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## American Irish Newsletter - September 1996

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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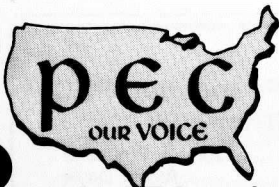
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### Recommended Citation

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - September 1996" (1996).  
*American Irish Newsletter*. 73.  
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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 21, Number 9

September 1996

## Still a Chance to Salvage the Peace Process

As of this moment, it would be accurate to say that the peace process is on life-support. In the reports on the recent visit of the PEC you will see that there is a sense of desperation and gloom on the ground at the current state of affairs and the chances for the peace process to succeed.

Right now, it is of the utmost importance that the British government finally take the steps necessary to provide the peace process with the formula that it needs in order to be successful. When the negotiations restart this month, the government must take steps to ensure that they are all-inclusive. Talks without Sinn Fein are useless. If this process is to succeed, Sinn Fein must be present. This is nothing new. The PEC and many others have been saying this for some time now. If the British government had taken the necessary steps previously, we probably wouldn't be in the predicament that we are in now.

Furthermore, the time has come for the Unionist leadership to show some courage. This is of course easier said than done because of the individuals who actually occupy the leadership positions in the main unionist parties. David Trimble and Ian Paisley have shown no sign that they care at all about finding a peaceful resolution to this conflict. In fact, by their actions during this past "marching season", one could not be faulted for feeling that these two men actually prefer war to peace in Northern Ireland.

All sides must redouble their efforts to achieve a just and lasting solution to this conflict. The only groups that have not shown real commitment to peace are the main Unionist parties and the British government. If this process fails, the blame will be on their shoulders.

But who will take solace in that fact? We already have enough pain, suffering and blame to go around. Steps must be taken to ensure that there is no more pain and suffering that anyone needs to be blamed for. True negotiations need to begin immediately. All issues must be on the table and preconditions must be thrown in the garbage. This is an historic opportunity. Let's not let it pass!

## Please Send in Your Raffle Books

This is a reminder for all members to continue to send in your raffle books to the PEC office.

The raffle is a crucial source of revenue to the PEC as well as an excellent chance for the membership to win some fine prizes.

The drawing will be held on October 12th. Winners will be contacted and announced in the newsletter. The deadline for chance books to be returned is October 8th.

PEC needs your support. So get out and sell your raffle tickets and return your books to the PEC office. If you need more books, you can call the PEC office at (800) 777-6807 Tuesday thru Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Please send your books in as soon as possible.

## Newsbits by Kathy Regan

Whenever violence takes place, loyalists are praised for keeping to their ceasefire and implored not to break it. However, serious doubt must be cast on the existence of a loyalist ceasefire. The murder of Michael McGoldrick by the UVF, a UVF bomb hoax at Dublin Airport, a UDA bomb hoax in O'Connell Street, numerous loyalist gun displays and threats against RUC officers and organized intimidation of Catholics during the Drumcree standoff area are all a matter of record. It is clear that there hasn't been a loyalist ceasefire for some time. (*Andersonstown News*, 7/27/96)

It appears that loyalists are far from willing to change their attitudes towards nationalists. A resident of Belfast commented, "It seems that rather than try and defuse what's already a tense marching season, the Orangemen of Newtonards Road want to up the ante this year. At least up to now they had the courtesy to leave the chapel out but now they want to rub our noses in it. It's not a very pleasant experience to have to walk to mass with red, white and blue bunting fluttering over your head." Additionally a number of drunken loyalists tumbled out of a car and began attacking homes in the area. Residents

*cont. on page 4*

## INSIDE

From the North . . . . .	3
Boston to Honor Victims . .	4
Loyalist Perspectives . .R&D	
Congressman Payne . .R&D	
The Scottish Clearances. . .	5
FOI Running for Congress. .6	

## OUR VIEW

*Americans who are concerned with peace with justice in Ireland are right to be angry with the response of the Republican Party to our issues.*

*Republican Presidential Candidate Bob Dole has consistently refused to come out on public record saying that, if elected, that he will pursue an aggressive even-handed policy on the Irish peace process. He also has not said that, if elected, he would not return America to the blindly pro-British policies on Ireland of his Republican predecessors.*

*At the Republican Convention, concerned Americans hoped that Dole or other leading Republicans would address the issue. They were to be sorely disappointed.*

*The only Republican to address the Irish issue in a primetime address was former Secretary of State James Baker. Mr. Baker blasted President Clinton for "inviting a representative of the IRA (Gerry Adams) to the White House just prior to the IRA's resumption of terrorist bombings in London." He also blasted Clinton for hurting US relations with Great Britain, stating that because of President Clinton's role in the Irish peace process, relations with Great Britain are "at their worst since the Boston Tea Party."*

*Without the even-handed policies taken by the Clinton administration, including the granting of a visa to Gerry Adams, there never would have been a peace process to begin with. It is obvious that Mr. Baker is more worried about cordial relations with the British government than the lives of Irish people. As Jim Baker speaks for Bob Dole, our worst fears are confirmed: the Republican party will return America to a blindly pro-British policy on Ireland.*

*If we in Irish America do not make Mr. Dole aware of our feelings, if we do not make him realize that there is an electoral price to pay for taking Mr. Baker's words to heart, then we will only have ourselves to blame when US policy on Ireland is once again made at 10 Downing Street.*

**Please Turn to Action Request #2 on Page 6**

## PEC Visits the North: Many Thanks

The PEC sent a delegation to Northern Ireland at the beginning of last month. The delegation was led by PEC Director of Operations, Sean Kane, and went to the north to accompany Rep. Donald Payne on a fact finding mission and to meet with political community and human rights leaders throughout Northern Ireland. The trip was very successful and the PEC would like to thank a few of the people who helped make the mission a success.

The PEC owes a special debt of thanks to the following:

Ruth Taillon, Niamh Flanagan and Fiona McIllduff, West Belfast Economic Forum. Gerry Adams, Ted Howell and Richard McCauley, Sinn Fein. Brenda Downes and Jim McCabe, United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets.

**Published by**  
**American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC**  
*A non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization*

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**GREAT HUNGER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR:** Frank Morris, Jr., 821 Briarwood Ln, Camp Hill, PA 17011-(717) 737-7013

**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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Eileen Howell, Falls Community Council. Dr. Maura Sheehan, Queens University. Bill Rolston, Martin O'Brien, Mark Thompson, CAJ. Robin Percival, Bogside Residents Group. Tony Doherty, Dove House. Sammy Douglas, East Belfast Development Agency. Raymond Lavery and Michael Briggs, PUP. Ken Rooney, Fountian Partnership. Gerry Doherty, Lenadoon Community Forum. Martin Finucane, Paul O'Connor, Pat Finucane Center. Patricia Breen and Gerard Rice, Lower Ormeau Residents Action Committee. Fr. Des Wilson and Noelle Ryan, Springhill Community House. Oliver Kearney, Equality. Roddy McCartney, Gerard 'Mo Chara' Kelly and the many others who helped make our trip a success.

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



## From the North: The Right to Consent

by Sean M. Kane, *Director of Operations*

This past marching season has been one of the worst periods in recent Irish history. Northern Ireland has been brought to the brink of despair time and time again. During the siege of Drumcree, the Irish people saw some of the worst violence the province has seen in more than twenty years. Some were seen to lament that we were right back where we started 25 years ago.

The issue is quite clear. The Orange Order and its sister organization the Apprentice Boys of Derry demand the right to march and hold parades in any area they see fit. It does not matter to them that they are not welcome in some of the areas such as Portadown's nationalist Garvaghy Road area, Belfast Ormeau Road area or Derry's Bogside area. The Orangemen see this as their traditional right, their cultural identity and even their civil right.

On the other hand, nationalists see these marches as an expression of sectarian triumphalism. To nationalists, these marches are not so much a reminder that King Billy defeated King James 306 years ago, but rather they are a clear and distinct reminder that nationalists are still regarded as second-class citizens in their own country, still lacking parity of esteem. They show who still holds power in Northern Ireland.

To Americans this issue may seem ludicrous. Comparisons to the Ku Klux Klan demanding the right to march through Harlem or neo-Nazis through Jewish areas help the public to understand a little better but, since they are a rarity in America, they do not have a profound impact. The head of the US Consulate in Belfast, Kathleen Stephens, summed up the feelings of the uninformed when she proclaimed "it's only a march, what's the big deal."

Here's the big deal Kathleen. There are over three thousand Orange marches throughout the north each

year. Most are in loyalist areas and cause no bother. However, a large number are contentious when they pass by or through nationalist areas. This is where the principle of consent comes in. The groups representing these nationalist areas have set up the principle that all marches, whether they be nationalist or unionist, must have the consent of the local people or the march cannot take place.

Heaven knows that the nationalist community has a lot of grievances with Orange marches coming through their area. When the Apprentice Boys marched down the lower Ormeau Road in 1992, they passed a bookmakers shop where five innocent nationalists were slaughtered by loyalist paramilitaries the year before. The sight of Orangemen celebrating the murder of innocent people by raising five finger salutes in the air was sickening. Even last year, when the residents of Portadown's Garvaghy Road agreed to allow the march to pass, they had their compromise thrown up in their face as David Trimble and Ian Paisley taunted the residents with clenched fist salutes. Is that culture or sectarianism?

This summer everything came to a boil. Once again the Orange Order demanded the right to march down the Garvaghy Road. The background of the situation follows. The Orange Order marched down a different road to a service at the Drumcree Church (Church of Ireland). After the service, instead of marching back the same way they came, they demanded their "God given" right to march back up the Garvaghy Road directly through a nationalist area.

Other areas of great contention are the Ormeau Road (mentioned above), the village of Dunloy (95% Catholic) and the part of Derry's walls that overlook the Catholic Bogside area. This year the resident associations in these areas, namely the Bogside Residents Group (BRG), the Garvaghy Residents Association (GRA),

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and the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Committee (LORAC), asked for negotiations with the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys. The loyalists refused to negotiate because some of the spokesmen were former Republican prisoners. The Apprentice Boys did begin negotiations with the BRG in order to avert more Drumcree-like violence. The negotiations failed when neither side would move. As one Irish journalist said, "It would be easier to get the IRA to decommission all of its weapons than to get an Orangeman to seek the consent of nationalists as to where he can march."

The answer is simple. Northern Ireland is a divided society. Marches, whether they be unionist or nationalist, should not be allowed in areas where they are not welcome. The PEC was opposed to the nationalist march in Derry that would have passed by the Protestant Fountain area of Derry with the same fervor that we opposed the Orange Order's demand to march through Garvaghy Road. It is true, in a democracy, there is a fundamental right to march. However, nowhere is there a fundamental right to determine which road you are going to march down. The authorities have the ultimate right to determine where the marchers travel (just like the US).

PEC agrees with the principle of consent. Marchers from whichever community should have to get the consent of the local community before they are allowed to pass through an area.

A PEC delegation was at the recent Apprentice Boys March that tried to pass down the lower Ormeau Road. The RUC let us stand by them on the front line. It was shocking to see the naked hatred in the eyes of the marchers and their supporters, young and old alike. To subject nationalists to such marches coming through their area without consent would be unconscionable.

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**Newsbits** *cont. from page 1*  
cowered inside as glass came showering in around them and sectarian abuse was hurled at them from the road. "Indications are that, far from seeking compromise, many Orangemen are seeking to plunge us even deeper into sectarian conflict." (*Andersonstown News*, 7/6/96)

Clara Reilly of the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets stated, "The RUC is firing plastic bullets in much higher numbers at nationalists than at loyalists. It's also very clear that the numbers actually fired are nowhere near the figures being admitted by the authorities (who admit over 6,000 were fired). What we had was squads of British soldiers and RUC men in Belfast and Derry firing plastic bullets constantly, stopping only to reload. It's more like a turkey shoot than crowd control...Plastic bullets are being fired at point blank range, at people on the ground, directly at the head. All of these are contrary to the rules of use and yet not a thing will be done about them." (*Andersonstown News*, 7/20/96)

When Orangemen confronted the RUC at Drumcree, it had little to do with marching down a street. They were there to stop nationalists from continuing to claim the rights that they have been denied throughout the history of the state. Just what are these huge concessions that make Trimble, Paisley et al so worried? They are nothing more than the democratic rights which this community should have had as a right but had to fight for tooth and nail...To the Orangemen, allowing Catholics the right to vote is a concession; to them, giving a Catholic a decent home is a concession; to them, a hearing which awards an aggrieved Catholic a monetary award is a concession; allowing nationalists to walk to their own town center is a concession. (*Andersonstown News*, 7/13/96)

Many Catholic families abandoned their homes in mixed areas and stayed with relatives. In an ominous development, loyalists daubed the numbers of Catholic houses on walls in the Cliftonville area portraying numbers as "this week's lotto. No7,14,21,39 It could be you." (*Andersonstown News*, 7/13/96)

## Boston to Honor Great Hunger Victims

by Kevin Murphy, *Massachusetts*

Boston, a city that was changed forever by refugees of Ireland's Great Hunger, is going to honor the memory of the Irish holocaust with two unique permanent memorials.

Deer Island on the Winthrop Peninsula has served as a Suffolk County Prison up until a few years ago and is now home to the USA's largest water cleansing plant that is reviving historic Boston Harbor. In the 1840's, Deer Island was the site of the quarantine center for the multitudes of Irish refugees plagued with starvation, disease and misery from the coffin ships. Hundreds of Irish men, women and children who fled Ireland's Great Hunger died while at quarantine on Deer Island. They were buried there in mass unmarked graves.

Soon the Massachusetts Water Authority is going to create a memorial type cemetery on Deer Island to the victims. The memorial is supposed to indicate the area as a memorial to the Irish people who perished while trying to make a new life in Boston.

Also, American Irish business leaders and ordinary citizens recently announced plans for a large memorial to be erected in the vicinity of busy Washington and School streets in downtown Boston commemorating the Great Hunger. The memorial is slated to be dedicated by 1999.

The memory of those who came to Massachusetts by fleeing a British created famine and who created the strong Irish influence that today is a part of the Bay State is being kept alive by caring people.

## 53 Members of Congress Blast Britain

A bipartisan group of 53 members from the House of Representatives and the Senate signed a letter to British Prime Minister John Major criticizing the decision of the British government and the RUC to allow the Orange Order to march through the nationalist Garvaghy Road area of Portadown, Northern Ireland.

The letter which, was circulated by Congressman Richard Neal, was signed by 53 members of Congress after intense lobbying by the PEC and Neal's office.

The congressmen also raised their concerns about "the appalling lack of police protection in nationalist areas following the Orange marches that resulted in many Catholic families being intimidated, harassed and burned out of their homes."

Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble was also lambasted in the letter for his conduct during the "siege of Drumcree" and his meeting with a Loyalist terrorist, Billy "King Rat" Wright, head of the UVF's Mid-Ulster Brigade. Wright's unit is suspected to have been responsible for more than 40 sectarian murders of innocent nationalists. Mr. Wright has subsequently been arrested in connection with the sectarian murder of a nationalist taxi driver, Michael McGoldrick.

The letter sends a clear message to the British government, the RUC and the Unionist leadership that the United States will hold them accountable for their actions during the recent disturbances in Northern Ireland.

The PEC would like to commend Congressman Neal, his staff and all of the members who signed the letter to John Major.

# Loyalist Perspectives on Recent Events in Northern Ireland

In 1989, PEC President John Finucane began our Unionist Outreach Program. Since then, PEC has met regularly with unionist and loyalist political and community leaders on our visits to Northern Ireland.

The PEC began this program because it is of the utmost importance that we establish relations with the unionist community in order to better understand their positions, feelings and fears. The program has been very successful.

A PEC delegation led by Director of Operations, Sean Kane recently visited the North and continued the Unionist Outreach Program.

In Derry, the delegation met with the Security Spokesman for Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), Mr. Gregory Campbell. Mr. Campbell gave us our first insight into Unionist feelings behind the whole situation at Drumcree. He said that "Unionists reckoned that nationalists had been using violence for 25 years to obtain concessions from the British government. Also, because of this use of violence by nationalists, the traditional civil rights of unionists had been eroded." So, for Mr. Campbell, the "Siege of Drumcree" was the epitome of Unionists finally taking a stand and saying that they will no longer tolerate the erosion of their civil rights and would use violence if need be. He also stated that, while he did not approve of the use of violence by unionists to achieve their objectives, he could understand why they would feel compelled to do so.

On Wednesday August 7th, the PEC met with Mr. Sammy Douglas, a loyalist community worker in East Belfast, Mr. Raymond Lavery and Mr. Michael Briggs. Messrs. Lavery and Briggs are members of the Progressive Unionist Party (PUP), the political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF), and have close ties with PUP leaders

David Irvine and Billy Hutchinson.

These men all told of the great tension within the Loyalist community at this time. According to them, since the end of the IRA cessation in February, tensions have been running high in the Loyalist community and a great many fear that the whole situation could collapse at any time.

The view was also expressed that the campaign to get the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys of Derry marches rerouted away from nationalist areas is actually an orchestrated campaign by Sinn Fein to erode the traditional and cultural rights of the unionist community.

Raymond Lavery commented, "After Manchester, the IRA was being attacked from all sides. Sinn Fein was being isolated internationally and both Sinn Fein and the IRA were bearing the blunt of the blame for the fragile state of the peace process. Now, through this campaign against traditional loyalist marches and the violence that occurred surrounding the events at Drumcree, the spotlight has been taken off Sinn Fein and the IRA. Sinn Fein is now seen as trying to save the peace process, restore calm and prevent further violence. Unionists are now made to look like the bad guys."

The residents groups that have led the fight against the orange marches such as the Bogside Residents Group, the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Committee and the Garvaghy Resident Association have also been labeled by these men as Sinn Fein fronts. Lavery cited the fact that some of the spokesmen for these groups are ex-Republican prisoners as proof that Sinn Fein has hijacked these committees and that these residents groups are a mere offshoot of Sinn Fein and the IRA. While that evidence might not hold up in a court of law, it is without a doubt a widely held belief among the unionist community at large.

Briggs and Douglas further expressed the feeling that the attacks on the routes of the Orange marches have only increased the deep feelings of isolation and alienation in the community. "Marches are part of the loyalist identity, culture and expression. So, when there is an open attack on them, loyalists take that as a direct attack on both their culture and their very way of life," said Sammy Douglas.

As for the peace process, there was little sign of optimism in that area. Messrs. Lavery and Briggs noted that the loyalist community lacks confidence in the intentions of not only the nationalist/republican side, but also in the intentions of the British and Irish governments. Loyalists, always conscious of a possible sellout, are more suspicious than ever. "During the IRA ceasefire, you kept thinking, what are Sinn Fein/IRA up to? Can they be trusted? Recent events only fuel suspicion that Sinn Fein and the IRA were never really interested in peace," said Lavery.

When the PEC met with Mr. Douglas and a different group of Loyalist leaders in February of 1995, the spirit in the air was one of optimism, hope and change. Sad to say, that spirit has changed. The events of this past summer have definitely led to a hardening of attitudes on all sides. It seems that we are further from a peaceful resolution of this conflict than at any time in recent memory. All sides must redouble their efforts to see that this opportunity for peace is not squandered. Leaders in Northern Ireland owe it to their children to find a peaceful, just and lasting solution so that future generations will not have to live with that pain and suffering that all sides have experienced in this conflict.



## Congressman Donald Payne in Ireland

by Sean M. Kane, *Director of Operations*

New Jersey Congressman and Congressional Black Caucus Chairman, Donald M. Payne, recently toured the north of Ireland with representatives of the PEC.

The Congressman met with political and community leaders in Belfast and Derry from August 4th to 6th. He also gave the fourth annual Frank Cahill memorial lecture as the honored guest of the West Belfast Economic Forum.

To say that the Congressman had a hectic schedule would be the understatement of the century. The itinerary which was set up by the West Belfast Economic Forum took the Congressman and the PEC across the spectrum of political, community and human rights leaders throughout the north.

On August 4th, we met with the wife and lawyer of wrongly imprisoned Colin Duffy (see last month's newsletter for further information on the case). After hearing the heart wrenching testimony of Susan Duffy and upon further examination of the facts surrounding the case, Rep. Payne vowed to get active in seeking justice for the wrongly imprisoned man from Lurgan, County Armagh.

Next we met with Oliver Kearney, Chairman of the Fair Employment group Equality, and lawyers from the firm of Madden and Finucane. There they presented us with a proposal to step up the campaign to combat injustice and discrimination in Northern Ireland. The proposal would bring economic sanctions on the British financial industry because of Britain's role in Northern Ireland.

Our last meeting on the night of the 4th was with representatives of the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets and the Relatives for Justice Committee. This meeting was one of the most productive during the whole mission. The CAJ documented case after case where the state forces have killed unarmed civilians with no paramilitary connection. The Congressman was especially shocked to learn that the only two British soldiers to serve prison sentences for killing Irish civilians, Privates Ian Thain and Lee Clegg, not only were freed after serving short sentences, but they were

then reinstated in the British Army.

The Relatives for Justice campaign informed the Congressman of the plight of political prisoners in Northern Ireland and especially England. They detailed the hardships caused to the families of prisoners by long and costly visits to see their loved ones as well as the fight to get the British government to implement the repatriation of Irish prisoners in England to Northern Ireland. The British government still has not repatriated most Irish prisoners to this day.

But the group that had the most profound impact on Congressman Payne was the United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets. Present at the meeting was Brenda Downes, the wife of Sean Downes who was killed by a plastic bullet fired at point blank range in 1984. Also present was Jim McCabe, the husband of Nora McCabe who was killed in 1981. Congressman Payne was visibly moved by the plight of the victims, he was horrified when he heard the number of children that have been killed by plastic bullets and he was even more stunned when he saw the size of the actual bullet and the velocity at which it travels. Congressman Payne has vowed to hold Congressional hearings on the use of these lethal weapons in Northern Ireland (the PEC will be working closely with him on this project).

On Monday August 5th, the Congressman and PEC met with Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein Foreign Affairs Officer Ted Howell, where they discussed the progress of the peace process and the conditions needed to get the process back on track. Rep. Payne also attended an exhibition on the Easter Rebellion. Then we met with community leaders from West Belfast to get a picture of the prospects for economic development and the state of economic affairs in the area.

That night Representative Payne gave the fourth annual Frank Cahill Memorial Lecture at the Beechmont Leisure Center in West Belfast. The lecture which is sponsored by the West Belfast Economic Forum is part of the 10 day West Belfast Festival. The theme for the lecture was Urban Regeneration and the Struggle for Civil Rights. Payne spoke

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poignantly about the civil rights movement both in Ireland and the US. He also spoke about the struggle of Irish Americans to rise out of poverty in this country. Rep. Payne also said that it was high time that the British government and the unionist leadership engaged positively in the peace process and made the necessary concessions for a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

On the last day of Congressman Payne's trip, we traveled to Derry. There we met with representatives of the human rights group, the Pat Finucane Center. They provided us with a detailed report of the disturbances surrounding the 'Siege of Drumcree'. The Congressman was told that the RUC only fired 400 plastic bullets at Loyalists during the Drumcree disturbances. However, when nationalists rioted in protest of the British government decision to allow the Orange Order to march down the Garvaghy Road, the RUC fired 5500 plastic bullets at nationalists. Paul O'Connor of the Pat Finucane Center stated that the RUC was firing so many plastic bullets that their guns were actually overheating from overuse. The center gave Congressman Payne a package containing a report on the actions of the RUC and plastic bullets. Congressman Payne will hand deliver the packages to both President Clinton and United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali.

Later that day we met with community groups from the Protestant Fountain area of Derry and from the Bogside. Then we went on a tour of the historic city walls of Derry. We witnessed just how close the Apprentice Boys marchers would come to Catholic homes. Contrary to the fallacy that the marchers would be about 250 yards away from the nearest Catholic home, actually the distance from a number of homes was only a few feet.

This was Congressman Payne's first trip to Ireland. The meetings were extremely productive and it is safe to say that when Congressman Payne returns to Capitol Hill he will be an even greater friend to the Irish than he was before.

\*\*\*

Published September 1996 by AIEF-PEC

## The Scottish Highland Clearances

by Steve Balmires, *Alaska*

The actions of the English government at the time of the Great Hunger in Ireland amounted to genocide against a Celtic people. The Scots are also Celtic, but not many people realize they suffered the same attempted eradication. The hatred of the English government towards the Scots culminated when Bonnie Prince Charlie and the Jacobites attempted to seize the English throne. They failed and were virtually wiped out at the Battle of Culloden in 1745. The following year the government passed "The Act of Proscription" in a spiteful attempt to eradicate all traces of Gaelic culture forever. Amongst other things, the act outlawed the wearing of tartan, playing of bagpipes, bearing arms and the teaching of the Gaelic language. By the time this legislative genocide was repealed some thirty years later, the damage had been done. A whole generation had been brought up without access to their rightful culture and traditions.

By the early 19th century, the Scottish landlords, many of whom now lived in England, were feeling the pinch as the demand for beef which had been the mainstay for so long had dropped. The enterprising British Wool Council saw an opening and offered them huge flocks of sheep for ridiculously low prices. The landlords leapt at the idea and changed from cattle to sheep farming in what they called "The Improvements". The people though referred to this change as "The Clearances" for they were cleared out of the way in their tens of thousands to make way for the hated sheep.

The Clearances was not an overnight event. These terrible deeds were allowed to carry on unhindered for at least 125 years until The Crofters Act was passed in 1886 which started to give the people some very basic, but totally inadequate, rights. Despite this Act, people were still being cleared in the Hebrides in the early days of this century. In the early days, the people

were served with a formal notice of eviction against which they had no right of appeal. But this was too slow. By the early 1800's the factors resorted to simply burning down the houses often with the family's furniture and possessions still inside and in some documented cases with people still inside. At the height of The Clearances up to 500 homes were being destroyed and 2000 families evicted per day. On the Duke of Sutherland's estate 10,000 people were replaced by a mere 40 shepherds. By 1820, thirteen Scottish islands had been completely depopulated. 40,000 people were cleared from the Isle of Skye. Between 1815 and 1838, Nova Scotia received 22,000 Cleared Highlanders. 2,000 people left the Isle of Mull in 1826 for Canada. 3,200 families were Cleared from Lewis in 1851. In Barra, the Crofters were called to a public meeting on the pretext of discussing fair rents but, when they got there, they were tied hand and foot, thrown onto a waiting ship and sent off to Canada with no more than what they happened to be wearing that night. The local police were standing by to arrest anyone who tried to resist. Many were forced to take up fishing, an industry

they knew nothing about. Many went to Glasgow (in 1840, the figure was 30,000) where they took back-breaking jobs in factories. Many starved to death where their homes had once been. But most ended up on the coffin ships bound for America and Canada where they joined their Irish cousins. Some tried to bring to the attention of the English people what had been going on in the remote Highlands and Islands for generations but the response from the government to the Clearances in Scotland was exactly the same as the response to the famine in Ireland - let the people emigrate or die.

Most people have never heard of The Clearances but this is not surprising. Although I was born in Scotland I knew nothing of these events until I was in my early 20's. It is as if they never happened. The truth behind the Great Hunger is being made known and the pressure is on the English government to acknowledge its actions during those terrible times. The potato blight was the excuse for brutal and inhuman actions in Ireland but in Scotland there was no such natural disaster to hide behind. The weight of the half million or so people who died or were forced to emigrate during the Scottish Clearances should now be added to this pressure. They must not be forgotten.

## Smyth Extradited to Northern Ireland

As we go to press, Irish political prisoner Jimmy Smyth has been extradited back to Northern Ireland by US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher.

Obviously the PEC is very disappointed that President Clinton did not intervene and stop the planned extradition of Smyth. Jimmy Smyth should not have been extradited and should have been allowed to remain in this country.

Smyth was convicted in 1977, in a Diplock Court, for the attempted murder of a prison officer. He has always denied his guilt and that he was ever a member of the Irish Republican Army. Smyth was sentenced to twenty years in prison. As of the moment, Smyth has been returned to Magaberry jail outside of Derry and is awaiting his ultimate return to Long Kesh.

In 1992, President Clinton promised that, if elected, on his watch, there would be no more Joe Doherty's. By the extradition of Smyth, Clinton has at least bent that promise.

Hopefully the President will continue his fight to get the British to give Smyth credit for the time he served in jail here in the United States.

Please turn to action request # 1.



## 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. Hon Bill Clinton

President

The White House

Washington, DC 20500

Ph # (202) 456-1111

Fax # (202) 456-2461

**Message:** While I am very disappointed that Jimmy Smyth was extradited to Northern Ireland, I hope you will continue to use your good offices to see that the British government gives him credit for the time he served in prison here.

### 2. Mr. Bob Dole

Dole for President

810 First Street NE Suite 300

Washington, DC 20002

Ph# (202) 414-6400

Fax# (202) 408-9468

**Message:** You will pay a heavy electoral price if you intend to follow James Baker's advice at the Republican convention and return the US government to a blindly pro-British policy on Ireland. Please make a public statement immediately that you will follow an active and even handed Irish peace policy.

## Friend of Ireland Running for Congress in New Jersey

One of the finest journalists to ever cover the conflict in Ireland, J. Morgan Strong, has decided to enter the political arena and run for a seat in the House of Representatives. Strong has written extensive and hard-hitting pieces on the conflict in Ireland for such prestigious publications as *USA Today*, *Gannett Newspapers*, *Modern Maturity* and *Playboy*. Strong, who also worked as a consultant for *60 Minutes*, exposed the blatant pro-British slant of CBS news in the PEC's *American Irish Newsletter* and was the driving force behind the PEC's ongoing boycott of *CBS News*. Morgan has been a great friend to the cause of Ireland and to the PEC, of which he is a member. We wish him the best of luck in his quest for office.

**The following is a statement by J. Morgan Strong, Conservative Party candidate for Congress from New Jersey's Fourth Congressional District.**

*I have worked as a journalist, covering the conflict in Ireland for a number of years. I did a number of interviews with leading figures of the independence movement. I interviewed Bernadette Devlin McAliskey for USA Today, John Finucane for Gannett Newspapers, Gerry Adams, Danny Morrison and an unidentified IRA member for Playboy in 1989. And recently, I interviewed Gerry Adams, John Major and President Clinton for Modern Maturity magazine, the magazine of the AARP, with a circulation of 30 million.*

*I will not claim objectivity. I am an Irish citizen, and my sympathy extends to the oppressed Irish people in the north. I have been there and can speak with some knowledge of the repressive circumstances of their lives under British occupation.*

*That repression extends to members of the foreign press. A warrant was issued for my detention after I met with and published the interview in Playboy with Adams, Morrison, and the IRA member. I was charged with violation of the anti-terrorism act. All copies of Playboy containing the interview were seized by British authorities and not allowed to be distributed until several pages of the interview were torn from the magazine. I am not the only member of the foreign press corps who the British attempted to intimidate. Several other American journalists, over the course of several years, were charged with similar transgressions.*

*However, I view the British presence in Ireland as a perverse, inexplicable residue of colonialism. No other rational explanation is possible. And in all, of what is described as the civilized world, Great Britain alone maintains a colony, through force and oppression in Western Europe. It is unconscionable.*

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