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American Irish Newsletter - March 1996

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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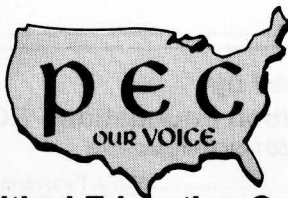
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American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - March 1996" (1996). *American Irish Newsletter*. 78.

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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 21, Number 3

March 1996

PEC Urges CBS Boycott and Intensifies British Apology Campaign

See pages 4&5 and R&D

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

On Friday, February 9, 1996, the Irish Republican Army ended its seventeen month ceasefire with a bombing attack on a London business district. At 6pm Irish time, Irish radio (RTE) received a coded message from the IRA's Army Council announcing the end to the ceasefire. The IRA announced that, "with great reluctance it was ending its seventeen month old ceasefire and that the blame lay squarely on the shoulders of the British government and the Unionists for their failure to negotiate and engage positively in the peace process."

Unfortunately, many saw this return to the armed campaign as inevitable because of the British government's continued failure to negotiate in good faith and indeed to engage positively in the peace process. (An *Irish Times* poll on February 17 showed that a vast majority of citizens blame the politicians and want all-party talks to begin immediately.) Since the IRA cessation of August 31, 1994, the British government placed nothing but obstacles and preconditions in the path of peace. First, it was the permanence of the ceasefire, then decommissioning and, when that failed, elections to a Loyalist dominated assembly. If the British had upheld the provisions of the Downing Street Declaration and kept their promise to hold all-party talks some three months after the ceasefire, the actions of Friday February 9th never would have occurred.

As we go to press, the Irish Government has announced that it will not meet with Sinn Fein at ministerial level until the ceasefire is restored. We hope by the time you receive this newsletter, that will have changed. This is not the way to go. It will be a fatal mistake for the Irish Government to refuse to meet with Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams at the highest level. The peace process will have no chance at success without Adams and the Sinn Fein party. As US Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith said, "the Irish Government is wrong to shut out Gerry Adams. If he is out of the picture, there is no peace process."

The PEC repeatedly called on Prime Minister John Bruton, through his Embassy in Washington (Phone# (202) 462-3939), to meet with Gerry Adams immediately in hopes of restoring the ceasefire and getting all-party talks back on track. The Irish Government cannot be accomplices in Britain's attempts to divide the pan-nationalist consensus (Irish unity) or, as Tanaiste Dick Spring said after the Mitchell Report, "divide and conquer."

If Sinn Fein is isolated and marginalized, not only will the peace process collapse, but most likely more hardline elements in the IRA will have their way and the ensuing results will be catastrophic.

If they refuse to meet with Gerry Adams, they might not have a chance to deal with him later. Then the name that they will have to deal with is likely to be P. O'Neill (the name signed by the IRA army council announcement of the end of the ceasefire February 9th).

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

A resolution calling on the citizens of San Francisco to support a boycott of Bushmill's [whiskies] because of employment discrimination against Catholics in the north of Ireland was introduced at the January meeting of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. The campaign was launched with the support of the first African-American mayor of San Francisco, in an Italian-American bar in North Beach, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the city. (*San Francisco Examiner*, 2/1/96) **PEC endorses the boycott.**

When the Mitchell Report was released on January 24th, PEC contacted the offices of President Clinton and his Republican challengers. Each was asked for their position on the developments in Northern Ireland concerning the Mitchell Report. President Clinton released a statement later that day. However, of his Republican challengers, only Senators Dole and Lugar and Pat Buchanan responded to PEC's inquiries. Their response was that the candidate would make no statements on or release any position papers on the Mitchell Report. In fact, we had to explain to Senator Dole's press spokesman what the Mitchell Report was. (*AIN-PEC* 1/25/96)

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OUR VIEW

In response to complaints from a few members (all members are important to PEC), the PEC would like to clarify our position in regards to our January fund-raising mailing to elicit support for the peace process from the Republican leadership and their presidential candidates.

Some members determined that our literature is either pro-Democrat or an attempt to aid President Clinton, while others accused us of exactly the opposite, supporting the republicans instead of President Clinton.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The PEC is a non-partisan organization made up of members from all political backgrounds, and this includes our Executive Board. Our only mission is to further the cause of peace and justice in Ireland. We do not endorse or support candidates or political parties.

The PEC lists the positions of all relevant candidates and parties on matters of concern to Americans who support the cause of peace and justice in a united Ireland. The fact of the matter remains that, of all the candidates for president, only President Clinton has expressed support for the peace process and without his support the process never would have advanced to this stage. We take no position on President Clinton's views on other political issues.

It is our hope that, well before the election, the Republican party and presidential candidates will also publicly express their support for our cause and make clear to the British government that there will be no going back to a pro-British policy on Ireland. In fact, the reason the PEC has been targeting the Republicans is because we feel that their support is crucial to the success of the peace process. We believe that, until they declare their support, Britain will continue to stall and jeopardize the peace process.

Simply stated, our purpose is to make sure that, no matter who you vote for in the Presidential election, you will be voting for a person who supports our views.

In a further example of the refusal of the Presidential candidates to support the English-Irish peace process, not one of the President's challengers showed up at an Irish American candidates forum in Manchester, New Hampshire, which was co-sponsored by the PEC.

Their refusal to attend this forum has drawn widespread anger, not only from concerned Americans, but also from many elements of the mainstream and conservative media. Newspaper columnists all over New England and New York blasted the candidates for ignoring the forum and alienating American Irish voters. In the opposite column is an excerpt from an article on the candidates forum that appeared in the *New York Post*.

**Send ALL Offensive Situations to: Paul Newman,
9 Deltic Road, New City, NY 10956**

Published by

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

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

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NATIONAL ORGANIZER:Pete Foley, 3177 Villa Ave. #3H, Bronx, NY 10468-(718)933-7196

**Supported in part by the Emerald Society
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**Excerpts from Steve Dunleavy, *New York Post*,
February 12, 1995**

REPUBLICAN SNUBS HAND IRISH VOTES TO BILL

**Re: Irish American Presidential Candidates Forum,
Manchester, NH 2/11/95**

The purpose of the forum was to give Irish Americans an opportunity to learn the positions of presidential candidates on Irish issues. But the representatives learned of only one man's position, Bill Clinton. Amazingly, unreasonably, stupidly, not one Republican candidate showed.

"It's a pretty sad state that not one (challenger) chose to send a representative here. This empty table, we shouldn't let that message get lost on us," stated Richard Walsh state president New Hampshire AOH.

"I don't know the role of these other candidates (on Irish issues) but I think their mere absence speaks loudly," said Clinton campaigner Elizabeth Shannon.

From the North

by Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the Campaign For Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization in Northern Ireland that supports a United Ireland.*

Since the IRA's cease-fire the British government has politicized the opportunities presented, taking bolder risks as the peace progressed. In reneging on its commitments, it revealed its true intentions:

1. To achieve pacification while avoiding having to resolve the core issue, British rule in the north.
2. To splinter the pan-nationalist alliance, in particular, to politically isolate Sinn Fein and to disarm (defeat) the IRA. They hope that division and confusion in the pan-nationalist alliance would lead to a slackening of American interest. British hopes have been raised by the government now in power in Ireland.
3. To restore for the Unionists their former dominant status, thereby securing their colonial grip on Ireland.

When Mr. Albert Reynolds's government, the SDLP and Sinn Fein, with support from America, convinced the IRA that there did exist a democratic route to achieve reunification and self-government for the whole island, Britain was taken off guard. The initiative had fallen from its grasp. But, as British officials readily admit, they have contingency plans fit for any development.

While the Irish side genuinely pursued the peace process, the British had other plans. Thinking that the cease-fire would not happen, Britain promised that after a three-month 'quarantine' period Sinn Fein would be admitted into all-party talks and that they would respond with 'generosity and imagination.' Instead they placed obstacles on the road to peace talks. In this politicking game they played their Orange/Unionist card to the full. While the Irish government fulfilled its part by delivering the IRA cease-fire, the British would have everyone believe that they were impotent in the face of the intransigence of their underlings,

the Unionists. In a 'tail wagging the dog act,' they kept explaining that they could not deliver the Unionists to the peace table.

Firstly the time wasting wrangle over the **permanence** of the cease-fire. Did complete mean permanent? The search for a solution had not even started. Then came the precondition that the paramilitaries must decommission their weapons before instituting talks, a sixteen-month delay. Unless this happened, the Unionists would not come to the table. Having achieved pacification, the British appeared to nationalists/republicans to be angling for the surrender of something they had not beaten. Then in stepped Senator George Mitchell and his Commission.

The Commission concluded that the British demand was unrealistic. Decommissioning could be correlated with progress towards a political settlement once talks had started. But the British had a contingency plan. Mitchell mentioned that provided it was **broadly acceptable, with an appropriate mandate and within a Three Stand Structure**, perhaps an elected body might be helpful. For some weeks previously the British had been colluding with the leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, who had been touting an elected body. But what Mitchell had in mind had nothing in common with the British/Unionist design.

But here was the material for a third obstacle. It meant betraying the Irish government, with whom the British up to this point had been, by mutual agreement, not acting unilaterally prior to consultation. The Irish had been honoring their commitment. Despite the almost total opposition of nationalist/republican Ireland to the Unionist elected body scheme, Prime Minister Major, angered over Mitchell's report, announced that he was backing an undefined election scheme, very much like what the Unionists had in mind.

English-Irish relations reached a new low. British deception was now undisguised. Impartial referee? For Britain only the pro-colonialist Unionist minority in Ireland counted.

Mr. Bruton has already forgiven

them for rubbing his nose in the dirt. Unlike President Clinton's response to the ending of the cease-fire, Bruton gave the British another gift -- an excuse to continue down their disastrous path of excluding Sinn Fein. He downgraded his contacts with Sinn Fein. Do the British need this kind of encouragement?

What the British did during the 18 months of cease-fire did not mean that the bombing in London was an inescapable necessity, but it transparently was the cause of it. Along with continuing to push for a Northern Ireland elected body to **lead** directly to all-party talks (will they include non-constitutional parties?) with no commitment to immediate negotiations, the British are now insinuating a fourth precondition -- obstacle.

They are now highlighting their own interpretation of **consent**, i.e. the acceptance by nationalist/republican Ireland of the outcome from a talks framework which they have biased to favor Unionism. Regrettably, nationalist Ireland at the Dublin Peace Forum has provided some grist for this mill.

Nevertheless, at the time of this writing, the SDLP leader, John Hume, remains adamantly opposed to the British concept of elections. He wants an all-Ireland referendum so that the people can give their opinions on two matters: 1) political ways for the resolution of the problems and, 2) immediate all-party talks.

Sinn Fein too is certain to boycott a British structured and **imposed** election. It is still possible that they would be excluded from any such body even with a renewed electoral mandate. It remains to be seen how the Irish government will perform. Will it exhibit due caution in the face of British blandishments and circumvent any new British/Unionists obstacles to talks? Whether or not we return to a quick durable peace depends on how it measures up.

PLEASE RESPOND
To The Urgent Action Requests
On Page Six And In R&D,
Boycott CBS.

Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

The following reportage by Conor O'Clery is excerpted from the Irish Times 2/15/96

As it tries to come up with new ideas, debate is swirling around the (Clinton) administration about the way it handled the Mitchell report, and whether the lack of enthusiasm in Washington for its conclusions contributed to the darkening mood within the republican movement.

On January 24th, the day it was published, President Clinton welcomed the report...He did not, however, urge all parties to adopt its conclusions. "Senator Mitchell did his own thing. There was a sense that it would be wise to be a bit careful, to wait to see reaction. We did not want to get out in front."...There are also rumors that the NSC [National Security Council] was not happy with the insistence of SDLP leader Mr. John Hume and the Tanaiste, Mr. Spring, on the need to move to all-party talks.

Some in the administration were more outspoken...One official privately expressed anger at Mr. Adams being left to "twist slowly in the wind" for 18 months by the British government...Voices in the US State and Justice Departments which originally warned against giving a visa, high level access, and fund-raising permission to the Sinn Fein leader are making themselves heard again...The second bomb was a blow to White House officials who have been working to get the peace process back on track. "The White House is not backing away," an administration source said. "There is too much invested."

A "White House aide" was quoted in the *Christian Science Monitor* yesterday as saying that at the Sinn Fein leader's meeting with President Clinton..."it had become pretty clear that Adams couldn't hold the line much longer." The aide said that when the British rejected the Mitchell plan, "and we not only did nothing but started telling the Adams people that they should consider the election proposal, the IRA may have concluded they had lost their fair hearing in the White House."

British Apology Petition Drive Continues

The St. Patrick's Day season, with all its parades, concerts, dances, etc., presents us all a perfect opportunity to solicit many more signatures for the *British Apology Petition*. For that purpose, we have included in this newsletter another copy of our petition. We urge everyone, whether or not you have already collected signatures for the petition, to please do so during the St. Patrick's Day season. Get people to help you. Take advantage of the goodwill that exists during March. We need many more signatures to succeed. Use the newsletter copy of the petition for making copies. **The British Apology Campaign puts pressure on Britain!**

We also remind you to copy and distribute the topical R&Ds we published in our recent newsletters. You should also copy for distribution the insert we sent you with our recent fund-raiser mailing, which pictures the Presidential candidates for 1996. **Do your best to wake up the American Irish!**

Letter To The Editor -- Action Requested

Dear PEC,

On Saturday, November 11, 1995, I was prevented from handing out copies of a PEC Reproduce & Distribute article from your Newsletter to Irish Americans attending a Wolfe Tones concert. The R&D was an update about the British government's continued stalling of the peace process. This incident took place in the lobby of Holy Trinity High School in Hicksville, Long Island (New York)

Although I was not told that I was in violation of any policy, I was told in no uncertain terms that the gathering was "non-political" and that handing out flyers urging people to take action to get the peace process started was something "we don't do." I responded that such a condescending attitude was a primary reason for the current state of affairs in Northern Ireland. I proceeded to hand out 300 copies of the R&D outside the school. Please note that everybody I approached took the flyer. Throughout the evening I observed many people reading it with great interest.

I encourage everyone within traveling distance of Holy Trinity High School to boycott all similar activities in the school. I ask also that you call the school administration (phone number (516) 433-2900) and advise them of your intentions because of their lack of support for the peace process.

*Ms. Arlene M. Ferguson, CSW
Kew Gardens, New York*

PEC Note: *It is time that we make clear to all concerned, especially those who depend on our community for financial support, that we will no longer tolerate such cowardly attitudes by those who should be prominent in promoting what we stand for. We urge you to support Ms. Ferguson's call for a boycott and to call the school administration.*

Get Our Message Out!

Display This Bumper Sticker On Your Car

**Ireland: Europe's
Last Captive Nation**

\$2 ea. -- order 6 or more for only \$1 ea.

Make checks payable to: American Ireland Education Foundation

Starving The Irish Was British Policy

by Stephanie Finucane

The potato famine of the 1840s was not the first man-made starvation to decimate the Irish population. In 1740-1741, during what was then known as Ireland's first Great Hunger, the population suffered a huge loss. Ireland's recorded population in 1740 was 3.1 million. In 1750, ten years later, the population was only 2 million. It is estimated that 450,000 perished. Obviously hundreds of thousands emigrated (voluntarily and involuntarily), certainly many to America. The cause of the disaster: English landlords, for the most part, would not help the starving people and England continued to export Ireland's other produce and livestock, rather than feed the starving masses.

Between 1720 and 1740, bad harvests not only caused large-scale emigration of many to the American colonies, but wreaked havoc on the food supply in Ireland. As one author states in *Gentleman's Magazine*: "The years 1725, 1726, 1727 and 1728 presented scenes of wretchedness unparalleled in the annals of any civilized nation" (O'Rourke, Canon John, *The Great Irish Famine*, first published 1874).

More bad harvests followed. This, combined with the English trend at the time for turning land to grazing instead of tillage and the great frost of the winter of 1739, set the stage for famine in 1740 and 1741.

Besides destroying the potato crop, the nine-week frost froze all the great rivers of Ireland and stopped employment. A drought followed that winter and spring and the price of provisions continued to rise.

Although the Duke of Devonshire met the Parliament in October and asked for consideration on preventing "the like calamity for the future," calling for an increase of tillage, no helpful bills resulted. However, a "temporary" measure passed shortly afterwards to encourage "the more effectual securing" of payment of rents and prevent tenant fraud. This Act was renewed in several reigns, and is the foundation of the Acts which were in force up to 1870 for the same purpose.

Farmers began cultivating the potato rapidly after the famine of 1740-41 for land was scarce, as it could flourish in land not suitable for most other crops.

In 1821 the potato crop failed, throwing much of the south and west of

Ireland into famine. A London Tavern Committee report cites the absence of landlords as a large contributor to the starvation. Another writer on this famine states: "The distress which has almost universally prevailed in Ireland has not been occasioned so much by an excessive population as by a culpable remissness on the part of persons possessing property, and neglecting to take advantage of those great resources, and of those ample means of providing for an increasing population, which nature has so liberally bestowed on this country" (O'Rourke).

During the 1821 famine, cereal crops were abundant and affordable enough - if people had the money to buy them. As stated in a Report of the Parliamentary Committee at the time, "There was no want of food of another description for the support of human life; on the contrary, the crops of grain had been far from deficient, and the prices of corn and oatmeal were very moderate. The calamities of 1822 may, therefore, be said to have proceeded less from the want of food itself, than from the want of adequate means of purchasing it; or, in other words, from the want of profitable employment."

By the time of the Great Hunger of the 1840s, the danger of relying solely on the potato crop for subsistence was quite obvious. "And it may, perhaps, surprise future generations that the statesmen and landed proprietors of that lengthened period did nothing whatever to regulate the husbandry of the country in such a way as to prevent the lives of a whole people from being dependent on a crop liable to so many casualties. Perhaps the social and political condition of Ireland during these times will be found to have had something to do with this culpable

Reproduce & Distribute

apathy" (O'Rourke).

Alongside Britain's willingness to let the Irish people solely depend on an inconsistent crop, she wiped out Irish trade with unfair navigation laws and destroyed Irish industry, such as the woolen industry. Such measures rendered the Irish weak and poor, conditions which would help prevent insurrection against the Crown.

Starvation: A British Policy

As O'Rourke writes: "It is commonly assumed that the subjugation of Ireland was effected by Elizabeth, but the submission to English rule was only a forced one; the spirit of the nation was one of determined opposition, which was abundantly shown at Aughrim and Limerick and on many a foreign field besides. Great Britain, knowing this and being determined to hold the country at all risks, was continually in fear that some war or complication with foreign powers would afford the Irish people an opportunity of putting an end to English rule in Ireland and of declaring the country an independent nation. As progress in wealth and prosperity would add to the probabilities of success in such an event, it was the all but avowed - nay, truth compels me to say, the frequently avowed policy of England to keep Ireland poor, and therefore feeble, that she might be held the more securely. For that reason, she was not treated as a portion of a united kingdom, but as an enemy who had become England's slave by conquest, who was her rival in manufactures of various kinds, who might undersell her foreign markets and, in fact, who might grow rich and powerful enough to assert her independence."

All this said, the Great Hunger of 1845-1850 could have been prevented. Instead, British policy set the stage for devastation.

Published March 1996
American Ireland Education Foundation, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980--Ph# (914) 947-2726

Irish Americans Urged To BOYCOTT C.B.S.

Reproduce & Distribute

The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC), a committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation, has called for a national boycott of CBS TV/radio network. PEC urges all Americans, Irish and non-Irish alike, who support a permanent peace with justice in Ireland, to refrain from watching or listening to CBS TV and radio programs, at home, in the car or at work, until its **national news programs** provide balanced coverage of the peace negotiations in Ireland.

PEC National President, John Finucane, said that C.B.S. has demonstrated a clear bias in favor of the British government's position in the negotiations over the fate of British occupied Ireland. He also said that, while his group has often targeted CBS's bias with letter-writing campaigns, it was not until very recently that the group had sufficient cause to call for a boycott against the network.

On January 24, CBS failed to report that Britain's Prime Minister John Major rejected the recommendations of the International Body headed by former US Senator, George Mitchell, and that he imposed another precondition, further stalling the peace process. Major did so, according to nationalist leaders, to buy Unionist votes to keep him in power. The Mitchell Commission's recommendations were supported by President Bill Clinton and the Irish government. **By its omissions, CBS acted to protect British interests.** CBS's actions kept many millions of concerned Americans in the dark, unaware of Major's deception of the International Body he created..

In another clear case of CBS's pro-British bias, Finucane said that he was told by journalist Morgan Strong, who had recently published an article in *Modern Maturity* on the English-Irish peace negotiations, that he, Strong, had been rebuffed by a CBS news foreign

desk editor who refused to consider Strong's story. Strong's story contained an interview with Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein, President Bill Clinton and Britain's Prime Minister, John Major. According to Strong, the editor made it clear that the reason for the rejection was not the merits of the story, but rather that the editor sympathized with the British position. The editor was quoted by Strong as saying, "The British people have suffered at the hands of the I.R.A. There have been young British children killed."

Strong, an experienced journalist who has worked as a consultant for C.B.S. News' *60 Minutes*, and for C.B.S. News, told Finucane he was shocked by the editor's reaction. "The news is supposed to be impartial. They are only to report news and not to allow individual prejudice to interfere in reporting," said Strong.

In another situation that occurred last year, Morley Safer, of CBS *60 Minutes*, deceived the American public in his segment, *Strabane, Then and Now*. He portrayed the conflict in Ireland as tribal, between Catholics and Protestants, and the British army as peacekeepers. This is blatant falsehood **and is the position promoted by the British government.** Finucane, who has often travelled to Northern Ireland, was told by loyalist community and paramilitary leaders that the conflict is about politics and economics, not religion.

Finucane said that his conversation with Strong convinced him to call for the nationwide response to what he described as an "institutionalized prejudice by CBS News against the cause of a fair peace in Ireland.

Finucane continued, "Slanted reporting makes it difficult to begin the process of peace with justice for the Irish people in British occupied Ireland. And, if there is no response by the 44

million Americans of Irish heritage, the lies, omissions and falsehoods will continue, and there can be no permanent peace."

Finucane continued, "We simply demand that the truth be told to the American people by all the news media. Ireland deserves the same type of coverage given the conflicts in South Africa and the Middle East. CBS **national news** has fallen far short of this in our view. We have constantly monitored the media to attempt to correct inaccurate reporting. CBS has historically failed to provide fair, regular and unbiased reporting about Northern Ireland."

"We had hoped that this would change in light of the spirit of hope generated by the IRA ceasefire. Unfortunately it has not, thus creating the need for a boycott of CBS," said Finucane.

Action Request!

Immediately, call, fax or write the message below, in your own words or simply as is, to: Mr. Peter Lunt, President, CBS, 51 W 52 Street, New York, NY 10019-Phone# (212) 975-4321 -Fax# (212) 975-8617

Sample Message

I support the boycott of CBS called for by the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC and will rally others to do the same. I will continue the boycott until CBS national news programs provide regular and balanced coverage of the English-Irish peace process.

For information on how you can help promote this campaign and/or the English-Irish peace process, contact:

**American Ireland
Education Foundation-PEC
54 South Liberty Drive
Stony Point, NY 10980
(914) 947-2726**

Copy This Flyer and Distribute it on an Ongoing Basis!

Published March 1996 by AIEF-PEC

PETITION:
THAT the BRITISH GOVERNMENT
APOLOGIZE for IRELAND'S GREAT HUNGER

Mr. Prime Minister:

ONE-HUNDRED, FIFTY YEARS have passed since Ireland's Great Hunger (The "Famine"). We believe the British government should apologize for its cruel policies at the time, which caused the death and forced exile of millions of Irish people in the 1840s.

BRITAIN'S APOLOGY will greatly assist the current English-Irish peace process by helping to heal the legacy of pain and anger the Irish people and the Irish diaspora continue to experience.

NAME

ADDRESS

Return to:

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980, USA 914-947-2726, fax 914-947-2599
ghpet2.pm4

Action Requests

Write the letters below (or call), preferably in your own words, or as is. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, etc., do the same.

1. President Bill Clinton

The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Phone# (202) 456-1111
Fax# (202) 456-2461

Message: Please appoint a peace envoy to help facilitate and to help start English-Irish peace talks. Continue to support Gerry Adams, a crucial player in this process.

2. Mr. Pat Buchanan

Buchanan For President
6862 Elm Street
McLean, VA 22101
Phone# (703) 848-1996
Fax# (703) 827-0592

Message: I urge that you publicly declare your support for our government's Irish peace policy and that if elected you will not return America to a pro-British policy on Ireland.

Renew Your Membership

Use coupon below

Great Hunger Commemoration Update

by Frank Morris, Jr., *Great Hunger Awareness Campaign Director*

New Jersey to include Great Hunger curriculum in secondary schools. Member James Mullin advises PEC that, through the efforts of his Great Hunger committee, **Dr. Paul Winkler**, Executive Director of the New Jersey Holocaust Education Commission, has agreed to include in secondary schools Mr. Mullin's Irish Famine Curriculum beginning this month. Congratulations Jim. **Congratulations also** to Jim Murphy, Dean of the West Side Alternative High School in New York City. This month the video, *When Ireland Starved* (available through PEC) will be part of his school's curriculum. Are you doing the same in your state?

Will New York be next? New York's lobbying effort to enact similar legislation, which would call for the inclusion of instruction of the "Great Hunger" within the New York State curriculum, officially commenced on February 28. A large number of concerned New Yorkers representing many organizations turned out in Albany, New York's state capitol, to urge their legislators to support the bill. The original sponsors of the bill are **Joe Crowley** in the Assembly and **Michael Hoblock** in the Senate.

A good number of legislators had already signed on as co-sponsors of the bill, due in large part to the letters our members wrote to them last year in response to PEC's requests that appeared in the July and November 1995 newsletter issues. Congratulations letter writers.

TAKE THE FOLLOWING ACTION!

Write to: Assemblyman Steven Sanders, Chairman of the Education Committee, NYS Assembly, Rm 836 LOB, Albany, NY 12248. **Sample letter:** *I respectfully request that you support and release to the floor for a vote bill #6510, introduced by Assemblyman Joe Crowley. I look forward to your positive response.*

Similar bills have also be introduced in Illinois and Pennsylvania, and another may be in the works in California.

WARNING! These bills will bring out the worst of the **WASP** (pro-British) element in the US. Editorials will condemn these bills as a waste of time, that teaching about the Great Hunger and the Irish contribution to building America should be left to teachers, not legislators. (What were you ever taught in school about the Great Hunger or the Irish contribution?) In opposition to a similar bill introduced in Illinois, a November 2, 1995 *Chicago Times* editorial said, "...the famine killed more than 1 million people and forced another 1 million to flee Ireland..." implying that the English government was not responsible. This WASP prejudice is the very reason such education must be legislated. The WASP's only concern is to protect English interests.

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