American Irish Newsletter - June - July 1984

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC
URGENT ACTION LETTER
by Albert Doyle, PEC and Brehon Law Society of N.Y.

On April 26th the Reagan Administration proposed to Congress four bills labelled as “anti-terrorists” legislation. Of course this label is considered as a sure-fire political winner. Our analysis, based on the information available to us, is that these bills have little or nothing to do with terrorism against this country and everything to do with stifling active dissent by Americans who disagree with the Imperial foreign policy now in vogue. It is very likely that one of the principal (if unstated) aims of this legislation is to crush support by Americans for the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland. As we know, this would be totally consistent with current State Department policy of complete support of Thatcherism. In fact, it is also probable that this legislation was drafted with the assistance of the British, the authors of such infamous laws as the undemocratic Special Powers Acts, Special Provisions Acts and Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Diplock Court system of internment. Of course, those tools of repression are part of a legal system unhindered by a written Constitution and Bill of Rights, whereas (have they forgotten?)

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NEWS BITS
by Andy Prior

Nationalists leaders, representing over 70% of the people and 90% of the nationalists in the 32 counties of Ireland have issued the long-awaited report of the New Ireland Forum. The report, the result of 11 months of deliberations, 97 sessions and 317 submissions, cited a unitary state that completely safeguarded the rights of all it’s citizens as the best model to be pursued. Participating political parties included the Irish Republic’s Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Labour Parties and the North’s Social and Democratic and Labour Party. Sinn Fein was not invited and all the Unionist parties refused to participate. Two major Nationalist concessions were included in the report. It was acknowledged that the Unionists in N.I. were British and had a right to remain so in a political framework that protected their cultural heritage. The report also stated that any reunification of the island would require a new non-denominational Irish constitution that guarantees the rights of Protestants to full civil and religious liberties.

The Forum also proposed two alternative forms of government for a new Ireland. One would be a confederal state based on the two existing political units, north and south, each with it’s own parliament and executive, but sharing a common president and with a central body that would handle

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BRITAIN'S APARTHEID SYSTEM (Continued from Page 1)

The average Catholic who does not want to get involved in the conflict is therefore left with no place to hide. To ask the Northern Catholic community, in these circumstances, for support for the Republican movement.

When the British Crown began, in 1608, to send large numbers of English and Scottish settlers to populate the constantly rebellious province of Ulster; it set in motion a process that was to eventually make the Irish Catholic an outcast in his own land; the victim of a kind of apartheid which persists, in subtle form, to this day in Northern Ireland. In order to ensure that these Protestant settlers remained an effective garrison to control the rebellious Irish it was essential that the Protestant and Catholic communities be kept rigidly apart. Accordingly, advantages in property-holding and other economic benefits were made dependent upon allegiance to the Crown and adherence to the Protestant faith. Thus inter-marriage between the colonists and the native Irish became the exception rather than the rule.

When the British partitioned Ireland in 1921 they made the Protestant minority in Ireland as a whole into a majority in the six Northeastern counties. The Irish Catholics caught behind this imposed boundary-line now found themselves a minority in an artificially created statelet. In order to maintain majority status, many Protestants discriminated against Catholics in employment and housing allocation, and passed repressive legislative measures against Republicans and their supporters. The objective was to force Catholics to emigrate, the fear being that with their higher birth-rate they would someday outnumber Protestants and vote themselves into a United Ireland. As for those who refused to emigrate the rigging of electoral boundaries and the blatant use of the gerrymander made certain that the Catholic Nationalist community was not fairly represented politically.

Discrimination requires identification of individual members of the targeted group, and to this end Protestant bigots have devised a subtle covert system. First, Catholics tend to use Irish forenames and family names; whereas few, if any, Protestants would dream of using such heretical forenames as Patrick, Liam, or Sean, for example; and Protestant family names are generally English or Scottish. Second, Catholics tend to send their children to Catholic schools, thus unavoidably providing another means of identification. Finally, employment discrimination has dictated the testant family names are generally English or Scottish. Few now days, one wonders if any, Protestants would dream of using such heretical forenames as Patrick, Liam, or Sean, for example; and Protestant family names are generally English or Scottish. Second, Catholics tend to send their children to Catholic schools, thus unavoidably providing another means of identification. 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FROM THE EDITOR

President Ronald Reagan's upcoming trip to Ireland which may prove very embarrassing to all concerned, is designed to win him Irish American votes. Unfortunately, many of our brothers and sisters will actually vote for him based solely on his trip. They won't even consider his support for Britians official terrorism and colonialism in the north of Ireland. Would America's Jewish, Black, Polish or Hispanic communities be so easily duped? Certainly not! That is why the Presidential candidates are going out of their way to woo their votes. These fellow Americans who some Irish Americans like to criticize, know how our system works and are taking advantage of it through political unity.

Why cannot Irish America do the same? Is it that we are selfish? Do we lack the moral courage to speak out? Do we worry too much about what others will think? Or are we just easily had? One thing is for certain. As other ethnic groups move up the ladder of success, others will take their place at the bottom. That vacuum will be filled in large by the children of the "easily had" Irish American. Wake up Irish America! Unite!

The NEW IRELAND FORUM has not caused great excitement within informed circles. It did not identify the cause — British colonialism — nor did it condemn British atrocities. it did not have the participation of the conflict's most important ingredients: Sinn Fein and the Loyalist's. We hope it was not just a move to bolster the fast declining SDLR. The ball is in Britain's court. Britain must remove the Loyalist guarantee. As we wait, we must redouble our efforts.

OFFENSIVE ST. PATRICK'S DAY CARDS

by John J. Finucane

Prior to St. Patrick's Day, 1984 we attempted without success to contact Recycled Paper Products concerning their continued production of insulting St. Patrick's Day cards. We ask all of you to write to Bambergers Department Stores, even though Bambergers may not do business in your area. Nation-wide support is effective. Bambergers is a big customer of Recycied. Also, we ask that you have friends and members of your local Irish American organization write.

Customer Service
Bambergers
131 Market Street
Newark, N.J. 07101
Dear Sir:

Unlike American Greetings and Hallmark, Recycled Paper Products has refused to discontinue production of St. Patrick's Day cards that depict the Irish as drinkers and social misfits. I have previously written to them.

I request that you discontinue doing business with this company. I look forward to your cooperation.

Respectfully, signature

LETTER

The Secretary
National Political Education Committee

A Chara:

Some of your committee's material has recently come into our possession. Let me say at the outset that we are extremely impressed by this material and by the work which your committee is doing in the republic to the south. Let me also, on behalf of the IFA and on my own behalf, heartily congratulate you and your colleagues for your endeavours.

Now to the business of this letter: Cumann Saoirse Eireann/Irish Freedom Association was established a little over a year ago with the general objective of carrying out the kind of educational activity that the NPEC is doing so well in the States. We would very much appreciate receiving from you information on how your organization is structured and on how it conducts its work in the areas of political education and lobbying. We would also like to receive back copies of your informational leaflets to assist us in presenting the Irish case to Canadian politicians and the general public. As the queen of England is due to visit here in July, we are renewing our efforts to raise the question of Britain's occupation and oppression in N.E. Ireland with appropriate parties here. For this purpose especially, we are in urgent need of more factual material which we believe your committee could provide us.

Again, congratulations on your work. We hope to hear from you soon.

Aidan P. Buckley
Irish Freedom Association
Toronto, Ontario
Canada

THANK YOU FOR RESPONDING TO OUR FINANCIAL APPEAL

We wish to thank all of you who responded so generously to our recent Financial Appeal. As you know, we depend very much on your support. We also wish to remind those of you who have not yet sent in your donation, to please do so at this time. All donations will be gratefully appreciated and acknowledged. Please make checks or money orders payable to: NPEC and mail to: NPEC, PO. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923.

Thank you.

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Date

Name (print)

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DID THE IRISH WIN THE WEST?

by Dr. Roger McGrath, Dept. of History, UCLA

The early morning hours of Thursday, 13 June 1878, found Patrick Gallagher's Shamrock saloon in the frontier town of Bodie crowded with men. Some stood at the bar drinking Irish whiskey, others at the chop counter eating fried steaks, while several huddled around the gambling tables playing faro. Suddenly two big Irishmen began quarreling — Alex Nixon, the popular and powerfully built president of the Bodie miners' union, and Tom McDonald, twenty pounds lighter than Nixon but no small man himself. When McDonald claimed he was the better man, Nixon unleashed a vicious blow that caught McDonald in the eye and sent him tumbling to the floor.

The Shamrock's burly bartender, T. C. O'Brien, and a deputy sheriff, Terrance Brodigan, tried to separate the men and cool their tempers. But McDonald drew a gun and asked the bigger Nixon if he would give him "even chances." "Yes, by God," answered Nixon while pulling a revolver out of his hip pocket. Both men opened fire. Nixon's first shot missed McDonald by inches but McDonald's hit Nixon in the side. "My God, boys, I'm shot," exclaimed the big miner as he staggered back and fell to the floor. As he lay there with blood running out of a hole in his side, he fired two more shots at McDonald. They missed. McDonald returned the fire. The rounds tore holes in the wooden planks of the Shamrock's floor but left Nixon untouched. It hardly mattered. Less than two hours later Nixon died from the effects of McDonald's first shot.

— excerpted and condensed from Chapter 11
Gunfighters, Highwaysmen, & Vigilantes:
Violence on the Frontier
(University of California Press, 1984)

Few people realize how prominent the Irish were on the American frontier. As the above account illustrates there were occasions when everyone involved in a particular incident was Irish born or carried an Irish surname. When I began researching my recently published book, Gunfighters, Highwaysmen, & Vigilantes, I knew that there had been plenty of Irish on the frontier, but what I discovered surprised even me: the Irish were often the predominant group on the frontiers of the Far West.

I did not set out to write a history of the Irish in the Old West. What I intended to do and what I think I have done is to provide the first truly representative look at violence and lawlessness in the Old West by studying two towns, Aurora and Bodie, that were typical of the frontier — the mining frontier specifically.

But the Irish were irresistible. They leaped out of the original source material with every bit of research that I did. I looked at the conflict between the Indians and whites in the Owens Valley — a cattle ranching region that supplied beef to Aurora and Bodie — and found that the cavalry was largely Irish; the names of the officers alone included McLaughlin, O'Neill, McKenna, and Kelly. I turned to the lawmen of the towns and found sheriffs and deputies with the names McGuade, O'Malley, Pine, Kirgan, Brodigan, Markey, Monahan, Flynn, and Phelan. But that was just the beginning.

The most prominent attorneys were Thomas Ryan, John McQuaid, and Patrick Reddy. Reddy never lost a case, but he did lose an arm when he was winged by a gunman. Reddy also served two terms as a state senator and later became one of San Francisco's most celebrated lawyers. The most deadly shootist in Aurora and Bodie was "Irish Tom" Carberry and other gunfighters included men named McTigue, O'Hara, Carroll, Deegan, Dugan, McCormick, O'Farrell, Keogh, McGrath, Bannon, Ryan, and Shea. John Daly, also a deadly gunfighter, was the most feared gang leader and George Finney was the stagecoach driver who twice was nearly shot to death by highwaymen. The group of five prospectors who discovered Bodie's gold included Patrick Garrity, Terrence Brodigan, and William Doyle. Bodie's finest restaurant was owned by George Callahan and the best saloons in Aurora and Bodie by men named McLaughlin, Gallagher, McDermott, Fahey, Buckley, Scully, Hogan, and Shannon.

Following the death of Alex Nixon, the miners of Bodie made J. P. Shaughnessy the president of their union. County election judges were Pat Kelley and Joseph McGrath. J. C. McMahan saw that the mail got through, once walking on snowshoes through a blizzard for fourteen hours. John McDonald was the first president of the Bodie chapter of the Land League of Ireland and Father John Cassin was the pastor of the local Catholic church, St. John the Baptist, one of only two churches that were built in the town.

And so it went — character after character, event after event. Irish kept surfacing throughout the sources: gunfighters, lawmen, miners, publicans, union presidents, cavalry officers, gang leaders, state senators, priests, teamsters, and attorneys. When I finally got to doing my index I found that I had six McGuires, four Kellys, five McLaughlins, and five Murphys to mention just a few of the more numerous Irish surnames. Did the Irish win the West? It certainly seems to have been the case on the mining frontier.
UNITY CONFERENCE UPDATE
by Andy Prior

Representatives from all over the U.S. traveled to our nation's capital to discuss the future of the Irish American Unity Conference on the weekend of March 31st. Commenting on the convention "Irish Times" columnist Sean Cronin wrote, "In Jim Delaney the IAUC has a dynamic leader. The delegates showed enthusiasm and are well-informed on Ireland, and there was a minimum of rhetoric — which is the curse of Irish-American gatherings.

The primary discussions of the convention concerned the hashing out of the details for the IAUC's master political action plan for this presidential election year. A model plank concerning N.I. to be submitted to each state's party platform committee was created. Subsequently, Paul O'Dwyer presented this model to the Democratic national platform committee on behalf of the IAUC. (see below).

As part of the education program, it was announced that the national office has initiated a campaign to highlight the use of plastic bullets in the North. One thousand information packets which included an exact replica of a plastic bullet and a questionnaire, were sent to all members of the U.S. Senate and Congress and the Governors of all fifty states.

Among other topics discussed were the establishment of an IAUC regional periodical, the creation of a harassment bank to collect information on cases of Irish American activists in the U.S. who have suffered for their outspokenness on N.I., and the organizing of a campaign to change the restrictive U.S. visa policy.

The representatives had the opportunity to gain valuable insights into modern Irish society when noted Irish author and journalist Tim Pat Coogan addressed the convention. "On The Blanket", "The IRA" and the recently published "Ireland And The Arts" are some of the popular works written by Mr. Coogan. Dean David Lowry of the Biscayne School of Law in Miami, Florida, and a highly-respected authority on the British Judicial System in Northern Ireland, presented an incisive capsule survey of British "reforms" in N.I. Other informed figures who addressed the convention included Margaret O'Rourke, wife of Michael O'Rourke, and Senator Joe Tydings, former Senator from Maryland who spoke on behalf of Senator Gary Hart's presidential bid.

The whole proceedings were covered extensively by the Irish media including such luminaries as Sean Cronin of the Irish Times (quoted earlier), author of "Irish Nationalism" and Michael Farrell, a co-founder with Bernadette Devlin McAliskey of People's Democracy in 1969, the author of what has fast become the standard text on the Northern Ireland state, "Northern Ireland: The Orange State".

PROPOSED IRISH PLANK
by Mike Mullen, Publicity Director IAUC

At the second annual convention of the Irish American Unity Conference held recently in Washington, D.C., the following Democratic party Platform plank was proposed.

"The Democratic party expresses grave concern over the violence in Northern Ireland and urges immediate negotiations between representatives of the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and all major political parties within the current boundaries of Northern Ireland. The United States

STATE DEPARTMENT BRIEFING
by Albert Doyle

You, the Action Irish, are well aware that the policy of the present U.S. administration is complete support for British policy in Northern Ireland. That support is revealed in the statements and actions (and inactions) of our elected officials and the bureaucrats who implement those policies. Their ignorance and contempt for our views, as Americans, is apparent. This attitude was never more evident than it was at the State Department's briefing for sixty-six members of the IAUC headed by its President, James Delaney, on March 30, 1984. Many PEC members were in the group. The briefing, originally scheduled for the White House, at the last moment was shunted off to the less prestigious State Department. The State Department representatives were four low level bureaucrats. The recital of U.S. policy consisted of a hurried summary (about four minutes) of the President's annual St. Patrick's Day messages, those annual insults to intelligent Irish Americans, with their pedantic scolding of Irish American activists, the exhortations against violence (by one side, of course), and the overlay of "shure and begorrah" which embarrassingly reveals the low level of knowledge and interest of the President about Ireland and particularly about the cancer of Northern Ireland.

Now, sad to say, this kind of response seems to go over well with the bureaucrats who constitute the representatives of Ireland in the United States. They seem pleased that someone important takes notice of them, and only one day a year. Well, this line did not go over with the informed people of the IAUC. They kept your civil servants hopping with discomfort for about two more hours. Many questions were asked by our people. The responses ranged from dissembling (probably seen by the State people as "clever"), such as denying the U.S. policy in relation to Northern Ireland is British influenced ... ranging to apparent outrageous ignorance given the positions held by these people, including the "Director of North European Affairs" and the Irish and United Kingdom "Desk Officers". I will offer a few examples to give you the flavor: a crude attempt to intimidate the group of presumed docile Irish

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among other duties, foreign policy and security. In the other, London and Dublin would share equal responsibility for all aspects of the government of N.I. Garrett Fitzgerald and Margaret Thatcher will meet privately during the EEC summit in France on June 25-26. This meeting is likely to result in agreement that an Anglo-Irish summit should take place in Dublin in September or early October. (NY Times 5/3/84, Irish Post 5/12/84, Irish Echo 5/12/84).

Speaking before a stunned Brehon Law Society of N.Y., Belfast attorney, Patrick Finucane revealed some startling facts about the N.I. "supergrass" trials. According to Mr. Finucane, "one man's word can put another into prison for 20 years or so," he added that, "all the old fundamental concepts of law have been eroded ... if you saw it on television you would look on it as black comedy. In every case where the informer's testimony could be tested against independent evidence the informer's evidence didn't stand up." (Irish Times 5/12/84). It has recently been alleged that 2 republican prisoners at Magilligan Prison, Co. Derry, had been taken by wardens to the exercise yard where they were assaulted by Loyalist prisoners. On being returned to their cells they had been assaulted by the wardens themselves, and later they were taken to the canteen where they were beaten up by about a dozen Loyalist prisoners under the eyes of the wardens. According to Fr. Denis Faul this kind of activity has been going on for the past 2½ weeks. (Irish Times 5/5/84).

Jerry Adams, Member of British Parliament and President of Sinn Fein has been invited to speak in the United States. Invitations have been extended by the influential IRISH AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA, the ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS IN AMERICA and the Brehon Society of Philadelphia. Adams stated he will accept the invitations if his visa is approved by the U.S. State Department. Normally the State Department refuses visas to prominent Irish nationalist Members of British Parliament and other nationalist leaders.

Britain's Irish Post newspaper recently wrote about the Irish American Unity Conference and it's recently sponsored conference in San Antonio on the subject of investment in Ireland stated, "Considering that his campaign is yet not a year old and that most of the effort until now has been in laying foundations, Delaney's (Jim Delaney, IAUChairman) operation is very impressive. It already has a generating potential greater than anything constructed in the past by the Irish abroad. All previous efforts were exclusively political. Delaney's is political and commercial. It is a potent combination." (Irish Post 5/12/84). Gerry Adams, MP and Sinn Fein president has announced that all elected Sinn Fein representatives would respond in Irish when questioned by the British security forces following the arrest of a Belfast Irish language teacher for giving his name and address in Irish to a UDR patrol. Mr. Adams has also requested that all Irish nationalists follow Sinn Fein's example. (Irish Times) 5/14/84.

JUST A COMMENT:  
by Pam Donnelly (Kansas City, Missouri)

While Michael O'Rourke remains in federal prison, since 1979, for failing to report his address and overstaying his visa — Margaret Thatcher's son, Mark, was caught using his mother's influence to get a $450 million contract, (to build a university in Oman). His punishment is self-imposed (and rather severe for the crime), banishment to the U.S. Mark has promised not to embarrass poor Maggie any further, so he's chosen the states as his dumping point. He'll be taking up residence in NYC or Texas and promises to hold down a regular job, with Lotus Cars at $67,500.00 a year.

Why is an ex-race car driver, being treated like a diplomat? Why can he waltz right into the U.S. and take up residence? Hold a job, that a U.S. citizen can do? Where are our immigration laws now? Double standards? Probably not! What America has always needed is a good used car salesman!

STATE DEPARTMENT  (Continued from Page 5)

Catholics by citing against us the statements of Bishop Cahal Daly; a totally inadequate discription of the history of "Northern Ireland", ending with the citation of Eamonn De Valera as a supporter of partition; an interesting (and carelessly correct) description of the Congressional Friends of Ireland (Moynihan et al.) as "nominally" supporting Irish unity; and professions of ignorance about the Short Brothers contract. Personally I am grateful to the IAUChaving given me the opportunity to witness this performance. It has caused me to redouble my efforts to expose the immoral policies of these people. They thought we were rude and uncivil because we didn't meekly swallow their claptrap. I have news for them — "We have only begun to fight!"

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