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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

Vol. 6, No. 2

APRIL/MAY, 1981

NEWS BITS

John J. Finucane

The Pope drew a distinction between force and violence, saying force can be used to protect human rights while violence is a violation of rights (Sunday Independent 12/7)...Addressing a group of politicians and industrialists in Belfast, England's Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, called for a new commitment to explore areas of cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic. (Irish Times 1/7)...Of the December, 1980, meeting between PM Charles Haughey and PM Margaret Thatcher, Ruairi O Bradaigh, President of Sinn Fein, said, "Once Mr. Haughey has accepted the ground rules laid down for Ireland by the British, there will be a continuation of British imperialism in Ireland, and power and privilege for one section north of the border (Irish Post 1/10).

Respectable sources in England have dug up the following extract from the minutes of a 1948 **British Cabinet meeting**: Now that Eire will shortly cease to owe any allegiance to the crown, it has become a matter of first class strategic importance to this country that the north should continue to form part of His Majesty's Dominions. So far as can be foreseen, it will never be to Great Britain's advantage that Northern Ireland should become part of a territory outside His Majesty's jurisdiction. Indeed, it seems unlikely that Great Britain will ever be able to agree to this even if the people of Northern Ireland desired it (Irish Post 1/10)...IRA guerrillas in Maze Prison (Long Kesh) threaten new hunger strike for political status, claiming the British reneged on promises made to end a "fast to the death" last month after 53 days (AP 1/26)... Members of the loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force kill one prison guard and seriously wound another because of their cruel treatment of loyalist prisoners (Republican News 1/10).

Spokesman for Britain's Labor Party accused the Northern Ireland Office and the Rev. Ian Paisley of conniving to create an independent Northern Ireland (Irish Weekly 1/24)...The Government of Ireland again renewed in full Sec-

tion 31 of the Broadcasting Authority Act which bans republicans (those who support a united Ireland) from appearing on radio or television. For the first time since its inception it is being opposed by those involved in implementing it. It is obvious that this **censorship** results in an unbalanced picture of the Irish political scene (Irish People 1/31)...Northern Ireland Secretary of State, Humphrey Atkins will not proscribe the UDA (Belfast Irish News 2/7)...Ian Paisley staged a predawn parade of 500 militant loyalists waving gun licenses aiming to display strength against any move by PM Thatcher to reach agreement with the Irish Republic on unity (AP 2/6)...members of Britain's Parliament suggested that if the British Government wanted to take legal action against Paisley, there were enough provisions in the Statute Book to do so (Belfast Irish News 2/7)... "Much more serious for the Northern people is the absence of any kind of positive political leadership among the loyalist population. At the same time, one gets the feeling that ordinary Unionists would welcome cooperation with their opposite numbers if someone would only find a formula", said Senator Ruairi Brugha after completing a fact-finding mission to the North (Irish Weekly 2/7).

Bobby Sands, Irish Republican leader in H-Block, commences hunger strike (An Phlobacht 3/7). There are presently 4 young men on the hunger strike who are "determined not to waver" when they reach the critical stage (An Phlobacht 3/7)...Thatcher's visit to President Reagan and the conferring of an honorary degree on Thatcher by the Jesuits revived debate in the Capitol and stirred up enormous protest in different forms which shook the Jesuits of Georgetown University and was well noticed by the Reagan Administration (Catholic News 3/5)...London Times to expand coverage on Northern Ireland as it is the most important political and social problem which Britain and the Irish face (London Times 3/81)...Less than one week before the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, U.S. Rep. **Mario Biaggi** has been assured by a key Reagan Administration official that there are no plans to change a 19-month embargo on U.S. arms sales to the main police force in Northern Ireland.

THE RHODES SCHOLARSHIP: PASSPORT TO ANGLOTOPIA

Sean Patrick Walsh (N.Y. State Legislature)

The ostensible purpose of the celebrated Rhodes Scholarship is to provide a year of advanced study at Oxford University for a select group of accomplished scholars chosen, for the most part, from among the inhabitants of former British colonies. The actual and chief effect of the Rhodes Scholarship program is to instill in these hand-picked students an exceptionally high regard for things English and to encourage their adoption of the Anglo-Saxon manner.

While foreign travel and study abroad are mind-enriching and an ennobling experience, one must distinguish between programs that foster an appreciation for another culture and those which press assimilation into that culture. There can be no doubt that the Rhodes Scholarship is an example of an

assimilationist program, one that bears especially careful scrutiny by Irish-Americans.

Cecil John Rhodes, the man after whom Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) was named, was an imperialist **par excellence**. He devoted a significant part of his career to swindling black Africans out of their rights to land rich in diamonds and, upon his death, left an estate worth more than 30 million dollars. In his will, he directed that the bulk of this money be used to finance what we know as the famous Rhodes Scholarships.

Each year, thirty-two "lucky" American college graduates receive this highly coveted prize for which thousands competed. Then, after an enjoyable year of study in England, the thirty-two return, invariably flushed with enthusiasm for British institutions and probably just the slightest bit sorry that George Washington was so successful. Moreover, since these freshly dubbed Oxford scholars are high achievers, they take their newly found, or in some cases rekindled, Anglophilia with

them as they climb the ladder to success as doctors, lawyers, or corporate chiefs. Some of them find a ready berth in the **U.S. State Department** where an abiding affection for the English crown is a prerequisite for aspiring American diplomats.

For Irish-Americans the consequences of all this are devastating. The flower of American scholarship judges itself by English standards and the leadership of the American government is predisposed by cultural and educational ties to favor the English point of view, sometimes to the serious detriment of the national interest of the United States. Since the Rhodes Scholarship has not German, French, or other counterpart to equal its prestige, generation after generation of Americans since 1902 has heard English propaganda with an American accent from the lips of some of America's brightest young men and women. Moreover, one need only listen to the affectations of a William F. Buckley, Jr. (who only went to Yale

for God's sake!) to realize that you do not have to be a Rhodes scholar to be a lickspittle of the English.

With all this in mind, it is easy to understand why the cause of Irish freedom has so few allies in the United States. Anti-Catholicism and anti-Irish racial bigotry are the twin obstacles, not only in England, but here in America, as well. Sad to say, many Americans possess an unwarranted reverence for England that not only occludes their comprehension of Irish affairs, but biases them against the French, the Spanish, the Italians or any other national group that was ever at odds with the English.

Until Americans come to grips with this insidious Anglo-American connection and learn to cultivate an independent national identity, the United States is destined to remain in 1984 just as John Quincy Adams described her in 1824: "a cockboat in the wake of a British man of war."

SUPPORT IS NEEDED NOW MORE THAN EVER

Ed McGrath (Co-Chairman, PEC, N.J. State AOH)

It was said that man would never permit another "Holocaust". Well there is one still going on in British-occupied northeast Ireland: the concentration camps of Long Kesh and Armagh; the ghettos of Belfast and Derry; the torture and interrogation centers; the murder of innocent men, women, and children by the occupation forces; and government-supported loyalist gunmen and murderers; the armed camp atmosphere in the streets. No, there is no Swatiska. This time it's a Union Jack that flies. But, the smell of our dead generations and the fear in the children's eyes are the same.

In this New Year, 1981, please make a commitment to help our suffering brothers and sisters in the north and the families of the political prisoners being held in British concentration camps. We must work even harder this year and highlight the issues to the American public. The atrocities and the orgy of sadism which the British are indulging in in northeast Ireland must be stopped.

OUR READERS RESPOND

Dear Sirs:

"I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the fine work of your Political Education Committee. I would also like to acknowledge the value and quality of your newsletter. The work of your committee and its newsletter has gone a long way in raising America's awareness of the tragic political situation in Ireland..."

Sincerely,

Honorable Hamilton Fish, Jr. M.C,

Published by: Rockland County Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Emerald Society, Fire Department of New York City.

P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923

Editor John J. Finucane
Assistant Editor Margaret Matone

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE THE FREE POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER, PLEASE SEND YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO: POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE, POST OFFICE BOX 16, GARNERVILLE, N.Y. 10923. ATTENTION: CIRCULATION DEPARTMENT.

PEC DUBLIN CORRESPONDENT

Barbara

Our Dublin correspondent's true identity is being withheld for reason of safety.

During the past 6 months the Irish Free State's police Special Branch has stepped-up its campaign of mental harassment against Irish Human Rights activists. Of course, the government continues to deny there is any harassment. I will say that since my last report in the PEC Newsletter (Sept. '80) there has been a noticeable decline in physical harassment.

Special Branch police seem to be everywhere watching and just making life miserable. I have been followed to and from work. They watch me from building doorways and automobiles. They follow my bus while returning to my boarding house from work. When I use a public telephone, they will be watching. In fact, they have come into my residence just to see what is going on. If you challenge them as to why they are following you, most likely, you will be taken in for questioning. Sometimes, I feel like I am in Russia. My mail has been tampered with.

A close friend lost his job because he was wearing a H-Block button. The Special Branch (SB) visited his employer. When confronted by his employer and asked to remove the button, he refused and was fired. The SB is constantly taking pictures at the General Post Office in Dublin whenever Human Rights activists are handing out educational material on British atrocities in northeast Ireland. Many of these individuals have subsequently had their homes searched.

As I meet different people, I become more aware of the bitterness between Protestants and Catholics, created and nurtured by the British Government, in Scotland and Wales and the strong resentment many of these people have for the British Government. In Scotland, it is not uncommon to see outbreaks of violence between the Protestants and Catholics, during sporting events.

The H-Block hunger strike which ended December 18, 1980, received tremendous wide-spread support in Ireland. One demonstration in Dublin brought out more than 30,000 supporters. [Ed. Note: There are only 3.5 million people in the Free State] Since that time, there has been a very positive uplifting in support amongst the Irish people for the brothers and sisters in the north. The solution lies in the hands of the Free State Government officials - will they continue to support the status quo, or will they seek justice - the reunification of Ireland? When the hunger strike ended, we were warned not to celebrate as the British Government cannot be trusted. [Ed. Note: That warning was very accurate: On March 1, a second hunger strike commenced.]

Together, we have come a long way in educating the public of Ireland and America. We have reached the point of no return. I ask you to please continue to support the PEC both financial-ly and morally.

FROM THE EDITOR

We have received a number of inquiries as to what the function of the Political Education Committee is. Our committee name states it clearly: **EDUCATION**. The two other major organizations are the Irish Northern Aid and the Irish National Caucus. One raises funds for the dependents of Irish Freedom Fighters in British occupied northeast Ireland and the latter lobbies in Washington for Irish Human Rights. The PEC seeks to educate the American public, government officials, the news media, college students, big business, unions, clergy, and whoever we deem necessary. We seek out the dependable, hard-working individuals from around the United States, in small towns and big cities, who are willing to carry out the PEC's function in their areas.

Has the PEC been successful? After reading the following, make your own decision. What was once a four-person operation in Rockland County, N.Y., is now a national network with thousands of newsletter subscribers in 32 states and overseas, and working committees in 10 states.

Could we be doing more? Definitely! We have several major public relations projects such as media advertising in the making. But they cannot be carried out until we have the necessary funds. With the necessary financing there is no telling how effective we might be. **This is where we look to you** since the PEC depends solely on private donations.

Who makes up the PEC? People from all walks of life —nurses, doctors, policemen, construction-workers, businessmen, lawyers, professors, elected officials, firemen, school teachers...people like yourself. **WHEN WILL YOU BECOME ONE OF US?**

DID YOU KNOW?

Dotty Allen

Ian Paisley was invited to President Reagan's Inauguration by a member of the *Moral Majority*, South Carolina State Senator Bidgen...on December 6, 1981, Pope John Paul II said force can be used to protect human rights...the mother of Garrett Fitzgerald, the leader of Ireland's Fina Gael Party, is an Orangeman...Conor Cruise O'Brien is bitter towards the Catholic Church...on 2/28/81 PM Margaret Thatcher received the *William J. Donovan Award*, named after the late US Army Major General William Donovan who founded the Office of Strategic Services in World War II. Get this, Thatcher received the award for her distinguished service to the democratic process and the cause of freedom. This is what you call: making the bad look good...British actress Anna Lee of ABC-TV's *General Hospital*, who makes her home in California, every St. Patrick's Day proudly displays her symbols of oppression - the Union Jack and God Bless Ulster banners...on 2/27/81 the Jesuits of Georgetown University honored Maggie Thatcher...telephone tapping by the Special Branch is rampant in Ireland. Even Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich, Primate of All Ireland had his phone tapped...in 565 AD an Irish monk named Brendan the Navigator sailed from Ireland and went across the Atlantic to the West Indies and returned to Ireland. Brendan, who is said to have landed in America, wrote a book about his trip called "The Navigatio". Nine hundred years later Christopher Columbus visited Ireland to read St. Brendan's "The Navigatio" before making his trip to discover America...the Irish language arrived in Ireland at least one thousand years before the Anglo-Saxon language arrived in England...the first three Gold Medals ever won by America in the Olympics were won in 1896 by two Irish-Americans, James Connolly and Thomas Burke.

FENIANS INVADE CANADA

Don Hartnett

In the early hours of June 1, 1866, more than 1,200 armed soldiers marched down to the bank of the Niagara River, near Buffalo, where they climbed aboard a variety of canal boats and barges. The officers were in full uniform - uniforms which looked strikingly like those of the recently victorious Army of the Potomac. Enlisted men wore work clothes of many types, but nearly all sported green shirts. By dawn the entire force was across the river, and elements of it had occupied undefended Fort Erie. The Province of Canada had been invaded from American soil.

The leader of the invading column was Colonel John O'Neill, a veteran of eight years in the United States Army in the Civil War. His men were Irish-American Fenians who had been some of the Union's best troops in the Civil War.

O'Neill's crossing at Buffalo was the first of a planned three-pronged invasion of Canada - the other two launching points were to be at Malone, N.Y., and St. Albans, Vermont. The Fenian purpose was to strike a blow at one of England's colonies and to secure a base of operations from which to emancipate Ireland and also annihilate England.

How could a few thousand Fenians expect to overcome a colony the size of Canada? Their hopes rested on the belief that the American Government would not interfere and that the Canadian Irish would join them in their enterprise. At this time, almost a third of the Canadian populace were of Irish descent but, in reality there were no more loyal subjects of the Queen than the Canadian Irish. Meanwhile, O'Neill's troops had occupied the village of Fort Erie and on June 2nd defeated a force of Canadian volunteers at the village of Ridgeway. The misconception of American neutrality became apparent when General Grant visited Buffalo and ordered General Meade to prevent any further incursions into Canada. With this order O'Neill's hopes of reinforcements from the US were dashed and he was forced to return to Buffalo.

There was no attack from the Fenians at Malone but about 1,000 Fenians under Brigadier General Samuel Spear crossed the border from St. Albans and captured several villages. Without local support or reinforcements from the US side he, too, like O'Neill, was forced to return.

Although more than a dozen Fenians were captured and sentenced to death in Canada, all were released in a few months. It is estimated that Fenian losses were eight dead and twenty wounded with similar losses for the Canadians. This futile attack against impossible odds demonstrated Fenian patriotism and zeal, the seeds of which created the Irish Republican Brotherhood movement and the patriots that proclaimed the Republic of Ireland in 1916. [Ed. Note: Many of the descendants of these brave patriots presently reside in Buffalo and Malone, NY and St. Albans, Vermont. How many of them are aware of this proud heritage?]

BOOK REVIEW

Ken Tierney

MONAGHAN COUNTY OF INTRIGUE. BY MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM. ABBEY PRINTERS LTD. (CAVAN, IRELAND). 130 pp. \$6.00 includes postage.

An insight into the political, legal, and religious intrigues in this border area during the period 1968-1979. Brings into question collaboration between high placed government officials of the Free State and England. A collaboration that cost many innocent people their lives or freedom.

For a copy, send \$6.00 (postage included) to the author, Michael Cunningham, Tanatallon, County Donegal, Ireland. Please mention that you read of the book in the PEC Newsletter.

ACTION LETTER

Margaret Parks

Some people question the value of the action letter, because they feel the same people writing all the time has no value. First of all, the amount of mail generated by the action letter increases significantly from one issue to the next. For example: since our last issue, more than 400 names have been added to the mailing list. This, of course, means that more letters will be sent. Secondly, our readers are from all around the country. This reflects a growing concern from around the country and demonstrates increasing Irish-American unity.

It has also be reported, that the Irish question was indeed discussed when PM Thatcher met with President Reagan and Secretary of State, Alexander Haig. This in itself demonstrates the value of letter writing.

As you are aware, a second hunger strike "to the death" was commenced on March 1, 1981, by Bobby Sands because the British Government has since reneged on its promises that ended the first hunger strike. There are presently 4 young men on the present strike demanding full political status. Reliable sources indicate that the first few strikers will be permitted to die before Britain responds to world opinion.

You are asked to write to both President Reagan and the British Ambassador in Washington. Below, for your convenience, is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply **rewrite** on your personal stationery. After writing your letters, please pass on the Action Letter to your family and friends so that they too can write. **Remember**, there is great value to writing.

address _____

date _____

Honorable Ronald Reagan
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Ambassador
British Embassy
3100 Massachusetts Ave.
Washington, D.C.

Dear

I fully support the hunger strikers and the blanket protestors in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh and Armagh Womens Prison in British occupied northeast Ireland and their demand for political status.

As you are aware, most of these young men and women have been convicted by special one-judge, non-jury courts based on the evidence of confessions made under duress.

I respectfully request, that you pass my strong sentiments on to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Sincerely,

signature

NEW YORK - NEW JERSEY AREA

The A.O.H. is holding a Dinner Dance on May 8, 1981, at the Astorian Manor, 25-22 Astoria Boulevard, Astoria, N.Y. The Cocktail hour will be from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Dinner will be served immediately afterward, and dancing will continue until 2:00 a.m. to music by Noel Kingston and his orchestra. Our guests of Honor will be Teddy Gleason, President, International Union I.L.A., Frank Durkan, Esq., Fr. Maurice Burke

and a guest from Ireland. Other special guest will be Hon. Mario Biaggi, Jack Connolly, National President, A.O.H., U. S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato, Edward Thompson, President, Emerald Society, Fire Department, N.Y.C., Hon. Hamilton Fish, Jr., Hon. Sean Patrick Walsh, and many more. Tickets are \$30.00 each, table of ten \$300.00. For reservations, please call: (914) 735-9500, (516) 223-1034, (212) 796-0908 or (212) 829-8034. Please mention that you read about the Dinner Dance in the PEC Newsletter.

POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS

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