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## American Irish Newsletter - June 2002

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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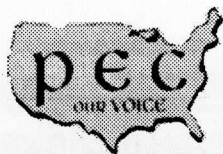
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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 27, Number 6

June 2002

## Black Propaganda Diverts Attention from Peace Process

(BELFAST – April 23) – THERE was bipartisan condemnation of what the House International Relations Committee staff members deemed to be evidence of IRA links with international global terrorism and the drug trade during oversight hearings on Capitol Hill today.

The committee heard claims that a number of international armed groups, including the IRA, were in the Colombia between 1998 and 2001. No evidence was presented to back the claims, which are being seen as part of an effort by US officials to justify further financial and military support for the Bogota regime.

Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams** said he had been told of pressure from British officials in Washington for the hearings. "It is clear that it is in the interest of somebody in the British government that this goes ahead," he said. The Sinn Fein leader added he was worried at the way "anti-peace process elements in Britain and Ireland have seized upon the hearings to damage the peace process itself."

*Investors' Business Daily* reported a British pundit's claiming that the hearings would cost Sinn Fein votes in the Republic's May 17 elections (*See Action Request, Page 8*).

Senior members on both sides of the committee questioned the validity and premise of the hearings. More than one member wondered aloud whether the hearings were aimed at further funding US military intervention in Colombia rather than establishing the reasons three Irishmen were arrested in Colombia last Aug.

Democrat **William Delahunt** said, "Unfortunately, we have been presented with a report short on facts and  
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## Sinn Fein Increases Vote in Three Constituencies

(DUBLIN – May 18) – SINN Fein increased its vote in the South's May 17 general elections, and Fianna Fail could be heading for an overall majority. Sinn Fein showed the largest percentage increase of any party in the three constituencies where voters cast their ballots electronically--Dublin North, Dublin West, and Meath. Manual counting in the other constituencies begins today.

In Meath, Sinn Fein almost tripled the party's vote but lost to Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, with three seats for Fianna Fail and two seats for Fine Gael.

In Dublin West, Sinn Fein increased its vote from 5 percent to 8 percent. Labor Party candidate **Joan Burton** kept her seat in that constituency.

In Dublin North, prominent Fine Gael figure and former Minister **Nora Owen** proved a major casualty. Fianna Fail regained the seat that former Minister **Ray Burke** gave up when he resigned amid claims of corruption. Running in a constituency the party had not contested in the last general election, Sinn Fein won 3.1 percent of the vote. Green Party leader **Trevor Sargent** held his seat, and Labor also retained its seat.

Polling stations were open from 7.30 AM to 10.30 PM, and about 65 percent of eligible voters turned out.

Following is an explanation of the proportional representation electoral system in the South, published May 17 in RM Distribution.

The Proportional Representation with Single Transferable Vote is the system of voting in the Republic. It contrasts with the plurality system in which only one candidate represents the constituency. The plurality system can distort election results. For example, in Britain in 1997 Labor won 63 percent of the seats with 43 percent of the vote.

In contrast, Ireland uses multi-seat constituencies in which voters rank candidate preferences. To secure election, a candidate must reach or exceed the quota.

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## **Our View: Britain Is Running Scared**

*WE SAW in April in the Investors' Business Daily a feature about the alleged link between the IRA and Colombian guerrillas. The story contained one telling line.*

*It said that Sinn Fein had been slated to win about seven seats in the Republic's May 17 general election but now, what with the IRA cavorting with South Americans, the republican party would likely get one seat.*

*What did this line tell us? That the issue of the three Irish prisoners in Colombia resurfaced in the news just as the Sinn Fein electoral machine was about to steam roll its contenders in someone's hope that the story would roll back that steamroller.*

*Whose wishes? The British state's. The Irish State's. The SDLP's. Unionists'. Who could orchestrate such a smooth black propaganda campaign? Our vote is with the British because they've always been good at it.*

*On top of their skill, they have plenty of motives. They don't want to give in to democracy. They don't want to have to answer to demands for international, independent public inquiries into all the murders of nationalists it has sanctioned over the years. It doesn't want to make good on the Mitchell Agreement. It doesn't want to seriously consider the likelihood of an independent, united Ireland.*

*Perhaps, too, it doesn't want to see loyalists disarm. Why else release UFF killer Johnny Adair when loyalist morale is low? Why else send out Northern Secretary John Reid to mumble something about the IRA's disarming just not being enough?*

*The Colombia propaganda debacle suggests one significant thing: Irish republican politics and the prospect of a united Ireland are the bogeymen that haunt Britain's sleep.*

## **Peace Process Update**

**April 9**

THE IRISH government expresses exasperation that UUP members **Jeffrey Donaldson**, **Martin Smyth**, and **David Burnside's** response to the IRA's placing more arms beyond use. The unionists claim the IRA made the move to boost Sinn Fein's vote in the Republic's May elections.

**April 10**

A poll shows Sinn Fein tipped to win several seats in the Dail in the May elections, including two in Dublin.

**April 16**

First Minister **David Trimble** meets with the paramilitary Loyalist Commission to, he says, to provide "analysis of the current political situation." He says he urges loyalists "to consider fully their position on decommissioning" and to follow the IRA's example by disposing of weapons.

**April 17**

The Red Hand Defenders murder a Catholic taxi driver.

**April 18**

Loyalists fire up to 10 shots and set off blast bombs in north Belfast.

**May 1**

The *Daily Record* reports that SDLP leader **Mark Durkan** has told British Prime Minister **Tony Blair** his party would be unable to compete with Sinn Fein in the elections to the Assembly next year without British assistance. Blair urges his big-business allies to bankroll the party but to give nothing to Sinn Fein.

**May 2**

Facing claims from the Conservative Party that the peace process is "on trial," Northern Secretary **John Reid** tells the House of Commons, "The IRA cease-fire has helped create the basis of trust on which the [Mitchell A]greement was reached and in a sense why so much progress has been made. However, and it is a large however, the hard fact is that four years after the Belfast Agreement, a

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### **American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC**

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## **From the North: Phony Crises Halt Agreement, Equality**

By Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization, Belfast, Northern Ireland*

YET ANOTHER "crisis" has blown up in the peace process, threatening *again* the democratic reform program of the Mitchell Agreement.

Who says there's another crisis? The DUP and the UUP, and their alter egos of terrorism, the UDA and the UVF. The crisis for these groups lies not in the impending failure of the Agreement but in the possibility that it might be implemented.

Throughout their history, unionists have needed a crises to justify their political existence, so they are trying to conjure up one to save themselves from the political scrap heap in a peaceful Ireland.

Four years have passed since the Agreement, yet only a pale reflection of its reform program has been implemented. Unionists have achieved, with the cooperation of the British government—which also wants a slowing-down and dilution of reform—much of what they have sought.

What are unionists griping about? For the majority of them--the honest bunch--the crisis is the Agreement itself. They just can't abide its equal treatment provisions. These are **Ian Paisley's** DUP rejectionist battalion and a growing number of anti-Agreement snipers behind UUP leader **David Trimble's** back.

They are honest because they do not disguise their willingness to risk throwing the North into a stepped-up conflagration rather than accept the Agreement. Then, there is a would-be respectable section of unionism that knows it is impolitic to admit to being so openly and crudely racist. It has had to come up with a different reason for being in a state of crisis. According to them, it's down to the IRA and

republicans in general. Republicans threaten the peace, they allege.

How are the republicans doing that when the IRA has been on cease-fire for more than seven years and is putting away its weapons?

Independent International Commission on Decommissioning head Canadian General **John de Chastelain**, has described the IRA's latest act of decommissioning as being "substantial." All of that is in contradistinction to what the unionist terrorists have been doing.

Recently, British consul **John Reid** has had to declare very reluctantly the UDA's cease-fire to be over, while members of the UVF are going on trial in Scotland charged with "paramilitary related offences"--the acquisition of bomb-making material.

Helpful as ever, Reid has intervened at this time to lend credence to the unionist thesis that there is a crisis because the IRA might be up to something. The Dublin-based *Irish Times* even headlined Reid's plea to Sinn Féin to "dissociate from violence."

In fact, the motive of this pro-unionist madness comes from three elements: a wish to influence the outcome of the South's May 17 general election; a grasping to find a new dodge for slowing down the Mitchell Agreement now that the decommissioning ploy is no longer valid; and trepidation at ongoing rivalry between the UUP and the DUP in the build-up to next year's Assembly elections. In these elections, Trimble, Reid's front-runner in the unionist camp, could be toppled and the UUP taken into the anti-Agreement kraal. This would most likely destroy the stability the British government had

been seeking inside the parameters of watered-down reforms.

While wishing to humor unionists and use their scare antics to help it achieve the first two elements, at the same time Britain will apply the brake to avoid sacrificing the Trimbleites.

What's at the heart of dishonest unionists' case for the anti-Agreement hysteria? These: three republicans arrested in Colombia; documents stolen from the PSNI/RUC; IRA intelligence on top Tories; and claims that the IRA is acquiring guns.

With regard to the first point, the unionists are deliberately ignoring the outcome of the Inquiry of the House International Relations Committee (HIRC) of Congress into the Colombia affair (*see Page 1, this Newsletter*).

Second, the Castlereagh thieves have not been identified. Almost everyone, including unionists, believes it was an inside job. Police have yet to establish a republican connection.

Third, anyone could get this outdated information by simply reading the autobiography of former Tory Prime Minister **John Major**. While that was going on, the present Tory shadow consul was in a pub in Crossmaglen, so-called IRA bandit country, drinking Guinness with the locals and telling them that no part of Ireland was British. Enough saod about targeting Tories.

Finally, the NIO itself has poured cold water on the allegation of IRA re-arming. That spin came from British intelligence via its mouthpiece, the *London Daily Telegraph*.

All of these alarms are a threadbare backing for a crisis, but they are enough to divert public attention from the brutal fact that the Mitchell Agreement remains on hold.



## Newsbits

COISTE na n-Iarchimí today condemned the Police Service of Northern Ireland's arrest of former prisoners and members of staff on April 30. It also condemned the raids on premises of an ex-prisoner group and a trauma center in Derry for ex-prisoners. Coiste na n-Iarchimí is the coordinating organization for republican ex-prisoners and their families throughout Ireland. Police used stun grenades; broke down doors to get into offices despite the availability of keys; showed no consideration to the children; held family members in rooms in their houses for the duration of searches; seized articles with no concern for the confidential nature of the contents; and detained people for long periods without asking specific questions. The raids were a stark reminder that emergency powers have no role in achieving a just peace in Ireland. (*Pat Finucane Center* 4/4/02)

Relatives of Roseanne Mallon, whom the UVF murdered in 1994, have accused the RUC and British army of planning the murder and assisting her killers. The publication of details of a secret RUC report reveals that six British soldiers were hidden at the scene and were monitoring the house with a hidden camera system when the UVF murdered the 76-year-old woman. The report reveals that the soldiers were ordered not to respond to the sound of gunfire. The team that investigated her murder was never informed that the soldiers had been present at that time. The report reveals footage recorded by the camera was also kept from the team, even though the killers would have been recorded on film, and up to 14 hours of tapes from the day before the murder vanished and British army logbooks were "unavailable." Sinn (*RM Dist.* 4/12/02)

Lawyers for the British government have considered a defense of "sovereign immunity" against civil litigation over the 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombs if the British government is blamed for the attack, according to a report in the *Sunday Tribune*. British lawyers would take a very different approach, had individual members of the Crown forces been named in legal proceedings in the Dublin courts. If named British soldiers or RUC men were alleged to have assisted or taken part in the attacks, they would have been disowned by the British government, which would insist that the bombings "could not be regarded as an aspect of State activity." The British lawyers would have claimed, instead, that such Crown force members were acting "on a frolic of their own," as a letter from British Treasury Solicitor's office to the Foreign Office puts it. On the other hand, if the civil action were against the British government, then the defense would be to dispute whether the Dublin courts had jurisdiction over the matter. This would have been a way of introducing the controversial "sovereign immunity." It appears that the British government's plan to disown their own security force members was inspired by the lengthy statement of former RUC officer **John Weir**, in which he revealed that the 1974 bombings were carried out by loyalists who were assisted by British army and RUC officers with the likely knowledge of military and police intelligence. He said that British intelligence was aware of the identities of the bombers within days of the deaths. It was also reported on Sunday that former British agents have told the Irish government they are willing to testify at the tribunal investigating the Dublin and Monaghan bombings in 1974. The agents, who met with Irish officials last week, have promised to

reveal what they know of British Army and intelligence incursions into the 26 Counties. (*RM Dist.* 4/22/02)

The failure of the RUC/PSNI police to investigate threats against Lurgan solicitor Rosemary Nelson before her 1999 murder is to be investigated in the High Court in Belfast, a judge decided yesterday. The Committee on the Administration of Justice, of which Nelson was an executive member, was granted leave by Justice **Kerr** for a judicial review of decisions by Police Ombudsman **Nuala O'Loan** and former Chief Constable Sir **Ronnie Flanagan**. The CAJ is seeking an order quashing the decisions by O'Loan and Sir Ronnie to refuse to disclose relevant documents to them. The CAJ insists O'Loan's and Flanagan's refusals were incompatible with the European Convention of Human Rights. The Ombudsman had failed to give adequate weight to the effect nondisclosure would have on their ability to make meaningful representations on the progress of the investigation and the benefit that could flow from them having sight of the documents, CAJ argued. CAJ also argued that Flanagan erred in law in deciding that "confidentiality" was sufficient reason for nondisclosure and that his provision of documents to the ombudsman absolved him of the responsibility to consider the applicants' request for disclosure. **Paul Magean**, legal officer of the CAJ, said in an affidavit: "I believe the failure to disclose the documents has put us at a disadvantage in respect of the investigation of our complaint." Kerr adjourned the hearing until May 24 to give the respondents time to file replying affidavits. (*RM Dist.* 4/28/02)

## High Court Keeps Killers in Army

(BELFAST – April 17) – THE COMMITTEE on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) today described a High Court ruling that the killers of Peter McBride could stay in the army as adding insult to the injury already inflicted on the McBride family.

Scots Guards **Peter Wright** and **James Fisher** murdered McBride in north Belfast Sept. 4, 1992, when they shot him in the back.

Justice **Brian Kerr** ruled that the decision to retain these two men convicted of the murder of Belfast teenager was not "unreasonable."

The decision follows 10 months of legal wrangling.

"It is inconceivable that in any other state service, employees who had committed murder in the course of their employment would be retained in their employment," said CAJ Director **Martin O'Brien**.

The Guardsmen, while not young by army standards, were hardly "mature, according to Kerr. The judge was willing to overlook the soldiers' lying at their trial about the circumstances of the murder because, he said, this was "understandable."

Nor did Kerr take issue with the Army Secretariat's withholding legal documents from the Army Board. Nor did

Kerr consider that the Army Board, which included General **Mike Jackson** of Bloody Sunday infamy, might be biased towards two of its own.

The two soldiers were among few ever convicted of murder. Britain's decision to grant them release at an extremely early stage in their sentence, combined with the decision to allow them to return to the army, sends entirely the wrong signal to soldiers and police officers, said CAJ.

"It also contrasts starkly with the treatment given by the state to the McBride family whose views have been essentially ignored throughout this process," O'Brien added.

The Belfast-based Relatives for Justice commented in a press statement that Kerr's ruling demonstrated the belief of many nationalists that "in the eyes of the judiciary murdering an innocent nationalist is not seen as doing wrong."

The group added: "In the context of the peace process and supposedly moving toward finding mechanisms of healing, this decision reinforces the grief and hurt of not only the McBride family but all families affected by state violence. For them little has changed...."

**Jean McBride**, Peter's mother, intends to appeal the decision.

## Anniversary Brings Calls for Action

(DERRY – May 7) – FIVE years have passed since the murder of Robert Hamill, three years since the murder of Rosemary Nelson, and 13 years since the murder of Pat Finucane. In these and other cases, there is ample evidence of British collusion with loyalist murderers, but only now Britain is appointing an "international judge" to examine these and other cases—a step far short of the demands for public inquiries into all three cases.

At the same time, evidence continues to emerge that the British have no interest in establishing a just peace. On top of the evidence of collusion, details of a conspiracy to pervert the course of justice are emerging in the Hamill case. The police ombudsman in Northern Ireland has found complete failure within the RUC to prevent the horrific Omagh bombing. In March, the security establishment burgled itself at Castlereagh.

The case of Hamill, whom loyalists murdered under the watchful gaze of the RUC, illustrates Britain's failure to take responsibility for upholding human rights in the North.

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### Press Release

## IAUC Improves Human Rights Web Page

THE IRISH American Unity Conference has updated and revised its Human Rights web page, <http://www.iauc.org/humanrights.htm>. The page contains links to IAUC human rights reports, documents about loyalist murders of nationalists, and IAUC testimony to government bodies responsible for implementing human rights provisions in of the Mitchell Agreement.

The most recent document is *The Good Friday Agreement in 2002: Unmet Promises*, which was issued in conjunction with IAUC's March 2002 lobbying session in Washington, DC.

The IAUC welcomes visitors to the Web page to pass along its contents in any way that might further the goals of peace, justice and human rights.



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replete with speculation and surmise and opinion, much of which I disagree with. This report and other documents have received wide circulation both here and abroad and are quickly being accepted as the position of this committee."

Republican Congressman **Chris Smith** said he had made widespread inquiries "within our intelligence communities" to determine if there was any evidence whatsoever that Sinn Fein or the IRA "has any knowledge of any kind of complicity in the training with the FARC."

"The answer at this point," he said, "has been that there is no evidence whatsoever."

Describing some seven hearings he held on Irish issues, Smith contended that there were "volumes of credible evidence" showing members of the British security forces in Northern Ireland engaging in collusion with loyalists and committing criminal acts.

However, comparing today's proceedings with past hearings, he said that the fundamental difference was a lack of any real evidence to substantiate the claims written by Committee staff members.

"The bottom line to all of this is evidence," said Smith. "The enemies of the peace process are likely to be disappointed in today's hearings because there is no evidence proving any link between Sinn Fein and the IRA and paramilitaries in Colombia."

Facing repeated questioning from Congressman **Peter King**, witness **Asa Hutchinson**, representing the Drug Enforcement Agency, admitted that his agency had no information or evidence whatsoever that the IRA was in any way involved in narcotics. This allegation was a central premise of today's hearings.

Committee chairman **Henry Hyde**, opened his remarks by noting that he accepted Adams's statement that neither Adams nor anyone else in the Sinn Fein leadership were aware that the three men were traveling to Colombia.

"I accept Mr. Adams's statement at face value and ask that it be included in the record," said Hyde. "At this time, we have no information contradicting this statement," he added.

Explaining his decision not to go to the hearing, Adams said he had offered to meet the committee the next time he was in Washington. "My priorities in approaching this important matter have been to defend the peace process, to defend Sinn Fein's essential contribution to it, and to give proper consideration to the plight of the three men presently in detention in Colombia, their right to a fair trial and the anxieties of their families," Adams said.

The Sinn Fein leader said he had received legal advice from the lawyers representing the three men in Colombia. The advice pointed to a history of damaging allegations being made and later retracted, argued that congressional hearings relating to a pending public trial were unprecedented, and said Adams's presence at them could be prejudicial to any possibility of a fair trial.

Adams added that the hearings were not about Ireland but "essentially about the relationship between the USA and Colombia. These matters are for the governments of these two countries."

He said he was satisfied by the IRA's Sept. 19 statement in which it made it clear that it sent no one to Colombia to train or to engage in any military cooperation with any group.

The republican queried some omissions from the report, however. "I am concerned that an account of separate discussions between myself and **Martin McGuinness** and the Investigating Council of the Committee does not appear to have been included in the report," Adams said. "Neither was his assertion to us that British government representatives pressed for the hearing."

In his remarks to the Committee, **Mark Wong**, representing the Bush Administration from the Department of State, emphasized that the Administration's focus "remains on ensuring that there is no current or future cooperation between these two organizations (IRA and FARC)."

In questioning, Wong acknowledged that the Administration "had no evidence whatsoever" that the IRA had breached the terms of its cease-fire. He said that the intelligence they had was that the IRA's cease-fire was intact.

Wong also stated that the Administration believed that Colombia's judicial process "should be allowed to reach their conclusions unhindered by anything we say here today."

The commander in chief of Colombia's armed forces, in his testimony, claimed seven members of the IRA had been helping to train FARC guerrillas in his country. General **Fernando Tapias** told the hearing he did not know if they were acting on their own or on behalf of the IRA. He said two of those arrested were in the "upper echelons" of the IRA.

When King asked why Colombian intelligence had used DUP deputy leader **Peter Robinson** to provide background on one of the three men in

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Colombia, Tapias said that this was a result of Columbia's working with British intelligence.

Colombian intelligence submitted to the hearing Robinson's statement that he considered James Monaghan "as the most important man in the IRA."

King asked Tapias if he were aware that Robinson is a political adversary of Sinn Fein, avowedly against the Mitchell Agreement, and has an arrest record in the North. The general said he was unfamiliar with the name but would research it and provide an answer at a later date.

(continued from Page 1)

If a candidate is elected on the first count, his or her surplus votes—the amount by which he or she exceeds the quota—are distributed among the candidates who remain. The distribution of this surplus is calculated by examining the second preferences on the candidate's ballot papers.

The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated first. These votes are then distributed to the other candidates on the basis of second preferences. When the second preference is for a candidate who has already been elected or eliminated, the "next available preference" on the ballot paper is used to determine its destination. The distribution of surpluses and the votes of eliminated candidates continues until all of the seats in the constituency are filled. Elected representatives vote for the prime minister on the first day of the new government, and the prime minister then forms the government.

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incident at a known flash point. They did not intervene during the attack. They did not administer first aid. They did not declare a crime scene, collect forensic evidence, or take statements—even though there were witnesses present and the attackers remained at the scene for nearly an hour. (Police made no arrests were made for two weeks, even though they knew some of the suspects.)

No one has been convicted of Robert's murder.

In May 2000, the Belfast coroner decided not to hold an inquest because he could not guarantee the safety of witnesses.

International pressure for a public inquiry has built up, and the demand for the inquiry became a feature of the negotiations to save the Mitchell Agreement. Nationalist parties and the Irish government have pressed for inquiries into the murders of Hamill, Nelson, the solicitor who

Adams said US support for the peace process remained strong. "I hear people saying that a lot of people walked away from us in the USA," he said. "They haven't."

He said he understood US concern about drug trafficking, which "Sinn Fein is very publicly and resolutely opposed to," he added.

Adams said: "We have been involved in the USA for the last nine or 10 years. We have built up a huge raft of support which we have used for the benefit for this peace process and we would not jeopardize that for anyone."

## Bloody Sunday Relatives Walk Out

RELATIVES of the Bloody Sunday dead and wounded staged a 24-hour walk out at the Saville Inquiry May 15 over the screening of RUC police witnesses.

The officers were present when British soldiers opened fire on a civil rights demonstration in Derry in 1972. The High Court recently upheld a Saville Inquiry ruling allowing witnesses to the killings to be screened from public view.

The Saville Inquiry is now allowing RUC witnesses to give their evidence from inside a large wooden box from which only the tribunal, its staff, and lawyers for the interested parties can view them.

The inquiry ruling followed police witnesses' claim that their safety would be placed at risk if they showed their faces. Although the witnesses are screened from public view, their names are made public.

represented his family and whom loyalists killed in 1999, and Finucane, a solicitor whom loyalists murdered in 1989.

The British government has offered to appoint an international judge to investigate all three cases, along with three cases of interest to loyalists, presumably in the interests of fairness. Britain has not announced the terms of reference of this judge, but the appointment in April appears to be an attempt to stall or prevent public inquiries in cases that could embarrass the RUC, now known as the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

The families of Hamill, Nelson, and Finucane demand open judicial hearings with full disclosure and the power to summon police witnesses. They will not settle for further secrecy, and they will not allow their grievances to be reduced to bargaining counters (*See Action Request, Page 8*).

For further information, contact Robert Hamill Justice Campaign, C/O CA, 1 Camden Park Road, London NW1 9AU or Roberthamill1@aol.com.



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## **Action Requests**

*Please take the actions recommended below.  
Mention that you are a PEC member.*

Contact: Prime Minister **Tony Blair**, 10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA, United Kingdom

Contact: Secretary of State for Northern Ireland **John Reid**, Northern Ireland Office, Block B, Castle Buildings, Belfast BT4 3SG, Northern Ireland

**Message:** I urge you to establish immediately an independent public inquiry into the 1997 loyalist murder of Robert Hamill. Hamill was murdered in plain view of the RUC and near an RUC station. An immediate, independent public inquiry will demonstrate to Northern nationalists Britain's interest in establishing justice along with peace. Failure to do so will suggest a cover up and, worse, disregard for human rights.

Contact: President **George Bush**, The White House, Washington, DC 20500, tele. 202-456-1111; fax 202-456-2461; email [president@whitehouse.com](mailto:president@whitehouse.com)

**Message:** I urge you to support the Irish peace process by endorsing the democratic participation of Sinn Fein in the South's May elections. I urge you to use your good offices to ensure that side issues, such as the three Irishmen imprisoned in Colombia, do not derail the peace process.

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cease-fire is not enough. If there is to be confidence that there is a wholehearted commitment to exclusively peaceful means, we need to see an end to paramilitary attacks, to targeting, and to any other such preparations. In a sense, we all truly need to have the sense that the war is over." Blair announces with Chancellor **Gordon Brown** new borrowing powers for the Assembly, which could pump billions of pounds into its budget.

### **May 4**

Irish Marketing Survey figures for the *Irish Independent* give Irish Prime Minister **Bertie Ahern's** Fianna Fail party 48 percent of the backing of the electorate, probably enough to secure more than half the parliamentary places under the proportional representation system of polling in the May 17 election.

### **May 5**

Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams** meets the UVF's **David Ervine** to discuss loyalist concerns about the peace process. Pointing to recent allegations about IRA activity, Ervine says, "We are in a substantial and serious crisis that both the government and the media are playing down." Adams has interrupted general election campaigning in the South for the meeting. Speaking en route to Belfast for the exchange, Adams describes the recent stories about the IRA as "allegations" or "myth" and said they have a common source—British intelligence.

### **May 6**

Sinn Fein's election manifesto calls on the next Irish government to draft a Green Paper on Irish unity. There are also demands for the appointment of a Minister of State with responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Mitchell Agreement and representation for politicians from the North in Leinster House.