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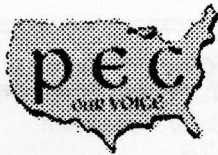


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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 24, Number 3

March 1999

Unionists Rain on St. Patrick's Day Festival

By Charles P. Mullaney, *Professor, Legal Studies,
Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Connecticut*

Between 10,000 and 50,000 people turned out last March 17 for the first-ever St. Patrick's Day parade in Belfast City Center. Tricolors flew proudly—as did the Union flag atop City Hall. Families from all over the city joined in the fun, parading behind a banner that declared, “Wouldn't it be Great if it Were Like This all the Time.” At President Mary McAleese's party in Dublin, guests included representatives of a loyalist ex-prisoners' center and the Shankill Women's Group.

None of this North-South multiculturalism is lost on Caitriona Ruane, an indefatigable community organizer who planned the Belfast parade. Last year, she proposed to Belfast City Council a four-day St. Patrick's Day festival for 1999. It would involve all sections of the community, keep out the militaristic bands and political banners, and enhance the image of the city.

The Council first approved and then, in an act of pure pettiness, took away a 50,000-pound contribution. Thus, Belfast unionists again squandered a chance to create goodwill and undermined the optimism that proponents of the peace process have struggled to engender.

A few weeks ago, I sat with Ruane, who is director of *Feile an Phobail*, the largest community festival in Ireland. She enjoys an international reputation as a dynamic and professional community activist. She is palpably perplexed by the Council's shenanigans. She shakes her head in dismay as she describes how the Council set up countless bureaucratic roadblocks to undermine the organizers' efforts. She says that last year's parade received “enormous positive coverage nationally and internationally.” She says there is a “very strong feel-good factor” expressed by people from many communities because the city is becoming more inclusive and welcoming. So the council's action “shocked us.”

Yet, there is nothing shocking about Belfast City Council's repudiation of a grant to an economically beneficial, cross-community festival. After all, Sammy Wilson and Nelson McCausland, who furiously fought the festival, belong to the same mind set that led to the loyalist siege of Garvaghy Road, costing taxpayers thousands of pounds in RUC overtime and property damage.

On Jan. 30, fans from the North, including David Trimble, mixed with fans from the South in Dublin to cheer the predominantly Protestant Ulster Rugby team's victory in the European cup finals. The media reported that Protestants, Catholics, and plain old rugby lovers jammed pubs in celebrations. There were no incidents. “It was just like St. Patrick's Day,” said one publican. Well, sort of.

The parade in Belfast this year will take place without the City Council's support. It will be inclusive, multi-cultural, and cross-community, according to Ruane--and a *cead mile failte* will be extended to all members of City Council.

Newsbits

[T]he loyalist [UDA] has been offered...5 million pounds in return for decommissioning its arsenal of weapons within the next month, [the *Sunday Business Post*] has claimed....Prominent unionists are said to be offering the deal...to increase pressure on the IRA to hand in its weapons. It is unclear where the money would come from or how precisely it would be applied, but it was thought the money could come from British secret service budgets with the help of unionist hardliners within the British military establishment. (RM Dist. 1/26/99)

Dublin Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue has been urged to cancel a controversial joint training program between the [Irish] police and the RUC. An outcry has followed reports that joint training between the Gardai and the...sectarian RUC is to take place under the auspices of the FBI in the US later this month. Gardai and RUC members are also due to undertake joint training at locations in Ireland on both sides of the border. (RM Dist. 1/13/99)

A former RUC man who was jailed for murdering a Catholic has con-

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OUR VIEW:

Gesturing Toward Peace Is not Enough

Just a few years ago, wearing shamrocks on St. Patrick's Day in the North required no small amount of courage and conviction. Such a gesture, after all, was tantamount to a political signature, a declaration of probably not being a unionist or loyalist. As such, wearing shamrock could invite derision in some areas and danger in others.

Today, there is a peace process more talked about than implemented. UUP leader David Trimble insists that IRA weaponry be decommissioned his way rather than the IRA's way. That is, guns must be handed in rather than put away to rust to dust. At the same time, loyalists harass and harm nationalists while their political counterparts talk nonsense about peace in florid terms few have the time to decipher. Meanwhile, human rights groups and many nationalists work to see the Mitchell Agreement become a reality rather than a vaunted piece of paper by searching for the truth about past human rights abuses and suggesting ways to prevent future abuses.

It is criminal of unionists to stall the peace process and continue deriding segments of the Northern population for not being one of them. By creating conditions for frustration and anger, unionists deride all of the people of Ireland. Indeed, perhaps it is as dangerous as ever to wear a little shamrock.

PEACE PROCESS UPDATE

January 15

There are serious concerns that the UUP is planning to move a motion, perhaps after March 10, to expel Sinn Fein from any executive if the IRA does not start decommissioning. Such a motion would fail because it would not obtain cross-community support. The worst scenario would then be a unionist walkout, which would pull down the agreement.

January 17

UUP deputy leader John Taylor gives the peace process less than 50 per cent chances of surviving.

January 18

The Assembly approves structures for the new Northern government, though the impasse over arms decommissioning continues to threaten the eventual transfer of some powers from London to the North.

Belfast law professor Brice Dickson is appointed to head the new Human Rights Commission in the North.

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January 21

The Irish government slams PUP leader Billy Hutchinson's claims that loyalists could target tourists in the South if the Mitchell Agreement were to fail. Hutchinson is the go-between for the UVF/Red Hand Commandos and the decommissioning commission.

January 22

The British government announces that seven British army bases in the North are to close over the next few weeks.

January 23

Two Catholic families escape injury in when explosive devices are thrown at their homes in Larne, County Antrim.

January 26, 1999

The Red Hand Defenders target a family for a car bomb attack. The Catholic family has lived in a loyalist housing estate outside Belfast for the past 40 years. Loyalist pressure forces 11 families in Portadown to leave their homes.

(continued on Page 6)

With British government indulgence of them nearing exhaustion, the UUP, which signed up to the Mitchell Agreement, has been persuaded after eight months of stalling to open the road to the possible implementation of what had been agreed.

From the North

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

On Feb. 16, the Stormont shadow Assembly passed by 77 votes to 29 the provisions for new governmental institutions in the North—the 10-member Executive, the North-South Council, the cross-border implementation bodies, the British-Irish Council, and what will probably be an ineffectual Civic Forum. Democratic window-dressing is never far from the minds of British civil service bureaucrats. One hundred percent of nationalism/republicanism backed the proposals, as did 50 percent of unionism. The latter split 29 votes pro (the UUP and the PUP) and 29 votes con—the rag bag collection of Paisley/McCartney “No Men.” The criterion for a sufficiency of cross-community consensus had been met. This means that it is now up to the British Secretary of State at the Northern Ireland Office, Mo Mowlam, to produce the Standing Order that will bring into being the Executive in compliance with the d’Hondt system specified in the Mitchell Agreement.

D’Hondt allocates executive places to parties in accordance with their share of the votes in the election for the Assembly. The share-out on this basis, the sole criterion for admittance, will be (if UUP resistance is

overcome): SDLP, 3; UUP, 3; SF, 2; and DUP, 2. It is interesting to note that, even though the UUP secured only 4 percent more votes in the election for the Assembly than did SF (21.26 percent as opposed to 17.63), the British government, with the Irish one tagging dutifully along, has placed inordinate control of the process with party leader David Trimble.

The Unionist No Men are, of course, furious with the outcome of the vote. They object to the whole peace process, but their specific whinge in relation to the executive is that it results in a 50:50 share-out of places between nationalists/republicans and unionists. Yet, because this outcome results from votes cast in an election, one would be justified in asking: What, in the name of blazes, would *self-proclaimed* democrats such as Paisley and McCartney and the imperial Grand Masters of the various “loyal orders” expect?

And so, even yet, everything is not plain sailing. The problem now reverts to Mowlam. She has to decide if she can activate the Standing Order in view of the UUP’s continuing refusal to sit with Sinn Féin in the executive prior to the IRA’s making a start to *credible* and *verifiable* decommis-

sioning. The shadow phase for the Assembly and the executive ends on March 10, when the London and Dublin parliaments have to enact the necessary legislation. A slight extension of this date might be possible but, if the problem is not resolved by then, then the whole process might collapse through her failure to overcome UUP resistance.

No one now believes that the UUP’s interpretation of the Mitchell Agreement gives it a credible legal leg to stand on. No such precondition for executive membership exists. And, even if it did, no one, aside from the UUP and the assorted Unionist “No Men” (with perhaps the British lurking in the shade) believes this kind of insistence is the correct or sensible way in which to proceed. After all, the vast majority of people want peace and they want all guns, British and Irish, taken out of the picture. The question is not, Do you want it? But, How can we achieve it? The Irish government, the SDLP, SF, the PUP, the Alliance Party (the latter two, unionist) and the Women’s Coalition all say the same thing—implement the Agreement.

That is the best—and perhaps the only—way in which to achieve all-round paramilitary decommissioning and British state-demilitarization in Ireland. Whether or not the beginning of face-to-face meetings between the leaderships of SF and the UUP will help Mowlam to overcome her difficulty remains to be seen. Trimble has already conducted a six-county wide tour of his UUP branch level membership in order to prevent serious in-house dissention. It is presumed that the SF negotiators require no mentors in that respect.

Newsbits *(continued from Page 1)*

firmed extensive collusion between loyalists and British forces in attacks on Irish nationalists. RUC man John Weir admitted driving leading loyalists to carry out the killing of William Strathearn, a grocer, and called for a South African-style truth and reconciliation commission in the North...to expose further such attacks. Strathearn was shot dead in 1977 after answering his door to loyalists who claimed they needed aspirin for a sick child. The murder later became known as the Good Samaritan shooting. Weir said: "I was told by another police officer that [Strathearn] was suspected of storing [IRA] guns after an attack, but I now believe this was made up to cover up the activities of an informer in the IRA." *(IAIS 1/19/99)*

The father of a Derry teenager who was shot dead during Operation Motorman...has called on British MP Andrew Hunter to support his campaign to name the soldiers who killed his son. [Fifteen-year-old Daniel Hegarty] was shot dead on... July 31, 1974, as thousands of British soldiers flooded Derry's Creggan area, breaking up the no-go areas.... [T]he teenager has since been labeled a member of a paramilitary grouping although his family has always stressed his innocence.... Recently, the Hegarty family started a campaign to clear his name. The British army said it would be willing to cooperate with any properly convened new inquiry into the teenager's death....Hegarty said, "The truth must be told if we are to move on with our lives and build peace on this island. You will not build peace by choosing to ignore and forget all the Daniel Hegartys of the past 30 years." *(Irish News 1/23/99)*

Peter J. Brady Helps Mold Modern America

By Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

Peter J. Brady was born in County Cavan, Ireland, on March 10, 1881. His parents, Charles and Bridget Brady, decided to immigrate to New York City when Peter was nine. Conditions in Ireland at that period were harsh because of British rule and landlordism. The freedoms America offered gave Brady enough room to exercise his talents as a trade unionist, banker, and airman in the first world war.

Upon arriving in New York, Peter attended public school for a year. He had to leave school when his father died, though. He sold papers on the busy streets and took various other jobs. Eventually, he landed a job as a union printer and soon became active in union activities. Throughout the country, Brady became a leading spokesman for the union movement.

Despite having limited formal education, Brady had a keen interest in and knowledge of banking. To combat unfair lending practices, Brady devised a plan to start a bank for working people in New York. Brady's bank was called Federation Bank and Trust, and it was a success. Brady was elected president of the bank.

During World War I, Brady developed an interest in airplanes. He became a colonel in the Army Air Corps Reserve. He traveled around the nation informing audiences of the future that planes would have in America's commercial and military might. He advocated for towns across the land to build airports. He became chairman of the New York City Aviation Commission, which got the city to build an airport.

On Sept. 21, 1931, Brady, who played an important role in shaping modern America, died in an air crash in the West New Brighton area of Staten Island.

Source: Library of Edward Kelley, Dorchester, Mass.

British Fail to Investigate RUC Plastic Bullet Abuses

A Belfast court agreed in early February to compensation payments of 115,000 pounds, 12,500 pounds, and two payments of 5,000 pounds each to four people injured by plastic bullets in July 1996 in Belfast. The highest settlement went to Michael Cosby, who lost his eye when a member of the RUC fired directly at his face. The British know identity of the RUC man responsible, but the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has failed to prosecute. In another case, an attempted murder charge should be brought against the RUC officer who called to Paul Morris from a security sangaar and then shot at his face. Following the incident, the RUC conspired to pervert the course of justice by altering statements, failing to disclose video evidence, and attempting to smear the man by claiming he was rioting. The Pat Finucane Center in Derry is concerned that the office of the DPP demonstrates criminal negligence by not pursuing prosecution of the officers involved. No member of the RUC has ever been successfully prosecuted following their illegally using these lethal weapons.

Source: Pat Finucane Center, 2/5/99

Groups Call for new Investigation Into Pat Finucane's Murder

Compiled by Sandy Carlson

The American-based National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL) is calling for a new inquiry into the 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Patrick Finucane. The NACDL has written to Northern Secretary Mo Mowlam, urging her to adopt the findings of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and calling for a new investigation.

On February 12, 1989, loyalist gunmen Finucane dead in front of his family. Since his death, evidence has come to light that strongly suggests collusion between military-intelligence agents and loyalist paramilitary organizations in his killing. In April 1998, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers issued a report in which he called on the British to institute a judicial inquiry into Finucane's murder.

In a detailed report to Mowlam, the legal organization highlighted several issues in the UN report that deserve urgent attention. The family, colleagues, and friends of Finucane are asking all concerned lawyers to endorse this call for a full international independent inquiry into Finucane's killing (*See Action Request, Page 6*).

More than 1,000 legal figures have in the North signed a petition supporting the United Nations' appeal for a judicial inquiry into the murder.

A report that British Irish Rights Watch published on Feb. 12 alleges RUC involvement in the killing of Finucane. It claims members of the RUC and the Force Research Unit of military (FRU) intelligence actively colluded in the lawyer's killing and that FRU played a role in the 1988 killings of Gerard Slane and Terry McDaid.

Finucane's widow, Geraldine, said: "All we have ever done for Pat's

murder is just ask questions. A lot of people have come from outside because they felt there were questions to be asked and there were answers that needed to be given. The whole thing is gathering momentum."

The Finucane family hope for another meeting with the British at a later date. They met with the Irish government Feb. 12.

The document names people involved in the killing, detailing their precise roles. The document identifies the plot to kill Finucane as part of an ongoing British military operation rather than the one-off action of a maverick individual. Those named in the document include members of the British army, some of whom gave evidence at the trial of Britain's loyalist double-agent, Brian Nelson, but whose identities were obscured.

The document debunks the myth that Nelson was a loyalist informer whose role was to save lives. The document reveals Nelson's role as a British agent tasked with infiltrating loyalists, directing their activities towards acting as assassination squads at Britain's behest.

Jane Winter of British Irish Rights Watch said, "Not only did we discover that the actions of the police and army directly contributed to the murder of Pat Finucane but also that FRU misled both the Stevens Inquiry and Belfast Crown Court about its knowledge of the Finucane, Slane and McDaid murders in an attempt to cover up the truth."

Last March, British journalists John Ware and Geoffrey Seed disclosed in the *Sunday Telegraph* extracts of classified British army files that suggested a covert unit of military intelligence engaged in a form of "shoot to kill" between 1987 and 1990. The files show that the British army's

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FRU infiltrated Nelson into the largest of the loyalist paramilitary groups, the UDA, specifically for the purpose of helping them to target IRA suspects for assassination. Ware described the disclosure as "the first time documentary evidence had been produced in support of the allegation that the [British] army had been involved in assassination."

British Minister Adam Ingram dismissed Ware's article as containing "unsubstantiated allegations."

The Finucane family has taken legal action against the British Ministry of Defense and has lodged a case with the European Court of Human Rights.

A short time before the murder then British Junior Home Office Minister Douglas Hogg told parliament some solicitors were "sympathetic to the cause of the IRA." In a statement issued to the *Irish News* Feb. 11, Hogg said he had nothing to add to that 1989 statement.

An RUC spokesman said, "This matter has been fully and independently investigated in the past, and clearly we cannot comment on a report we have not seen."

The following organizations are also supporting the UN Special Rapporteur's appeal for a judicial inquiry into this killing: the PEC, Amnesty International, The International Commission of Jurists, Human Rights Watch, The International Federation of Human Rights, The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, The Committee on the Administration of Justice, British Irish Rights Watch and The Law Society of England and Wales.

For more information, contact the
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Unionist Supremist's Slip is Still Showing

By Brian Feeney

Reprinted from the January 27, 1999 *Irish News*

You didn't happen to spot any unionist politicians picketing the jail when Lindsay Robb was released the other day? Didn't notice Ian Og or J. Donaldson egging on any outraged loyalists to chain themselves to the gates to block the exit?

No? Odd isn't it?

Difficult at first glance to make sense of the current state of affairs until you remember nothing has happened to decommission the unionist mind set or even to prepare unionists for the changes they have to accept.

Then all becomes clear.

Murder and attempted murder by the so-called Red Hand Defenders, regular petrol bombing of Catholics' homes, blast bombs at Catholics' homes (especially in overwhelmingly Protestant towns like dreary, dreadful Larne) by the so-called Orange Volunteers, threats from the same quarter, a threat from Billy Hutchinson that the military wing of his movement would try to cripple the Republic's economy by murdering tourists if an Anglo-Irish Agreement Mark 2 were signed should the Assembly collapse.

He called this a "more sophisticated" response, presumably as opposed to just plugging Fenians as before. Of course, it was taken out of context; it always is, isn't it? It was an "analysis," not a threat, he said, thereby demonstrating he doesn't know the difference between analysis and description but "analysis" sounds "more sophisticated," doesn't it?

What connects all this?

Simple: a growing realization that the north is never going to be the same again because if it's to run at all nationalists have to be involved in running it. Nobody told loyalist fundamentalist religious bigots and people brought up on a diet

of unionist anti-Irish racism that this would be the inevitable outcome of any settlement. The people in the PUP know this but their old supremacist slip still shows. Basically, "we decide how much you're gonna get and if they give you any more we're gonna fight."

Hutchinson's ham-fisted attempt to warn loyalists there's no alternative will fall on deaf ears. Don't forget—despite being camped in the TV studios, or perhaps because of that—he's speaking from the Olympian heights of 2 percent of the vote.

Sadly, many loyalists, including those who vote PUP, just loathe, fear, and fantasize about Catholics. They can't stomach the prospect of nationalists running anything in the North. When the LVF declared a cease-fire to get its prisoners out of jail, some of its members simply carried on its sectarian campaign under new pseudonyms, all of which appeared instantly after the LVF cease-fire....Fear of giving Catholics a role in the north has driven Paisleyism since the early 60s. It fuelled the murder campaign the UVF began in 1966 and their bombing campaign in 1969. In the subsequent 30 years, any prospect of reform acceptable to nationalists was met by an increase in sectarian murders, known to the RUC in the 70s as "motiveless murders."

See how much things have changed?

Now the police "search for a motive" after Catholics' homes are bombed.... Pathetic isn't it? The racist attitude to Catholics that leads to violence against any available Catholic remains at the core of the political impasse. IRA weapons are just a smoke screen.

...Trimble's problem is persuading [fundamentalist bigots in his party] to let Sinn Fein share in running the north. Unfortunately, he hasn't even begun the task. On the contrary, his language

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when referring to republicans strengthens the antipathy of those who feel queasy about power-sharing. The SDLP and Sinn Fein are just waiting now to see if the herrenvolk will sit down beside the untermensch. That's what it's all about.

It's particularly piquant because, as a main protagonist of the herrenvolk, Trimble has a lot of words to eat so nationalists don't make it difficult. They know Trimble is going to sit in an administration with republicans. He has to, or there's no administration, and he knows it....

He makes it more likely that unionism will throw off more splinters, so he writhes to postpone the day of reckoning. Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.

Instead of attacking the IRA, Trimble should be attacking the Continuity IRA....Instead of obsessing about the weapons not being used, he should concentrate on the ones loyalists are using. Instead of quoting spurious figures about punishment beatings and prisoners, he should count the attacks on Catholics. Instead of pandering to loyalist bigots by demanding the abolition of the Parades Commission, he should realize loyalist bigots see him as a traitor.

To become first minister instead of just designate he has to start confronting sectarianism in his own party.

For a start, how about getting his MPs and assembly members in constituencies where Catholics are attacked to condemn the loyalist campaign of violence instead of the absence of IRA violence?

At present the silence is deafening.

For more information, contact the
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Investment Firm's Motives are Sectarian

By PA Service, January 17, 1999

A mysterious investment company is making sure Protestant-owned property is not sold to Catholic buyers, claims SDLP assembly member John Dallat.

The East Derry assembly member says an alliance of wealthy unionist businessmen has sprung up in the tiny streets of Kilrea, Co. Derry, to make sure as little property and land as possible falls into the hands of Catholics.

The allegation comes after a week in which the Department of Economic Development confirmed that new laws to stop sellers "barring" Catholic bids for Protestant-owned properties would soon be introduced.

According to Dallat, when farms come up for sale in Kilrea and there is no Protestant buyer, a mysterious investment company buys it up. "They seem to have a bottomless pit of money," says Dallat.

Unionists, however, claim the same methods are practised by Catholics and that very little property has ever been exchanged across the religious divide.

In the 1970s, Kilrea earned itself the

unenviable title of "most bombed town in Northern Ireland." Now, Catholics are slightly in the majority, and they are becoming increasingly affluent. In return, Protestants are more determined than ever to keep them in their place, according to Dallat.

"They are hungry for land, but they can't buy it," says Dallat. "People aren't fighting with guns and bayonets anymore—they're fighting with property and contracts. The battlefields are quiet but the determination to ensure that Catholics don't set foot on Protestant soil is as determined as ever."

In one recent case, Dallat says, a would-be buyer and vendor agreed a price on a farm and shook hands on it. The buyer celebrated all weekend, although the price of 180,000 pounds had seemed a bit steep.

By Monday morning, things began to go wrong and the estate agent was playing hard to get. Getting desperate, the buyer offered 25,000 pounds more, but he was told that even if he offered a million pounds it would never be his. The farm was not to be sold to a Catholic.

Farms can stand derelict for months or even years after being bought up by one of the investment companies, who would rather see the land go to rack and ruin than fall into the hands of a Catholic, Dallat said....

Protestant owners who went against the grain and sold to a Catholic were shunned and intimidated. "It would be seen as letting the side down. Farms and land especially are sacred. Protestant farms must not, at any cost, be sold to Catholics and the price for defiance is being ostracized."

One realtor admits openly that the practice is widespread throughout Northern Ireland and would be virtually impossible to eradicate.

David Sinton, a realtor in County Down, says, "It's par for the course. It is often given to us as a prerequisite of a sale. If I know someone's religion, sometimes their name is a dead give away, I would say to them I don't mean to hurt you but this particular property must stay in a certain religion and you don't fit that criteria...."

Welcome for Appointment of Human Rights Commission Chief

Professor Brice Dickson will oversee the setting up of the Human Rights Commission, which is scheduled for the end of February. He is professor of law and head of legal studies at the University of Ulster.

The human rights campaigner is a former chair of Amnesty International and is a long-standing member of the Committee for the Administration of Justice.

The chief commissioner's remit will include advising the government and assembly executive of measures which ought to be taken for the protection of

human rights, developing an active human rights culture in the North, and assisting the implementation of the North-South human rights committee.

The commission will also have powers to carry out investigations and to assist in bringing human rights abuses to the attention of the courts.

Northern Secretary Mo Mowlam said the announcement was a significant step forward in implementing the Mitchell Agreement. She said that the Human Rights Commission will play a key role in ensuring that the development and protection of human rights

remains at the heart of the new system of government in the north.

Dickson said the commission was an opportunity for all sections of the community to develop greater confidence in the administration of justice. He said, "I will ensure that the commission performs its function rigorously and efficiently, paying full attention to the internationally accepted rules and principles protecting human rights. A priority will be the consultation process on what should be contained in the promised bill of rights for Northern Ireland."

Action Request

Write the letter below, call, or e-mail. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, and others do the same. Please mention your membership in the PEC.

Write: Rt. Hon. Marjorie Mowlam, M.P., Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall, London SW1A 2AZ, UNITED KINGDOM

Message: As a member of the American Irish PEC, I join with human rights and legal groups around the world to urge you to reinvestigate the Feb. 12, 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane.

Write: Congressman Ben Gilman, 2449 Rayburn, Washington, DC 20515, 202-225-3776, e-mail: ben@mail.house.gov

Message: I support your efforts urging the British to implement the Mitchell Agreement and to fully reform policing in the North.

Congressman Gilman Denounces Unionist 'Foot Dragging'

Congressman Ben Gilman (R-NY) on the House floor on Feb. 11 denounced the continuing unionist veto over the implementation of the Mitchell Agreement. He also announced that the House International Relations Committee, of which he is chair, will hold hearings April 22 to examine the need for new and acceptable policing in the North of Ireland.

Gilman said: "....Sadly, as has so often been the case over many years, the issue of arms 'decommissioning' is still a major obstacle to further progress in the effort to bring lasting peace and real, concrete change to the [North]....What is sadly lacking is the political will and leadership...in the North. In particular, the decommissioning issue is being used to block creation of a new...cabinet level executive intended to help govern the North as well as help implement the new North-South bodies under the [Mitchell Agreement]....

"It is time to get on with it and put an end to the unionist veto which for far too long has been used to maintain the unsatisfactory *status quo* that is the North of Ireland today. We all know far too well how political vacuums in the past have been filled in Northern Ireland. No one wants a return to violence on all sides. Change must come on the ground, and the nationalist community must be treated with equality and given their rightful voice in the future of the new North....It is time to get on with it, end the foot dragging, and implement the will of the good and generous Irish people." (See Action Request, this page.)

(continued from Page 2)

February 1

Loyalist paramilitaries make a pipe bomb attack on St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Antrim.

February 8

President Bill Clinton makes a new offer to help bolster the peace process in a meeting with British Prime Minister Tony Blair in Jordan. Nine people escape injury when the Orange Volunteers throw a grenade at a Catholic-owned bar in the North.

February 11

Congressman Jim Walsh (R-NY) lays the blame for the current impasse with Trimble. Walsh urges the governments to adhere to the Mitchell Agreement and proceed with the implementation of its provisions. He says Trimble's requiring the IRA to decommission before allowing Sinn Fein to take up Executive positions is a stalling tactic.

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