressure on the IRA to begin arms decommissioning.

October 30

The Red Hand Defenders shoot Brian Service, a Catholic in his mid 30s, several times in the head and back as he walks along Alliance Avenue, an interface area between Catholics and Protestants in north Belfast. He dies of his injuries. The terror group claims it will make more attacks.

The British and Irish governments are about to implement a new strategy to lay the groundwork for an IRA gesture on weapons next February. The governments intend to speed up movement on other areas of the agreement—policing, equality, human rights, and prisoners—to demonstrate progress. The strategy arises from the failure to meet the Oct. 31 deadline for the establishment of the North-South bodies outlined in the Mitchell Agreement. Both Ahern and Blair accept there will be no shadow executive. They also accept there will be no shadow North-South Ministerial Council or implementation bodies.

November 4

Ahern says that failure to establish cross-border bodies has had a "destabilizing effect" on northern nationalists. On decommissioning, he says there are still useful contacts between the head of the decommissioning body and the parties working with it.

This week, republican prisoner Joe Doherty, who served a lengthy sentence in the US without charge or trial, is released from Long Kesh as part of the Mitchell Agreement.

Action Request

Write the letter below, call, or e-mail. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, and others do the same. Please mention your membership in the PEC.

Write: **Congressman Ben Gilman**, 2449 Rayburn, Washington, DC 20515, 202 225-3776, e-mail: ben@mail.house.gov

Message: I support your efforts to see the MacBride Principles of Fair Employment attached to the US contribution to the International Fund for Ireland. Thank you for supporting this effort.

Write: **President Bill Clinton**, The White House, Washington, DC 20500, 202 456-1111, fax 202 456-2461, e-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Message: Please pressure the British government and Northern Ireland First Minister David Trimble to stop stalling the Irish peace process over arms decommissioning. Please urge all relevant parties to implement the Mitchell Agreement.

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MacBride Principles are Linked to the International Fund for Ireland

Congressman Ben Gilman NY, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, welcomed the news: "I am very pleased that after a long and difficult struggle the MacBride Fair Employment Principles will now become the law of the land and serve as a guide for the expenditure of US economic aid in the North of Ireland. It is also an important message on equality which will help ensure that no US tax-payers' monies can be used to reinforce the unsatisfactory status quo where job, work-place discrimination, and sectarian harassment poisoned life in the north of Ireland far too long."

The legislation will affect the almost \$20 million annual contribution to the IFI and is being seen as a significant vote of confidence in the peace process.

The MacBride Principles have been the target for British government and unionist suspicion over the years, though the campaign to have them implemented in the US is credited with having aided moves to introduce fair employment measures in the North.

The nine principles are: increased representation of under-represented religious groups; protection of minority employees; the banning of provocative religious or political emblems from the workplace; the public advertisement of jobs and special efforts to attract under-represented religious groups; the impartial consideration of members of any religious group; the elimination of employment criteria that discriminate on the basis of religion or ethnic origin; the preparing of minority employees for skilled jobs; the establishing of procedures to actively recruit minority employees; and the providing of senior staff to oversee affirmative action efforts.

Industrial Development Should put Principles to the Test

John McFall, Minister for Education and Training in the North, said at a symposium in Washington State on Oct. 28 that the British had committed \$500 million for industrial development in the north, according to Washington State PEC representative **Paul D. McGuigan**. McGuigan asked SDLP and UUP representatives at the symposium whether their parties were committed to fair employment. Mark Durkan of the SDLP said that the MacBride Principles "were not contrary to Northern Ireland law," and Danny Kennedy of the UUP said that fair employment had already been achieved.

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