



Sacred Heart  
UNIVERSITY

Sacred Heart University  
**DigitalCommons@SHU**

---

American Irish Newsletter

The Irish American Community Collections

---

2-2001

## American Irish Newsletter - February 2001

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish\\_ainews](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish_ainews)



Part of the [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), and the [Political Science Commons](#)

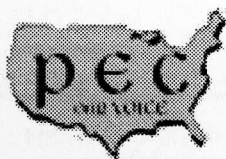
---

### Recommended Citation

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - February 2001" (2001). *American Irish Newsletter*. Paper 13.

[http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish\\_ainews/13](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish_ainews/13)

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the The Irish American Community Collections at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Irish Newsletter by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact [ferribyp@sacredheart.edu](mailto:ferribyp@sacredheart.edu).



# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

*Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation*

Volume 26, Number 2

February 2001

## Key Republicans Look to Make Peace a Priority for Bush in 2001

**KEY IRISH** American Irish Republican figures in Congress are lobbying the Bush Administration to ensure that the Irish peace process remains central to foreign policy.

At least three key House figures from New York—**Jim Walsh**, chairman of Friends of Ireland; **Ben Gilman**, chairman of the International Relations Committee; and **Peter King**—drafted a letter to President **George Bush** in Jan. to remind him of his explicit commitment to the peace process in the Republican election platform. The letter urged Bush to keep the peace process high on the

foreign policy agenda.

Chairwoman of the National Association of Irish American Republicans **Susan Davis** expresses confidence that the Administration would continue what she acknowledges was President **Bill Clinton**'s important role in the Irish peace process. Davis says officials close to Secretary of State **Colin Powell** are well briefed on the issues and are determined to maintain this country's role in the peace process.

The Republican manifesto, approved at the party convention last Aug.,

provided for the possible appointment of a special envoy to the North; called the Mitchell Agreement a "healing document;" and urged the "complete implementation" of the Patten Commission's recommendations on police reform in the North.

On the role of President **George Bush**, the manifesto says: "The next President will use the prestige and influence of the US to help the parties achieve a lasting peace. If necessary, he will appoint a special envoy to help facilitate the search of lasting peace, justice and reconciliation."

## Did the British Poison Their Political POWs?

By Anne Cadwallader

(Reprinted from *Ireland on Sunday*, Dec. 10, 2000)

IT WAS A COLD, bright Oct. morning in 1974, and the smoke was beginning to clear from the burning Nissan huts at Long Kesh internment camp. Republican internees and sentenced prisoners were exhausted but still engaged in hand-to-hand combat with heavily-armed British soldiers.

The previous day, Oct. 15, the inmates had set the camp on fire in a row that had begun over two missing pancakes from the daily food supply to the republican sentenced prisoners' compound. The flames blazed through the night.

On the football pitch where the battle was raging Oct. 16, the soldiers suddenly fell back. Exhilarated, the prisoners began to believe they had won a temporary respite from the retaliatory beatings that were sure to come. It was then that the poison was dropped on them from helicopters flying so close to the ground that the prisoners below could see the military pilots sitting at their controls.

The small cans fell around them like confetti. Before they hit the ground, plumes of the previously-unknown CR gas began flowing out as they scattered into small, smoking mini-clusters. Then the gas hit the prisoners' faces.

"My skin started burning so badly I fell to the ground and put my head into a puddle of dirty water. It was like my face was on fire. Men around me were choking, spitting and vomiting," says ex-prisoner **Paddy McBride**, remembering that morning.

(continued on Page 5)

### INSIDE

Peace Process Update .....	2
From the North .....	3
Newsbits .....	4
American Irish History .....	5
In English, Irish, Play Recreates Hunger Strikes .....	6
Letters to the Editor (continued) .....	7
Action Requests .....	8



## Our View:

### *The North is a Military Playground*

*NATIONALISTS have been saying it all along: the North is Britain's military training ground. Here is a population that Britain has long thought to be inferior to its own, so where better to test CR gas, rubber bullets plastic bullets, various forms of electronic spying? Where better to try out a few counterinsurgency tactics? Name a better place for target practice? (See Ann Cadwallader's and Robert Heatley's stories, and Newsbits.)*

*Hard feelings aside, evidence of Britain's exploiting Irish people in the name of military research gives lie to Britain's claims that 1) it ever fought a civil, rather than a political, conflict in the North; 2) it respects the people of the North as human beings with the right to life, etc.; 3) its military establishment can think of the North and its people as anything but military assets; 4) that there is hope for fair play from British policy makers responsible for implementing the Mitchell Agreement.*

*As Heatley points out, the past 30 years in the North informs the context in which the peace process is currently languishing. Emerging evidence of British chicanery makes a strong case in favor of continued international involvement in the peace process. We must insist that President George Bush further the work that President Bill Clinton and his Administration began. The PEC urges members to contact the President and insist that he continue the peace process (See Action Requests, Page 8.). Recently-discovered evidence of British brutality in the North must become artifacts of a completed.*

## Renew your subscription to the *Newsletter* today.

### **American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC** *A non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization founded 1975*

National President ..... John J. Finucane  
Membership/Subscription Coordinator ..... Loretta Fitzgibbons  
Recording Secretary ..... Kathy Regan  
Financial Secretary ..... Tom Sheridan  
Newsletter Editor ..... Sandy Carlson  
Webmaster ..... Edward Dzitko

#### Newsletter Mailing Address:

Five Woods Way, Woodbury, CT 06798

PEC & Newsletter Email Address: [aipec@homestead.com](mailto:aipec@homestead.com)

#### National Headquarters

P.O. Box 102, Blauvelt, NY 10913-9915

(845) 947-2726 Fax (845) 947-2599

PEC Web Site Address: <http://aipec.homestead.com>

Supported in part by the Emerald Society,  
NYC Fire Department

## Peace Process Update

**December 13**

SINN FEIN President **Gerry Adams** congratulates **George Bush** on the latter's presidential election victory, saying, "I am confident that he and his Administration will play a strong and positive role in the Irish peace process." Adams adds, "In writing to me some months ago, Gov. Bush confirmed his strong personal interest in the peace process and his commitment to moving it forward."

**December 15**

Sinn Fein's court challenge of First Minister **David Trimble's** sanctions against the republican party opens today. Sinn Fein claims in court that the Ulster Unionist Party leader and first minister's actions constitute political discrimination. Leaders of the loyalist paramilitary UDA and UVF issue a joint statement declaring that their feud, which has claimed seven lives, is over.

**December 18**

A man in his 20s is found shot dead in North Belfast. Loyalists are responsible.

**December 19**

Sinn Fein engages in negotiations with the British and Irish governments in an effort to break the peace process impasse. Adams says Britain must put an end to the UUP's ultimatums and begin demilitarization. He calls on Dublin to bring Britain before the International Court for breach of the Mitchell Agreement.

**December 21**

Talks between Sinn Fein and the British and Irish governments end without a breakthrough.

**December 22**

Head of the decommissioning body Gen. **John de Chastelain** says he is anxious to explore with the IRA its proposals for putting arms beyond use and what role the decommissioning body will have in that process. The body says it is still possible to achieve paramilitary

*(continued on Page 8)*

**STATE DIRECTORS:** Jack O'Brien, 11109 Belton St., Upper Marlboro, MARYLAND 20772-(301)336-5167; Leah Curtin, Hibernian Life, 790 Cleveland Ave., Ste. 221, St. Paul, MINNESOTA 55116-(612)690-3888; Kathy Regan, 7 Balint Dr., Apt 714, Yonkers, NEW YORK 10710-(914)395-1995; Frank O'Day, 21 Pierce Ln., Madison, CONNECTICUT 06443-(203)245-4739; Bob West, 683 Walnut Rd., Wauconda, ILLINOIS 60084-(847)526-6520; Terry Deem Reilly, 1123 Clarkson, Denver, COLORADO 80218-(303)837-9443; Ned A. Delaney, 1211 El Grande St., Lafayette, INDIANA 47905-(317)474-2546; Larry Doyle, 2036 Calhoun, Bellevue, NEBRASKA 68005-(402)292-5291; Kathy Whitford, 15910 Lucille Dr., Cleveland, OHIO 44111-(216)251-7551; Paul D. McGuigan, 7607-8th Ave. NW, #201, Seattle, WASHINGTON 98117-(206)782-5567; Nancy Love, 14151/2 Grand Ave., Racine, WISCONSIN 53402-(414)633-4085; Dr. John T. Giesen, 1107 Ironwood Dr., Coeur D'Alene, IDAHO 83814-(208)667-7459; Hal Cousins, 905 Shalimar Dr., Del City, OKLAHOMA 73115-(405)677-3623; Elizabeth McElligott, 7747 E. Dale Ln., Scottsdale, ARIZONA 85262-(602)585-3602; Robert J. Fuhrel, 1901 Rio Canyon Ct. #202, Las Vegas, NEVADA 89128-(702)255-9619; Mary Holford, 6555 Tam O'Shanter Dr., San Jose, CALIFORNIA, 95120-(408)268-4548  
**GREAT HUNGER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR:** Frank Morris, Jr., 821 Briarwood Ln, Camp Hill, PA 17011-(717)737-7013  
**NATIONAL ORGANIZER:** Pete Foley, 3615 Greystone Ave., Bronx, NY 10463-(718)884-2220

## **From the North: Britain Fails Peace Process as Unionist Violence Escalates**

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

IT WOULD appear that President **Bill Clinton's** visit to Ireland and Britain in Dec. has failed, so far, to change the minds of the British government as far as the peace process is concerned. It would appear that the minds of the British government won't accept responsibility for furthering the peace process.

Its stance on the vexed questions of demilitarization, the Patten policing reforms, and UUP leader and First Minister **David Trimble's** exclusion of Sinn Fein from the cross-border bodies shows no sign of ameliorating.

The UUP threat to have a recall meeting of the ruling UUC in Jan. seems to have been put into abeyance. Its purpose would have been to arm Trimble with further sanctions against Sinn Fein in the event of the IRA's failure to jump to his commands in his capacity as drill-sergeant to proconsul **Peter Mandelson**. Instead, the UUP leader will engage in a consultation process with his party branches, which will probably end up at the same destination—some form of a renewed suspension of the Stormont institutions.

Unless the British and Irish governments jettison these tactics, the prospects for a continuation of the Mitchell Agreement, upon which the peace process depends, are very grim. The matter is so grave that Sinn Fein has called for the direct intervention of British Prime Minister **Tony Blair**. At press time, Sinn Fein's disrupted talks with the Britain have restarted, but the mood is still pessimistic.

The forthcoming local elections in the North and the UK-wide general election for seats at Westminster (expected in May) will determine Trimble's strategy. Trimble is fearful of being routed by **Ian Paisley's** DUP

and by the strong anti-Agreement rejectionists within his party.

Anti-Agreement sentiment is said to be spreading within unionism in general. Five of the six brigades of the loyalist paramilitary UFF and UDA are reputed to have joined this camp.

Given these threats to the peace process, some nervous elements in even that part of the media that designates itself as nationalist have called upon Sinn Fein and the SDLP to placate the Mandelson-Trimble duo. In other words: accept a gutted Patten reform in regard to policing and bow to stepped-up pressures in relation to IRA arms decommissioning.

Accepting these suggestions as a reasonable way out of the peace process impasse requires turning a blind eye to the history of the conflict and to the present context.

Take guns. Britain has released State Papers for 1970, when the UDR (a state body) first became operational in replacement of the notorious B Specials, some of whose members had participated in the anti-Catholic pogroms of 1969. "The problem was...the disposal of the surplus police and special constabulary arms listed for the Cabinet as: More than 15,000 rifles; 15,000 revolvers, pistols, and shotguns; nearly 3,000 automatic weapons; 117 mortars; nearly 8 million rounds; 27,000 illuminating cartridges; 970 mortar bombs; 3,000 miscellaneous primers, detonators, flares, etc.; 120 tear or gas grenades; and 41 armored vehicles." All of this to control and suppress a population of then around 620,000 people!

The problem was: "This vast armory is now a considerable security risk." At the time some unionists were talking about emulating Rhodesia,

which had declared UDI—a unilateral declaration of independence—because they wanted this for the North. Also, there could have been a threat of raids from Republicans. "Its [the armory's] protection is absorbing manpower that could be better employed elsewhere."

Matters have now, of course, changed. The weaponry now available to the state forces in the network of military and police bases overlaying the six counties is probably not much less in quantity, but it is light years more sophisticated. That might be okay if a genuine consensus of the people accepted the political legitimacy of the state, but that is decidedly not the case in Ireland, the North particularly.

Also, there has been no depletion in the number of arms held in the hands of non-state, but pro-state, unionist forces. Finally, when the context is referred to, it is to the present, not the past. Five out of the six UDA/UFF brigades have been accused of the pipe-bombing of an SDLP premises in north Belfast. They and other loyalist paramilitary groups are said to have been complicit in a spate of pipe-bombing attacks on Catholic homes throughout the six counties. The RUC has been conspicuously ineffective in apprehending the culprits.

This scenario reveals that the British government can, with an almost manic persistence, threaten the viability of the Mitchell Agreement by dismissing what the IRA has already done to facilitate the peace and by refusing to move. Pressuring the SDLP to accept a gutted Patten reform of the RUC and refusing to deal with its own demilitarization obligations, as agreed at Hillsborough last May, is not the way forward.



## Newsbits

FOUR leading republicans who shot their way out of Crumlin Road jail in 1981 are now free to return to Northern Ireland after they were granted the royal prerogative of mercy. The NIO has confirmed that former IRA prisoners **Angelo Fusco, Robert Campbell, Paul Patrick Magee, and Anthony Gerard Sloan** were granted special dispensations by the queen on Christmas Eve. All four are now legally free to return to Northern Ireland without fear of prosecution. The move comes amid claims that President **Bill Clinton** is engaged in secret talks with Sinn Fein in a bid to break the deadlock on decommissioning before he leaves office on Jan. 20. There is mounting speculation that the highly symbolic gesture is part of a sequence of carefully planned moves aimed at stabilizing the peace process. (*Irish News* 12/27/00)

A Catholic mother-of-two whose County Antrim home was peppered with bullets is lucky to be alive, it was claimed yesterday. East Antrim SDLP assembly member **Danny O'Connor** said the woman and her two young sons had been subjected to a vicious sectarian campaign to drive them from their Larne home. **Helena McCambridge** and her sons, aged seven and four, were in bed asleep when five shots were fired into their Fannad Walk home in the mixed Craigyhill area of the town around 1.30 am on Wednesday. A few weeks ago, the mother had £700 worth of damage done to her car. Earlier in the year, she was attacked with a pellet gun while sitting on a bus in the town. Last year, O'Connor submitted a report to the British and Irish governments detailing more than 150 attacks against Catholics in the predominantly loyalist town. (*Irish News* 1/4/01)

According to a former communications officer with the British Ministry of Defense, British forts on mountain peaks in the border region of South Armagh are crucial to British Intelligence understanding of what is going on in the entire island of Ireland. In a report for the *Sunday Business Post*, a source has revealed that the spying tasks of these posts are not confined to republican dissidents but extend to every aspect of government and political and commercial life in the 26 Counties. Two of the forts are used as electronic intelligence collection platforms, while the others "give plausibility to the cover story that the watch towers were only used for visual surveillance of the immediate area along the border." The principal collection platform, codenamed G40 by the British military, is on Croslieve Mountain, west of Forkhill, and it can intercept all the public service network carriers radiating from Dublin. These include all the main telecommunications highways, telephone calls, fax and data transmissions, email, and Internet communications. They also tap into fiber optic cables, to which they have access as they pass through British-controlled territory. (*RM Dist.* 12/18/00)

A demilitarization pressure group in South Armagh has, for the second consecutive Sunday, mobilized against a British military installation in its area. About 50 members of the South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee entered the British army base at Crievekeeran, where they confronted armed British soldiers. Using wire-cutters, the protesters occupied most of the base for more than an hour while the soldiers retreated inside an inner cordon. Group spokesperson **Toni Carragher** claimed members of the RUC attacked the group as it withdrew from the base, setting attack dogs upon the protesters. "Today's action demonstrates the futility of the British military occupation

in South Armagh. If the British Army cannot secure its own bases, it should abandon its pretense to be providing security for anyone," said Carragher. A spokesman for the RUC said police struck two people with batons in this afternoon's incident. (*IAIS* 12/17/00)

A key witness is refusing to cooperate with the Stevens inquiry into collusion between British forces and loyalists because his life is at risk, according to a *Sunday Times* report. The former undercover soldier is supposed to be in hiding, but he has already received threatening phone calls, and his house has been burgled. Recently, his name and whereabouts were emailed to newspapers by a former colleague in an attempt to intimidate and silence him. **Phil Smith**, who wrote about his career in the British Army under the pseudonym **Rob Lewes**, has admitted sending the email, but the British Crown Prosecution Service declined to prosecute him for intimidating a witness. It refused to consider pressing charges under the Official Secrets Act, although Smith had disclosed the personal details of the former intelligence officer. The soldier who was intimidated, known as **Martin Ingram**, said: "I deserve a degree of protection from the state and cannot put my family in danger." He said that he had received two threatening phone calls: "The caller demanded that I make sure Smithy's charges were dropped, that I retract my statement to the Stevens inquiry, and that I don't mention anything to do with **Steak Knife** [an alleged informer in the IRA leadership]. I feel like a rape victim because I have been forced to retract. But when I made my initial statement to the Stevens team, they agreed that there would be a bit of trouble and I was given the assurance that I would be given a degree of protection. If they cannot protect me, then I have to ask if there has been political interference." (*RM Dist.* 12/15/00)

## ***American Irish History: Irish Labor Helps Develop Gulf Coast Trade***

By Georgia Fleming (*Reprinted from The American Irish, published by the AIEF, 1987*)

AMERICAN Irish laborers were largely responsible for helping the US develop Gulf Coast trade following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. At the same time, these laborers fought the cause of workers' rights.

After the Louisiana Purchase, the large number of Americans who moved into the New Orleans area found themselves at a disadvantage. The long-established Creole community controlled the Carondelet Canal, depriving the Americans of easy access to Gulf Coast trade.

The capital to construct a canal in the American sector eventually was acquired by entrepreneurs, including two natives of Ireland, Maunsel White and Charles Byrne. The canal company hired a Pennsylvania engineer, Simon Cameron (later President Lincoln's Secretary of War). Before he left Philadelphia, Penn., Cameron recruited 136 Irish laborers for work on the canal.

The terms seemed attractive: board and lodging and \$20 per month. The digging began on schedule in 1832, but after a short time the Irish workers published a list of grievances, among

them that Cameron had practically sold them as redemptioners to the canal company and that the company store charged twice as much as stores in town. They protested Cameron's labeling them "as a turbulent and disobedient set of men because we do not tamely submit to the numberless acts of injustice." They were joined by thousands of Irish immigrants over the next four years. Slaves were considered too valuable to risk under such unhealthy conditions.

Historians consider the construction of the New Basin Canal to be a project of greater difficulty than the Panama Canal, given the technology of the time. Irish workers dug the canal with hand shovels, excavating more than half a million cubic yards. Lacking dynamite, they used hand axes on the huge old cypress trees along the route.

Visiting Irish actor Tyrone Power thus described conditions in 1834: "...hundreds of fine fellows laboring here beneath a sun that at this winter season was at times insufferably fierce and amidst a pestilential swamp whose exhalations were fetid to a degree scarcely endurable even for a few

moments;....[They are] mid-deep in black mud...bearing burdens it made one's shoulders ache to look upon; exposed meantime to every change of temperature, in log-huts, laid down in the very swamp....Here they subsist on the coarsest fare...often at the mercy of a hard contractor, who wrings his profits from their blood."

Estimates of the number who died range from 8,000 to 30,000. They died of cholera and yellow fever contracted in the mosquito infested swamps north of Materie Ridge. Laborers buried thousands where they fell.

Opened for traffic in 1838, the New Basin Canal was an immediate success. Thousands of Irish lives enabled Americans to sever economic and political ties with the Creoles.

The heyday of canals had passed when the order came to fill the New Basin in 1946 to make way for an expressway, which was completed in 1961. The remaining blocks that were once canal stretch from Robert E. Lee Boulevard to Lake Pontchartrain.

The tremendous loss of American Irish lives should not go without some memorial.

(continued from Page 1)

"I never heard so many people screaming. They were clawing at their own faces. I could hear my own voice screaming," says ex-prisoner **Jim McCann**. "It completely disabled us. You couldn't protect yourself from it," he says.

"It was suffocating, it burned your face and eyes and lungs. It was the worst experience of my life. People around me lost consciousness," remembers **Joe Barnes**, another ex-prisoner.

Fr. **Denis Faul** called for an immediate investigation by the International Red Cross into the use of the gas and said Britain had violated the United Nations' minimum standards for the care of prisoners. He accused the British government of telling lies. Within a month, all prisoners,

republican and loyalist, whom the British had subjected to the CR gas were blood-tested. The tests were restricted to sentenced prisoners. The internees held in the same camp, who had not been gassed, were not blood-tested.

The prisoners were never told why they had to undergo blood tests and were never given the results of the tests. About 200 had been affected by the gas. McCann and others now believe they were, in effect, being used as guinea pigs for a British chemical weapons experiment.

Skip forward 26 years, and McCann is surfing the Internet when, out of sheer curiosity, he types the words "CR Gas" in the search box of a British government Web

(continued on Page 7)



## In English, Irish, Play Recreates Hunger Strikes

RECENTLY-RELEASED republican prisoners form part of the cast of a bilingual play about the 1981 hunger strikes, *Dialann Ocras*.

The **Peter Sheridan** play chronicles the hunger strikes, during which 10 prisoners in Long Kesh—including Bobby Sands, who led the strike—petitioned for the status of political prisoners as Britain sought to cast the Northern conflict as a criminal one.

Former prisoners **Davy Adams** and **Gerard Magee** perform in the production.

"Jail gave me a love for Irish, and when I was asked to do this play, it was the fact that it was in Irish as well as the subject matter that I took it on," Adams told the Irish News last autumn. Adams, a cousin of Sinn Fein leader **Gerry Adams**, spent 17 years in prison. He was in jail during the hunger strikes.

"I had political status when I went to jail in 1979, but when its abolition led to the first hunger strike, the atmosphere was unbelievable, in the Kesh and in Crumlin Road. When the second hunger strike began, it got even worse.

"I shared a cell with Kieran Doherty before he went on hunger strike, but when Bobby Sands died, I was in a cell with Archie Livingstone.

"Archie was asleep, and I woke him to tell the news. We just sat there in silence.

"We couldn't pass the word on because we had an old radio which had been smuggled into the prison, and we didn't want to be caught with it," Adams said.

The hunger strikes brought Magee into the republican movement. As a 16-year-old living in a predominantly Protestant area outside Antrim town, it changed his life.

"I remember reading the stories of Bobby Sands, and up to this time, I had read a lot of Irish history, but it was the stories of Bobby Sands—"I Once had a Life," "I am Sir," "You are 1066," "I Fought a Monster Today"—those stories were simple but very deep; they were ahead of their time," Magee said.

Magee, who works as a plumber and as a political activist for Sinn Fein, said performing in the play was a "completely new challenge for me with three and a half weeks intensive training and learning lines, then four and a half weeks on the road."

The play was produced in the *Culturlann* in Belfast and then in Galway. "After this, we had one-night stops in Newry, South Armagh, Monaghan, Donaghmore, and Derry City," Magee said.

"This was a very fulfilling and worthwhile experience. I done acting in short dramas in Long Kesh, which gave me the confidence to have a go at this one," Magee said, adding: "I didn't even know it was being organized. I was just in the Culturlann one day and was asked by the director if I'd like to take part in a drama."

Both Adams and Magee believe the play is, in the main, a faithful reconstruction of the hunger strike period. Magee says it is likely the troupe will produce the play again in the spring and might appear in New York.

## Letters to the Editor

HAMMES Notre Dame Bookstore has responded to PEC members' concern about the store's porcelain figure of an Irish guard, defending the figurine as a symbol of the university's football traditions.

PEC member **Kevin Brennan** had contacted the PEC in Oct. to express his anger that the bookstore was selling a porcelain statue of an Irish Guard because, off the Notre Dame

campus, Irish Guards were part of the British Army. The PEC, along with Brennan, felt the statue was therefore offensive.

Bookstore spokesman **Jim O'Connor** sent this email reply to a PEC member.

"The Irish Guard have long been a part of the marching band tradition at the University of Notre Dame. This elite group of 10 guardsmen is selected every year on the basis of marching ability, demeanor and height (6'2"

minimum). The Irish Guard leads the university's marching band into the stadium; raises the American flag while "America the Beautiful" and "The Star Spangled Banner" play; joins in the half time show; and whenever Notre Dame scores a touchdown, dances a jig. The Irish Guard are an integral part of both the band and the pageantry of every football game.

We have several books available if  
(continued on Page 7)



(continued from Page 5)

site and makes discoveries that lead him to appeal to any former prisoner, republican or loyalist, to contact him at the *Tus Nua* offices in Turf Lodge so he can compile a database of the illnesses and premature deaths that might have resulted from the use of CR gas in Oct. 1974.

McCann has contacted a professor of chemistry who told him that CR gas is considered 10 times as powerful as CS gas, which the British routinely used in the North in the 1970s.

CR is the chemical code name for dibenzoxazepin. On Jan. 11, 1999, Britain's defense minister, **John Spellar**, said the gas has "severe short-term incapacitating effects that have been well documented in the medical literature."

Answering a question from Labor MP **Kevin McNamara**, who had asked him what quantity, strength, and type of CR gas was deployed at the Long Kesh on Oct. 16, 1974, Spellar replied: "As far as can be ascertained, only 200 hand-held spray devices containing 0.05 percent CR gas were held at the Maze on that date but were not used." McNamara asked about the prisoners having to undergo blood tests and was told Britain has "no record" of blood samples being taken at the prison at that time.

In response to McNamara's question about the effectiveness the gas has in maintaining public order and the circumstances in which it may be used, Spellar said: "CR may be deployed and authorized for use by the armed forces in certain special circumstances, particularly where it might enable the use of firearms to be avoided."

In a written reply to a parliamentary question from Labor MP **Ken Livingstone** in March 1999, British junior defense minister **Doug Henderson** said the use of CR gas had been authorized twice in the preceding two years, but he declined for security reasons to give details.

Livingstone also asked when the British army had used CR gas since 1968 and was told there are "no records of CR having been used operationally by the armed forces." McCann thinks the use of CR gas in Oct. 1974 at Long Kesh is perhaps being defined as an "experimental" deployment.

In March 1999, in another parliamentary question, a British Home Office minister said CR gas was rejected for police use because "not enough is known about its chronic health effects and its carcinogenic and genotoxic potential."

"It also poses particular problems in

relation to decontamination because it retains its irritant characteristics in water. The decontamination procedure employed for CS involving the use of copious volumes of water would exacerbate the contamination when used against CR." When McCann discovered this, he was able to tell McBride that McBride's putting his face into a water puddle had compounded the effects of the gas.

McCann can reel off at least eight names of former republican prisoners who have since died of cancer in their late 40s and early 50s. "I actually hope I am wrong and that the use of the gas was not a contributory factor in their early deaths," he says.

The only way of discovering if the chemical experiment has resulted in premature death and disablement, however, is to contact as many of the 200 prisoners involved as possible and begin a comparative study.

McCann points out: "Somewhere, on the shelves of some government department, lie the results of the blood tests. I believe we are entitled to know the results. They came out of our bodies. The British government, which proclaims its clean hands from the rooftops, broke the Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners, at the very least. They should be held to account."

(continued from Page 6)

you are interested in learning about the traditions of the University.

(See Action Requests, Page 8.)

I am a subscriber to the newsletter for a number of years. I retired from the NY Fire Dept. and am a member of the Emerald Society. I am trying to have the martyrs from The Great Hunger beatified in Rome. Our request is being studied now at The Congregation for the Causes of the

Saints. Our Web site is [www.irishhuntermartyrs.org](http://www.irishhuntermartyrs.org) Would you link us to your Web site?

PEC member **Bill Fahey**

*[Editor's Note: The PEC is linked to this Web site to provide information to members and others. We are completely independent of the Irish Hunger Martyrs and the Web site, which offers the following information on this project.]*

"[During the Great Hunger, some]

Protestant church missions in England sought to...proselytize starving Catholics, [whom they] offered food in return for renouncing their Catholic faith....During the [Great Hunger], there were more than 125 missions in Ireland for the purpose of converting Catholics.

"We have requested that the Vatican beatify the Irish Hunger Martyrs who refused food and eventually starved to death in support of their faith."



**To Join or to Renew Your  
Membership in the AIEF-PEC**

- ☐ New Membership \$25 ☐ **Membership Renewal** \$25  
☐ Senior Citizen \$20 ☐ Student \$10  
☐ Additional Tax-deductible Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ **Tax-deductible Donation Only** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Members receive the monthly *American Irish Newsletter*.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Town/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number** ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Email Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to** AIEF-PEC

Mail to P.O. Box 102, Blauvelt, New York 10913-9915,

For information, call (800) 777-6807

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC  
Garnerville, NY 10923

Non-Profit Organ.  
US Postage Paid  
Leesburg, FL  
Permit No. 1040

**Address Service Requested**

**Action Requests**

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

Contact: **President George W. Bush**, The White House, Washington, DC, 20500, phone 202-456-1111; fax 202-456-2461; email president@whitehouse.gov

**Message:** I urge you to maintain the momentum your predecessor brought to the Irish peace process. Now, more than ever, that political process requires the participation of the US government to prevent a return to the policies of the past 30 years that created the conflict there. Please use your good offices to help the people of Ireland realize a democratic government and the prosperity such a government can bring.

Contact: **Jim O'Connor**, The Hammes Notre Dame Bookstore, P.O. Box 608, Notre Dame, IN 46556, tele. 219-631-6316, fax 219-631-7842, email ND@bkstr.com

**Message:** I understand that the Irish Guard figurine that your bookstore offers represents a Notre Dame football cheerleader. Nonetheless, I urge you to consider that such icons, and the history of British colonialism in Ireland that they represent, reflect a dated, racist perception of the Irish as well as the American Irish. I urge you to consider the offense such items cause to many American Irish people and discontinue offering them for sale.

(continued from Page 2)

decommissioning by the June 2001 deadline. The Commission states: "We already have agreement in principle on schemes with the UVF and UFF. We are anxious to explore with the IRA representative [its] proposal to put arms beyond use and our role in that process. Again, the Commission remains prepared to state, if necessary, when we believe decommissioning must start and how it must proceed if we are to fulfil our mandate within the required period."

**December 28**

The Irish government says again that plans to reform policing in Northern Ireland are not yet sufficient for it to encourage nationalists to join.

**January 1, 2001**

The IRA says it is still committed to resolving the arms issue but that the matter will not be resolved until the British prime minister takes responsibility for it.

**January 5**

Loyalists say they are prepared to instigate violence throughout the North if British authorities do not release from prison loyalist killer **Johnny Mad Dog Adair**.

**20th Anniversary  
Hunger Strike  
Commemoration Mass  
St. Patrick's Cathedral  
New York City**

**Saturday, March 3, 10:30 AM**