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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 24, Number 12

December 1999

Support the PEC, Peace, and Understanding

THANKS to your support of the PEC:

- the US has continued its commitment to supporting the Irish peace process;
- Congress has continued its support of police reform in the North;
- Great Hunger memorials have been dedicated;
- the USPS issued a commemorative stamp in honor of Irish immigration;
- Coors brewery got rid of its partitionist T-shirt;
- President Bill Clinton apologized for likening Northern Ireland politicians to drunks who never leave the bar;
- Florida attorney John Stemberger apologized nationwide for attacking a client's Irish adversary on the basis of race;
- Minn. Gov. Jessie Ventura apologized for making anti-Irish comments on the Letterman Show;
- the *American Irish Newsletter* has reached a growing audience; and
- the AIEF-PEC's Web Site has grown and attracted members and supporters.

The PEC has been involved in the campaign for peace for 25 years; the Great Hunger Commemoration Campaign, from the outset of that project. We have led the campaign to end anti-Irish stereotyping since we formed in 1975.

None of our achievements would have been possible without the perseverance and moral and financial support of members. Throughout our campaigns, PEC members remained constant in their belief in peace in Ireland and a better understanding in this country of the role of the American Irish in it. Our perseverance is paying off.

The PEC is succeeding because you have supported us through financial donations that have made our campaigns possible. Only the PEC discusses the issues and organizes direct, democratic, peaceful action. Only with your financial support can we continue to do so.

Please send the PEC a tax-deductible donation of whatever you can afford. Make your check payable to the American Ireland Education Foundation and mail it to AIEF-PEC, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980.

"The Magical Legend" Preys on Stupidity

THE PEC issued the following press release Nov. 6 slamming the NBC miniseries "The Magical Legend":

"Commenting today on the recent controversy over the demeaning stereotypes of the Irish in NBC's miniseries 'The Magic Legend,' PEC spokesperson Sandy Carlson said: 'NBC's program will feature leprechauns as diminutive versions of the stereotype of the fighting Irish alcoholic. Sadly, this is a stereotype we can't seem to eradicate because stupid, racist stereotypes are easier for the networks to conjure than are serious, three-dimensional characters.'

Carlson continued: 'Such nonsense is hardly the stuff of enduring art. It is as unfortunate as it is ironic that the fantastic world of Irish myth that lit the fire of the Revival a century ago is being exploited to spawn such rubbish now.'

An NBC spokeswoman defended the series in an interview with the *New York Post*, saying it "is a fictional, fantastical adventure using magical realism to tell the story."

The cast includes Irish actor Colm Meaney, as well as Randy Quaid,

(continued on Page 7)

INSIDE

| | |
|--|---|
| Peace Process Update | 2 |
| From the North | 3 |
| Newsbits | 4 |
| American Irish History | 5 |
| Cohasset, Mass., Commemorates Great Hunger | 6 |
| Journalist Wins Right to Protect Interview Notes | 7 |
| Action Requests | 8 |

Political Documents
 Press Releases
 Great Hunger Links
 Action Requests
 Irish Libraries
 PEC Archive
<http://www.homestead.com/aipec>

OurView:

Unionists Never Sought Peace

IN APRIL, statesman George Mitchell published his memoir of the Irish peace process, Making Peace. In it, he praises the politicians involved (including himself) for their commitment to peace. His praise for Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams is restrained compared to his praise for unionists and the loyalist paramilitaries-turned politicians.

We wonder, then, whether Mitchell appreciates the irony of the latest development in Ireland, in which republicans have again expressed their commitment to peace by offering to again take political risks to establish peace. (At press time, the details of the IRA's and Sinn Fein's respective offerings have not been disclosed.) Unionists, in response, stammered and scrambled for a novel way to reject the compromises and, with it, peace and political progress.

The unionists have sought to renegotiate the Agreement solely in terms of IRA decommissioning. By doing so, they are attempting to hold British Prime Minister Tony Blair to his word. After all, he promised decommissioning to unionists, so long as they signed up for the deal. The Mitchell Agreement has thus become the road to IRA decommissioning for unionists. This might explain why unionists refuse to implement the terms of the Agreement or envision an Ireland of peace, prosperity, and democracy. The bigots never thought that far ahead. The republicans' proposals caught them off their guard and exposed unionists' abhorrence of peace.

Peace Process Update

October 11

BRITISH Prime Minister Tony Blair replaces Mo Mowlam with Peter Mandelson as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. Mandelson, whom the UUP suggested last summer replace Mowlam, is a former Trade and Industry Secretary who resigned from the cabinet last year following a scandal over a mortgage loan. Most unionists whom the *London Sunday Times* surveys say they would not support the Mitchell Agreement if it were again put to a referendum. Trimble says devolution might accompany disarmament.

October 13

US statesman George Mitchell moves the peace process review from Stormont to London in a bid to break the impasse. Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams says the UUP's position of "no guns, no government" will destroy the Mitchell Agreement.

October 15

The Irish and British prime ministers meet in Finland to discuss the faltering peace process. Mitchell and the Northern political parties remain tight-lipped about the deadlocked review process.

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

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October 18

Adams again suggests that progress on IRA decommissioning could be possible if unionists move away from their "no guns, no government" stance.

October 19

SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon suggests that there might be alternatives to handing in weapons to achieve decommissioning. Trimble suggests that Orange parades might become a tourist attraction because the marches are "among the largest genuine folk festivals in Europe."

October 20

The Mitchell review adjourns without a breakthrough on the key issues.

October 25

Talks resume among the pro-Agreement parties as Mitchell agrees to continue the review process into the near future. The UUP says there is a "glimmer of hope" for the Agreement but sticks to its "no guns, no government" stance.

October 27

Mitchell returns to the North to resume the talks process.

(continued on Page 8)

From the North

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

AT PRESS time (Nov. 15), the end game of former US senator George Mitchell's review of the non-implementation of the Mitchell Agreement has been reached. The cupidity of the Ulster Unionist Party has held up the deal, which is now 19 months old. This has been possible only because the British government, with the Dublin one tagging along, has been pulling the strings in the background.

Superficially, it might look as if the British government were occupying a moral high ground in perceiving the Agreement as an excellent opportunity for disarming an anti-state paramilitary organization, the IRA. What democratic state, after all, wishes to tolerate such bodies within its borders?

This is precisely the point: the British government's grip on Northern Ireland is not democratic; it is colonialist. The British media's almost entirely ignoring loyalist paramilitary violence reveals this. At the same time, the same media has treated the Mitchell Agreement as if its sole objective were to achieve immediate IRA disarmament. Few people disagree with taking guns, British and Irish, out of the Anglo-Irish conflict, but there is both a sensible and a senseless way in which to do that; the Agreement charts the sensible way. The reason the British media ignore actual and potential loyalist paramilitary violence the media is pro-state.

Now, what emerges from all of this is that the British government's cynical and bumbling handling of the Agreement until now does not place it on any claimed high moral ground, despite its efforts to persuade the world to the contrary. In the case of a truly democratic government, there would be no ambiguity at all—paramilitary groups

would be required to cease their activities and perhaps even a narrow, even biased, manipulation of the Agreement on this issue could be excused.

However, Northern Ireland is a pig with a different snout. The British government cannot justify its hiding behind UUP leader David Trimble and his party in an attempt to use the Agreement as solely a quick-fix method of pressuring the IRA to disarm. Such an attempt is a denial of Sinn Fein's electoral entitlements as well as a plan to get the IRA to disarm in a way the British know is premature and outside the legally enshrined stipulations of the Belfast accord.

This approach has led to a 19-month delay in the implementation of the Agreement and a possible abandonment of the peace process itself. This is so because Downing Street has accepted, until now without demur, every stalling device that the UUP has conjured up.

Because of this conniving with the UUP, the master-manipulators surrounding British Prime Minister Tony Blair have possibly woven a noose with which to hang themselves. They seem to have miscalculated. Sinn Fein and the Republicans generally have not turned out to be so naive, gullible, politically inexpert, and easily frightened as the British have imagined. They have refused to be stampeded, no matter how much pressure has been inflicted upon them. While being flexible, within the terms of the Agreement, the republican determination has been holding.

The British government is learning that its tactics are getting it nowhere and that it is in jeopardy of destroying the Agreement. There is much in it

very favorable to unionism, although even UUP types don't wish to concede that. Wishing now to modify its tactics, the British government now also realizes that, in the UUP, it has created a Frankenstein. This party has flung the whole thing back in Downing Street's face. Trimble and his cronies actually took Blair in good faith when, just prior to the signing of the Agreement, he promised them IRA decommissioning within a matter of months.

Unfortunately, this undertaking was not in the deal. Since then, British effort has been directed at mollifying the unionists by getting the prize of IRA disarmament for them. The stalling process having stalled, the bunglers perforce had to call in again George Mitchell in a rescue mission. That is where we stand as of mid-Nov.

After 10 weeks of hard labor, the former senator, a master in statecraft, has worked out with the republicans a plan (no outsider knows yet what exactly it is) to which the two governments have reacted with favor. Alas and alack, the UUP, isolated, is in a quandary. The indecipherable media spinning that has gone on since reflects the confusion: the UUP Assembly party has rejected it; no, they haven't; Trimble is trying to sell it to them; anti-Agreement unionist Jeffrey Donaldson says Trimble himself has not bought it and that he wants to prolong the review for more concessions....

Others say that, in about a fortnight, Trimble will call together the 800-member Ulster Unionist Council to decide. If the review fails, it will be over to Northern Secretary Peter Mandelson to try to pick up the pieces. All this for a Curate's egg Agreement that is possibly good only in parts.

Newsbits

THE UNIVERSITY of Ulster has been overwhelmed by the huge demand for its new Irish language course....Administrators at the Department of Irish Studies had to sift through 150 applications for only 58 places. Delighted the course attracted more than two people for every place, university chiefs are hoping for an even bigger response next year. Dr. Art Hughes, who heads the course at UU's Belfast campus, said...: "It is clear we are helping meet a huge pent-up demand for top quality Irish language education in the greater Belfast area and beyond."...The revival of the language has been sweeping Northern Ireland over the last year and the new part-time diploma is open to beginners and well-seasoned Irish speakers. (*Irish News* 10/19/99)

Britain temporarily regained dominion over all 32 counties of Ireland yesterday, to the surprise of just about everyone in Westminster. Introducing himself as "secretary of state for Ireland," Peter Mandelson had made the most unfortunate of starts to his first Northern Ireland question time. Nerves were blamed for the slip, but if Mandelson expected a roasting from anti-agreement unionists, it was notable only by its absence. (*Irish News* 10/19/99)

Dublin's Minister for Foreign affairs has admitted that his government had changed its mind about its approach to membership of the NATO support group, Partnership for Peace (PfP). The Dublin government is this week seeking to force through parliament a motion approving membership of Partnership for Peace. [Foreign affairs minister] David Andrews opened the debate on a motion approving Ireland's participation in PfP. "To those who claim that this government changed its mind on PfP, I say yes, we have, and we are not afraid to admit that we can

change our minds in the light of new facts and changed circumstances," he said. Meanwhile, two of the four Independent TDs formally supporting the minority Fianna Fail/PD administration are to break ranks and vote against the government on the Partnership for Peace motion when it is put to the Dublin parliament next week. (*RM Dist.* 10/14/99)

Two Belfast men who have been fighting for over 20 years to prove they were framed by the RUC saw the case against them finally fall apart in a Belfast appeal court. Billy Gorman and his brother-in-law, Paddy McKinney, were convicted in 1980 of killing RUC member Thomas McClinton in 1974 when Gorman, now 40, was only 14, and 42-year-old McKinney was just 16. The Belfast Court of Appeal heard the crown barrister, Gordon Kerr admit that "the basis of the crown case has collapsed" after the court had been presented with forensic ESDA tests which proved that the RUC falsified interview notes. These RUC statements were the only evidence used in 1980 to convict the two men; and Kerr conceded that, "the nature and extent of the writing, particularly in interviews concerning written admissions, raises at the very least the issue that they were rewritten after interviews as opposed to during them." In the original 1980 trial, Gorman gave evidence for five days and said that the RUC notes used to convict him were fabricated, but the judge rejected this, instead supporting the RUC. Now, two forensic reports based on handwriting and examination of impressions vindicate what the two men have said all along. (*RM Dist.* 10/14/99)

It seems attending an Irish festival is okay by Ulster Unionists councilors in Lisburn as long as it's 3,000 miles away. Shock figures released this week show that a massive £10,000

was spent on sending five councilors to the Irish Festival in Milwaukee. The recently-issued auditor's report reveals that some councilors had an expenses cost of more than £20,000 against their name for junkets to places as varied as America, Portugal and Switzerland. And the lion's share of these trips went to the largest group on the council—the UUP....Notable by their absence from the junkets are the names of Sinn Féin councillors. Dunmurry councillor Paul Butler is the only member of that party to be sent away on council business, attending a *Bord Na Gaeilge* seminar in Waterford. (*Andersonstown News* 10/9/99)

A shocked [SDLP leader] John Hume has described as "nonsense" accusations by former [British] Prime Minister John Major that he hindered the peace process. Major's startling comments were revealed yesterday as extracts of his autobiography were published. The ex-Tory leader describes Hume as a "prickly" character who was at times "loath to reciprocate unionist concessions." He also says progress in the peace initiative was blocked because the SDLP leader sided with Sinn Fein at crucial junctures. Early drafts of the Hume/Adams document are blasted in the memoirs as "utterly one-sided, so heavily skewed towards the presumption of a united Ireland that they had no merit as a basis for negotiation. They were little more than an invitation to the British government to sell out the majority in the north and the democratic principles that we had always defended." Criticism of Hume extends to suggestions that the IRA was intent on uniting the Irish government and the SDLP in a pan-nationalist front to negotiate Northern Ireland's future with the British government to the exclusion of unionists. (*Irish News* 10/4/99)

American Irish History: 19th-Century Burlington, Vt., Attracts Irish

By Brian Walsh, *Vermont*

NOTHING struck Nathaniel Hawthorne more on a trip he made to Burlington, Vt., in 1835 "than the great number of Irish" immigrants there. Hawthorne reported that "they swarm[ed] in huts and mean dwellings near the lake, lounge[d] about the wharves, and elbow[ed] the native citizens entirely out of competition in their own line."

Whether Hawthorne's judgment was based on direct observation or his Yankee prejudices is not clear, but Burlington was a popular choice for Irish immigrants since well before the Great Hunger of the 1840s. There, they struggled to make a new home for themselves and their faith.

Following the War of 1812, England placed a stiff tax on passenger tickets from Britain and Ireland to the US. As a result, a person could book passage from Ireland to Canada at half the price of a ticket to the States. Since those Irish who wished to escape Britain's dominion had no desire to stay in Canada, many immigrants subsequently filtered into the US. Burlington, the largest port on Lake Champlain, became a natural highway for this migration, and many of those immigrants settled in Vermont's "Queen City."

Burlington's Irish population comprised more than 10 percent of the village by 1830 but grew slowly during the decade before the Great Hunger. However, class differences between the Irish—mostly manual laborers—and the Yankees led to segregation within Burlington. The chief objections of the locals to the Irish, who remained near the lake, were cultural. Their Roman

Catholic faith generated considerable complaints. In addition, the Depression of 1837 and the subsequent competition for menial jobs lay at the root of nativist hostilities.

The Irish compounded the problem by "speaking in loud voices at public places," criticizing the establishment both vocally and in print, as in the case of Fr. Jeremiah O'Callaghan (an Irish-born priest who arrived in 1830) and other educated Irish.

Some wealthy Yankees attempted to indoctrinate the Irish with Protestant values. Most of these efforts failed because, as University of Vermont President James Marsh noted, the Irish would not accept "Protestant handouts." Antagonism between Burlington's Irish and the native-born Protestants intensified following the burning of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Burlington's first, in 1837. The authorities never conclusively determined the cause of the blaze.

The years of the Great Hunger in Ireland constituted the period of greatest growth for Burlington's Irish. The 1850 census listed 2,249 Irish and American Irish residents, who comprised nearly 30 percent of the city's population. Seventy-five percent of those listed were born in Ireland, mostly from the starvation-ravaged counties Clare, Tipperary, Cork, Limerick, and Kerry.

Burlington's reputation as boom town of economic opportunity attracted many of these Irish immigrants. Despite this reputation, however, opportunities for the Irish were limited. Because of their lack of education and skill, most of the

Irishmen in Burlington labored in the lumber, marble, shipping, and other lake front industries. A much smaller number—15 percent—were skilled workers, mostly carpenters, masons, marble workers, painters, and plasterers. Other male occupations included peddlers, an apothecary, and an innkeeper.

Although most Irish women lived in traditional family units, many unattached females were household servants. The high rate of transience among Irish immigrants indicates a general lack of economic success; fewer than 10 percent of the Irish living in Burlington in 1840 remained there by 1850.

The Burlington Irish community's primary achievement during the mid-19th century was the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in Vermont. Together with the city's growing French Canadian population, the Irish assembled the state's largest Roman Catholic congregation. Burlington's second Catholic Church, also named St. Mary's, was enlarged in 1850 after the influx of Great Hunger Irish. In addition, Michael Mulqueen, a Jesuit-trained schoolmaster from Limerick, founded the Catholic Boys School in 1857. Mulqueen was said to have a "remarkable personality" and an "unusual" talent for teaching.

Burlington's Irish achieved little upward mobility before the Civil War. Indeed, their sole lasting achievement in the city was the Catholic Church. Not until the war's end did Burlington's Irish begin to achieve economic, political, and social success there.

Cohasset, Mass., Commemorates Great Hunger

IRISH cultural groups and visitors from Ireland gathered in Cohasset, Mass., on Oct. 12 to recall the fate of the 99 passengers of the brig St. John, which sank in a storm on October 7, 1849, just a mile short of its goal. The people on the boat were fleeing Ireland's Great Hunger.

"That's the incredible tragedy in all of this," said John L. Sullivan, a Scituate lawyer and officer with the Ancient Order of Hibernians, one of the event's sponsors.

Organizers staged Irish music and dancing, an exhibit at the Cohasset

Maritime Museum and a special Sunday Mass celebrated partly in Irish. Cardinal Bernard Law officiated. "We pray for their families. We pray for all of those who in our own day, suffer the scandal and sin of injustice," Cardinal Law said.

Following five weeks at sea, the St. John dropped anchor after meeting an unexpected storm off the coast of Boston. Dragged on to Grampus Ledge off Cohasset, Massachusetts, the ship broke apart.

While the official death-toll was 99, only 45 bodies washed up on shore.

They were buried in a mass grave in Cohasset's Central Cemetery, which is marked by a 25-foot Celtic cross.

Twenty-two passengers survived, and 21 eventually returned to Ireland. Many of the travelers came from County Galway.

"They had very little choice available to them," Jack Meehan, an expert on the economic turmoil that prompted the exodus from Ireland in the mid-19th century, told the *Boston Herald*.

Most of the travellers were poor, and were considered little more than "human ballast," he said. "A lot of them died en route ... It was a horrific period in Irish history."

US Companies Targeted for Job Creation in Derry Area

DERRY Investment Initiative (DII) is targeting US companies in a bid to create jobs in the Derry area. The effort is part of a 2000 investment plan.

Trade missions to Tucson, Ariz.; New York; and Washington, DC, will be among the projects, according to Barney Toal, chief executive of DII.

This year, the Derry region has secured more than £150 million in inward investment. Seagate, Stream, Perfecseal, and Raytheon have made job announcements.

Commenting on the plans for next year, Toal said DII is already negotiating with a number of US companies and the Industrial Development Board about investment packages.

Derry City Council chief executive John Keanie said in Oct. the DII had an important part to play in helping the council to meet its employment targets for the area.

He said: "Our aim is to assist in the growth of the local economy through inward investment and trade development, to complement

IDB activities, to develop partnerships at home and abroad, and to further develop DII as the major local organization in this region operating on the international business promotions sector."

Keanie said that peace and stability are important. "Locally, Derry can help itself in attracting investors by ensuring that it's a safe environment for visitors, that diverse political interests can work together for the economic good, and that the business environment is viewed positively."

Congressmen Call for Action on Agreement

CONGRESSIONAL Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs cochairs Representatives **Peter King, Richard Neal, Ben Gilman, and Joe Crowley** have expressed their continued support of the Mitchell Agreement and urged Ulster unionists to accept immediately the terms of the Agreement.

Failure to implement the Agreement would be a mistake, they said in late Oct., while former Sen. George

Mitchell, the Northern Ireland political parties, and the British and Irish governments sought to resolve the peace process impasse.

"We urge the unionists to recognize the imperativeness of the Agreement and further urge them to immediately establish the Executive so that the [Mitchell] Agreement can work. There is no alternative," they said in a statement Oct. 27

Oakland Honors Adams

THE CITY council of Oakland, Calif., voted unanimously in Nov. to rename a street Gerry Adams Way to honor the Sinn Fein president. The road will intersect with Martin Luther King Jr. Way. Councilwoman **Nancy Nadel** proposed the renaming.

South Africa statesman Nelson Mandela, who has a parkway named after him, is the only other living person that Oakland has honored in this way.

Journalist Wins Right to Protect Notes

JOURNALIST Ed Moloney won his appeal Oct. 28 to overturn a court decision ordering him to hand over interview notes with loyalist William Stobie, who is accused of murdering solicitor Pat Finucane in 1989.

Two High Court judges in Belfast ruled that a judge at an earlier hearing had been wrong to direct the journalist to hand over the notes.

In his judgment, delivered with Justice Brian Kerr, Sir Robert Carswell said: "Police have to show something more than a possibility that the material will be of some use. They must establish that there are reasonable grounds for believing the material is likely to be of substantial value to the investigation."

The evidence, they judged, "does not start to meet that criterion."

Moloney, northern editor of the southern-based *Sunday Tribune*, had insisted he would go to jail rather than hand over the notes that the Stevens Inquiry had demanded. RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flanagan brought in the Stevens team following allegations of collusion between the security forces and Finucane's killers.

Following the high court ruling, Moloney said, "It is not just a good day for us but a good day for journalism. It will make the authorities think twice before they do this again."

The veteran journalist said it was difficult to avoid the thought that the police action (to demand the notes) was motivated by a desire to dispose

of the embarrassing allegations that Stobie had made.

He said that, during Stobie's bail application, it became clear the authorities "had in their possession since 1990 over 120 pages of conversations with Stobie during which he admitted that he was a Special Branch informer and that the information he passed to the Special Branch was sufficient to have saved Pat Finucane's life.

"I have five hours of interviews with Stobie...that is 10 pages of notes. They [the police] had 122--they wanted the names in my notes yet their own notes are peppered with names.

"What was motivating people in this case was embarrassment, embarrassment over the Pat Finucane affair. I think there was an element of punishment as far as I was concerned because I had messed up the script somewhat by writing the Billy Stobie story."

Moloney's conducted his interview with Stobie on the understanding that he would not make it public if Stobie believed that his life or liberty were in danger. After Stobie's arrest earlier this year, Moloney ran the interview.

Compelling evidence has emerged that precise information about the plans for the UDA attack was available to the authorities but was not passed on to Finucane.

The role of British army agent Brian Nelson in the affair has been well documented, and claims have been made during recent court hearings that

an informer within the ranks of the UDA, William Stobie, also gave vital details to the RUC before the murder.

Subsequent official investigations completely failed to resolve the many disturbing issues arising from the killing, and a team of detectives under the direction of the new Metropolitan police commissioner John Stevens eventually reopened the case. To the astonishment of many observers, the Stevens team devoted considerable resources to a legal action against Moloney, who had previously carried out an interview with Stobie.

National Union of Journalists (NUJ) Irish organizer Seamus Dooley said the court decision was a victory for journalism and common sense. He added that it represented a blow to the authorities' attempt to undermine the independence and integrity of the media.

"The Stevens inquiry team has sought to take possession of Ed Moloney's interview notes as part of a trawling exercise," he said. "The high court ruling seriously undermined the concept that state authorities may engage in random fishing expeditions."

Pat Finucane's brother Martin pointed out that the court ruling showed once again the inadequacy of the investigation so far.

"It raises a lot of questions about Pat's murder. While it is known that loyalists killed Pat, the mere fact that the RUC and military knew about it, we believe, shows they wanted to see him murdered," he said, adding, "We base this on the evidence that they sat on for the last 10 years."

(continued from Page 1)

Whoopi Goldberg and Who singer Roger Daltrey.

The PEC urges people to contact NBC and voice disapproval of "The Magical Legend." Contact NBC at its email address, programming@nbc.com.

Collusion Continues

THE RUC in early Nov. informed hundreds of nationalists that their British military files are in the hands of loyalists, including one group operating out of an Orange Hall in County Antrim. The files are believed to contain detailed, high-

level classified information, suggesting that their origin is MI5's "anti-terrorist" division and not the locally-recruited Royal Irish Regiment. According to reports, some of the details were compiled as recently as 1997, three years after the IRA began its cease-fire.

Action Requests

Please make the telephone calls or write the letters below. Mention that you are a PEC member.

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

Message: As statesman George Mitchell struggles to overcome the obstacles that beset the Northern Ireland peace process, I urge you to maintain your interest and presence in that process. Surely, you have done more than your predecessors in bringing Ireland close to a just and lasting peace. Please use your good offices to keep peace in Ireland on the agenda of the potential Democratic contenders for the White House in 2000.

Contact: Likely Democratic presidential contenders **Al Gore**, P.O. Box 24837, Nashville, TN 37202; and **Bill Bradley**, 395 Pleasant Valley Way, W. Orange, NJ 07052; and likely Republican presidential contender **George Bush**, Bush for President, P.O. Box 1902, Austin, TX 78767-1902

Message: I urge you to place the Northern Ireland peace process at the top of you campaign agenda as you campaign for your party's nomination as the next presidential candidate. Openly support peace and equality in Northern Ireland. Kindly respond to this correspondence with a letter stating your position on the Irish peace process.

(continued from Page 2)

November 3

The Mitchell review adjourns as the former senator prepares his report of its proceedings and the failure of the signatories to the Agreement to implement its terms. Mitchell requests a report on the decommissioning impasse from the chairman of the decommissioning body as he briefs Blair and Clinton on the review.

November 4

Mitchell says he will not impose a deadline on the review process, but Sinn Fein negotiator Martin McGuinness says that the process should not be allowed to drag on indefinitely.

November 6

SDLP leader John Hume says the peace process has given too much attention to disarmament.

November 9

Reports from Belfast claim that the IRA has provided a statement to the parties reviewing the peace process. The statement says the organization will nominate a representative to work with the decommissioning body. At the same time, Sinn Fein, in a bid to break the peace process deadlock, is poised to issue a statement deploring political violence. Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern says that the Republic will not scrap Article Two of the Irish constitution, claiming sovereignty over the North, until the Mitchell Agreement is implemented in full.

November 12

Mitchell adjourns the review process until Nov. 15. The UUP denies reports that it has rejected the IRA's and Sinn Fein's latest efforts to break through the impasse. UUP member John Taylor says he opposes the new proposals, adding that Sinn Fein is "irrelevant" because the party has claimed it has no influence over the IRA.

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