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## American Irish Newsletter - June 1980

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

# NEWSLETTER

JUNE—1980

Rockland County A.O.H., P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE EMERALD SOCIETY, FIRE DEPT., NEW YORK CITY.  
THE PEC ACKNOWLEDGES THEIR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE  
PUBLICATION OF THIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER.

## NEWS BITS

## BRITISH KILL 9 YEAR OLD CHILD JOHN J. FINUCANE

British army armored vehicle intentionally ran down and killed 9 year old Hugh Maguire (Republican News 2/16)... William McAteer murdered by loyalist gunmen (Republican News 2/2)... John Morrow, 35, father of 2, murdered by pro-British para-militaries (Republican News 2/14)... Loyalist gunmen murder Brendan McLoughlin of the Republican News Service (Irish People 3/8). Who cares about the Catholics?

There is increased evidence of *major* disillusionment among soldiers who have served in the north of Ireland about the British army's role in Ireland (Credo TV 2/16). Look for a British withdrawal due to IRA pressure... Four IRA volunteers serving life in England *again* stated that they are guilty of the Guildford bombings for which 4 innocent people are serving life. One of those framed, Guiseppe Conlon (54) died in prison (Britain's Guardian 3/1).

Senator Kennedy and 13 other Irish American political figures called for Britain to "reverse its long standing policy of permitting the Protestant majority to veto every reasonable proposal that could lead to peace". The group strongly came down on the side of a reunified Ireland (Washington 3/14). Have they finally gotten the message and stopped blaming the IRA for blocking the road to peace?... The government of the Irish Republic has welcomed as "helpful and constructive" the statement by Kennedy (AP 3/16)... U.S. policy has been not to get involved unless requested by the Irish or British Governments. *Will Carter be his own man?*... Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey asked the French Government to help persuade Britain to bring forward proposals for peace through a united Ireland (Paris, LeMonde 3/80). When will the leaders of the Irish and British Governments and the Irish Republican Army sit down and talk?

London—Preaching at an ecumenical service here Cardinal Tomas O'Fiaich, Primate of All Ireland, described "desires" for a united Ireland as "actual and legitimate" (Irish Echo 3/29)... The Church of Ireland (Protestant) Archbishop-elect of Armagh, the Most Rev. Dr. John Armstrong, has said the only long-term solution to the problem of violence is "a federal, or united Ireland". He reiterated his willingness to talk to the Provisional IRA (Irish Echo 3/29). Will the British Government learn from him?

American public officials should concentrate their attention on the peaceful effort to unite Ireland by convincing Britain to declare its support for a *united Ireland* (Daily News 3/17)... Bishop Frank Rodimer of the Diocese of Paterson, New Jersey, commended the work of the Political Education Committee, Ancient Order of Hibernians of Passaic County for speaking out in a clear manner against the injustice suffered by Catholics in Northern Ireland (Today 3/16)... Congressman Biaggi has called upon the House Foreign Affairs Committee to conduct hearings on House Concurrent Resolution 122 which calls upon the British Government to embark upon a new peace initiative for Northern Ireland. There are now 100 members of Congress co-sponsoring the resolution (Washington 3/24)... Speaking in New York City, Michael Mullem, general secretary for Ireland's 187,000 member Irish Transport and General Workers Union, called for an end to partition and the reunification of Ireland. "My union and the labor movement in Ireland are totally opposed to violence, but we understand why it happens and why it has happened in every generation and will continue to happen as long as partition exists".

## CARTER NEEDS IRISH-AMERICAN VOTE

JOHN J. FINUCANE

*President Carter needs the Irish-American vote (10,000,000) if he is to be reelected.* Those were the words of Stephen Aiello, Chairman of the President's Ethnic Committee Advisory, when he met with leaders of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Emerald Society Fire Department of New York City, and the Washington-based Irish-American lobby, the Irish National Caucus.

Leaders of the various ethnic groups in America met with President Carter on April 11, 1980, at the White House. The Political Education Committee, has been advised by Ed Thompson, President of the Emerald Society, (FDNY), that it was made very clear to Mr. Carter that he must speak out against Human Rights violations by the British in northern Ireland. Mr. Thompson went further to remind the President of his 1976 campaign promise and presented him with a list of *demands* which included that he immediately speak out against the British occupation of northern Ireland, and that he *publicly support the reunification of Ireland*. (Ed. note: the PEC and the Irish Justice Committee [IJC], of the Emerald Society, which have a common membership, have been working together to bring the truth about Northern Ireland to the attention of the American public.

Mr. Thompson also stated that Mr. Aiello selected the above organizations to represent the Irish-American community because they are *activist* organizations about whom Carter is concerned. This concern emanates from you, the letter writers, and from the dedication of the members of the PEC, the IJC, and the INC that has brought this pressure to bear on President Carter.

Letter writers: Organized letter-writing campaigns are most effective. Do not be discouraged because you may not receive a response to your letters. Be persistent! Be assured that your views are taken into account. These letters serve as a warning to all government officials that the Irish-American must be taken seriously. The April 11th meeting is proof of that.

### **IRISH-AMERICAN UNITY (EMERALD SOCIETY FDNY) FRANK O'ROURKE**

These days we hear of our leaders espousing Human Rights for all peoples of the world. Freedom, Liberty and Social Justice are the most noble aims of a truly civilized society. Without meaningful input from all people, the cause of Human Rights is lost.

It is this writer's opinion that when people fail to support and encourage one another towards a common goal of social justice, negative secular attitudes are allowed to develop, with each one concerned only for himself. Has this happened to some degree in our Irish community? Has selfish secularism crept into some quarters and held Irish people back from contributing their full potential to become dynamic forces in an interacting free society? Let each Irish person become an Uplifting Positive Person to our own in promoting Irish causes, Irish welfare, Irish culture, and Irish justice, both here and abroad.

We must admit we have learned much or at least observed much from organized minority groups in the U.S. Have not such groups demonstrated time and time again that when they speak out as a bloc, many people and leaders listen with sympathy and many times accede to their demands. Why not the Irish-Americans?

So now we come down to the bountiful resources that our Irish people are blessed with, be it keen intellects or material wealth, if we just collectively coordinate such blessings in concert to promote Irish benevolence, then who can beat us. But when are we going to recognize this *Golden Rule* and fully live by it?

### **Political Education Committee FOURTH ANNUAL DANCE**

**Saturday, June 7, 1980 at 9 P.M.**

**Knights of Columbus Hall, Maple Ave., New City, N.Y.  
(1 block south of Clarkstown Town Hall)**

**Tommy Dunne and his band**

**Free Open Bar**

**Hors d'oeuvres**

**Donation \$12.50 per person**

**\$125.00 per table of 10**

**AS USUAL THE PEC GUARANTEES A GREAT TIME FOR ALL**

Reservations are limited. For tickets call: (914) 947-1241; (914)-728-9880; (914) 947-1460 and (914) 354-3586 or write to the Political Education Committee. Make your reservations early.

## OUR READERS RESPOND

The PEC welcomes comments of any nature from our readers. Below is one of the many comments we have received.

“Your newsletter is always welcome here. I wish every American could get a copy and learn the truth about Britain’s illegal occupation of Ireland”

Thomas Garvey  
Freedom for All Ireland Committee  
Monmouth County, N.J., A.O.H.

## CANDIDATES WHO SPEAK OUT

DAN MEEHAN

Assemblyman Sean Patrick Walsh (82nd AD Bronx, N.Y.), Hempstead, N.Y. Town Supervisor Alphonse D’Amato (candidate for NYS Republican Party nomination for US Senate), and Rockland County, N.Y. Legislator Eugene Grogan, candidate for N.Y.S. Assembly 96th AD, appearing before *mixed* audiences, have publicly condemned Human Rights violations by the British in Northern Ireland, called for the reunification of Ireland and called for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from that part of Ireland. Their statements were made before political and fraternal organizations and witnessed by this writer.

We urge our readers to advise us of any other candidates for *state* and *federal* office who do the same. Please forward the candidates’ statements, date and where said. We are particularly interested in the names of candidates who do not restrict their statements to Irish-American audiences only.

## OPINION

BETTY KELLY

In Geneva at the recent United Nations Human Rights Commission meeting the British attempted to condemn the Soviet Union for its treatment of the dissident scientist Dr. Sakharov. The Soviets, in reply, accused Britain of wrong doing in Northern Ireland and advised Britain to examine its own conscience before criticizing others. (*Ed. note: this is exactly what Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal [N.Y.] warned the U.S. Government of in his 1977 report “Human Rights in Northern Ireland”.*)

Our own State Department condemns the Soviet Union for its intervention in Afghanistan and censures South Africa for its denial of Human Rights, yet, ignores the repressive legislation and proven gross violations of Human Rights in Northern Ireland by the British Government. A double standard that can be used by our enemies to destroy U.S. credibility and effectiveness as leaders in world affairs.

It is this kind of hypocritical double standard thinking that allows the British Administration to effectively veto any development toward Irish Unity. By guaranteeing continued support the artificial loyalist majority in an *illegally* created state and by carefully planned campaigns of distortion and propagandawherby they project themselves as the peace keepers, they manage to continue their occupation.

Is it any wonder that Moscow is not averse to exploiting Ulster for its own East-West ideological reasons? During the 10 years of war in Ulster, while our State Department has been careful to avoid offending the British, the Soviets have not just sat idly by. It would be a pity to make Northern Ireland a pawn in big power politics.

## NIXON’S GHOST

MARK G. BARRETT

One of the common governmental abuses of power during the Watergate era has returned to haunt the Irish neighborhoods of Queens.

Mrs. Olive McKeon, an Irish-born grandmother, has been incarcerated indefinitely for refusing to cooperate with a Federal Grand Jury investigation of alleged gun-running to Northern Ireland.

It should be emphasized that Mrs. McKeon has *not* been charged, indicted, tried, or convicted of any crime. She is merely failing to cooperate with the investigation which is focusing on her friends and relatives in the Irish-American community. In short, she has refused to play the role of “informer”.

Unfortunately, since she is not accused, she has none of the constitutional rights afforded criminal defendants. Like the “Fort Worth Five” in 1972, she can be held for the entire 18 month term of the Grand Jury and then re-incarcerated by successor juries *ad infinitum*.

The Nixonian law in question is 28 U.S.C. 1826(a) and we urge you to contact your Senators and Congressmen to have it amended to limit the length of the confinement and to grant “witnesses” like Mrs. McKeon the rights afforded common criminals.

## SPREADING THE WORD

PEG MATONÉ

The Political Education Committee of Rockland County sponsored a forum concerning Human Rights in Northern Ireland, on February 29 at Rockland Community College. Panelists who discussed various aspects of the Northern Ireland situation included: Dr. David Lowry, professor of law at Pace University; New York State Assemblyman Sean Patrick Walsh; and attorney Martin Galvin, spokesperson for Irish Northern Aid. Among the interested audience were several Rockland County Judges who expressed their amazement at hearing of the violations of Human Rights in the judicial system practiced against the minority in northern Ireland. A question and answer period followed the talks. Chairing the forum were PEC members Dan Meehan and Peg Matone.

The PEC of Orange County, NYAOH, chaired by Charles Bohan, also held a forum. This took place in Monroe, NY, on March 7, with Dr. Lowry, PEC legal staff, and Ken Tierney, Chairman PEC, Westchester County, NYAOH and attorney Martin Galvin participating. A large crowd was in attendance, indicating the rising concern of Irish-Americans over the lack of progress in arriving at a just solution to the crisis in northern Ireland.

Since our last newsletter, PEC members have been very active *spreading the word* in different parts of the country, via radio programs, lectures, and newspaper articles. Special credit must go to the PECs of the North Jersey American-Irish League; Division 1, Passaic County, NJAOH; Orange and Rockland Counties, NYAOH and Pompano Beach, Fla.

The PEC has completed another informational mailing to all members of the US Senate and Congress, and to the top 100 newspapers across the nation. In the past, these mailings have generated informational requests from both newspapers and schools.

*Congratulations are in order* to Ray and Anita O'Connor who are in the process of forming another PEC in Florida, to James P. Shannon who has formed a PEC AOH, in San Diego, California, and to the Allen Family and the PEC in Saugerties, N.Y.

## ACTION LETTER

MARGARET PARKS

Our last action letter called upon Ronald Reagan and George Bush to include Northern Ireland in their campaign activities. Their responses are: Ronald Reagan—it is not for the United States to interfere, urges the extradition of “political” prisoners suspected of terrorist acts. It should be noted that Reagan said nothing about British Human Rights violations. George Bush has no position.

From the article “Carter needs the Irish-American vote” it is quite obvious that if we are united we can educate the candidates so that they will respond favorably. We now call upon you to write to both Carter and Reagan. Below is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply rewrite on your own stationery. Please reproduce this action letter for distribution to your friends, family, etc.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Honorable James Carter  
President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Ronald Reagan  
9841 Airport Blvd.  
Suite 1430  
Los Angeles, Ca. 90045

Dear Mr. Carter,

Dear Mr. Reagan,

I again call upon you to immediately include in your campaign activities, public statements on the following: call for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from Northern Ireland; condemning British Human Rights violations in Northern Ireland; the right of all the people of all Ireland to self-determination.

Sincerely,  
signature

PLEASE DO YOUR SHARE

**IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY RECEIVE THE PEC NEWSLETTER BY MAIL AND WISH TO HAVE IT SENT TO YOUR HOME (FREE), PLEASE FORWARD YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO THE POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE, P.O. BOX 16, GARNERVILLE, N.Y. 10923.**