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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 23, Number 2

February 1998

The Charter for Change Must Succeed

An urgent **RESOLUTION CAMPAIGN** to support the *Charter for Change* in Northern Ireland is underway in the U.S. The campaign, directed to President Clinton, needs massive support right now.

The first bodies to adopt the resolution were the Legislature of Rockland County, New York (thanks to legislator **Thomas Morahan**), and the Uniformed Firefighters Association in New York City (thanks to **Charles Bohan**, a union officer). Both bodies did so at the request of PEC. Support has also come in from the New York City Council, which represents 8 million people, and the New York State AFL-CIO, among others. Similar efforts are underway across the US.

The resolution, which is directed to President Clinton, is designed to let him and Vice-President Al Gore know that concerned Americans support the Charter for Change and expect them to promote its success.

The Charter for Change was drafted by nationalist activists and draws broad support within the north's nationalist community. The following excerpt from the Charter sums up its purpose: "All people living in the North of Ireland are entitled to receive full parity of esteem and equality of treatment with one another. Delivering these fundamental rights is a prerequisite to, and is not dependent upon, any negotiated settlement..."

A copy of the resolution--ready to be photocopied--appears as one of this month's R&Ds.

Informed people agree that the cause of the conflict in the North is the British government's denial of basic democratic rights to the nationalist community. After almost 30 years of conflict, those rights are still not guaranteed and may never be guaranteed. Unlike the United States, Northern Ireland has no Bill of Rights to guarantee democratic rights. This requires that the British

government immediately ensure **through legislation** that these basic democratic rights are guaranteed to all citizens.

Continued page 4

Propositions For Heads Of Agreement

As we go to press the British and Irish governments have announced their proposal to get the peace talks underway. The proposal is called, "Propositions For Heads of Agreement." Its main points are:

1. balanced constitutional change, based on the principle of consent,
2. make changes to the Irish Constitution and to British constitutional legislation,
3. N Ireland Assembly elected by a system of proportional representation,
4. a new British-Irish agreement to replace the Anglo-Irish Agreement,
5. bi-annual meeting of a new intergovernmental "Council of the Isles" involving members from London, Northern Ireland, Dublin, Scotland and Wales,

Continued on page 2

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

Nationalists from ... North Belfast were threatened to leave their homes in January. Following a fatal loyalist gun attack on New Year's Eve on the Clifton Tavern, a warning was phoned into the nearby Boundary Bar naming six families and telling them to leave the area within 14 days. The area, a UDA stronghold less than 200 meters from an RUC barracks, has been the site of continual intimidation by loyalists since June last year. (*RM Distribution*, 1/8/98)

The new year opened with a series of alarming economic setbacks across the north. In the first week of January, Greenbank Plastics in Newry and Porter's textile company in Strabane announced they would close, causing the loss of more than 200 jobs. Almost 100 people were paid off when Kennedy's bakery shut down in Belfast in December, with another 500 workers left unemployed when Coats Viyella axed its Lurgan plant in November. It would be unfair to directly blame any of the job losses on political factors, but it can be said with certainty that fears of renewed violence across Northern Ireland did not help... What is required urgently is the stability which only an agreed political settlement can bring. (*Irish News* 1/7/98)

INSIDE

From the North 3
Loyalists Censor CNN . . 5
Poverty in the North . . . 5
Charter for Change..R&D
RUC Harassment...R&D

OUR VIEW

The murders that concluded 1997 on a grim note in Northern Ireland demonstrated the loyalist political parties' and the paramilitaries' talks table strategy: give us what we want or we'll kill another innocent Catholic. It is a blatant show of the gangsterism that has marked loyalist politics since the beginning of the troubles.

Britain is responsible for the perverse logic of this argument. After all, didn't the British government intensify its campaign of violence against the nationalist people when they first called for civil rights thirty years ago?

Loyalists justified their killing spree that left Seamus Dillon and Eddie Treanor dead and others injured by claiming that they did it in retaliation for the INLA's killing of Portadown loyalist Billy "King Rat" Wright, himself responsible for killing numerous Catholics. Next, the loyalists indicated that their "cease-fire"--honored in the breach throughout 1997--might not hold if Northern Secretary Mo Mowlam didn't give them something--anything so long as they had something.

Of course, loyalists are looking for some assurance that they are yet Britain's privileged darlings of the north. If there is an optimistic reading of the intensification of loyalist violence, it is that it is a reaction to Britain's refusal to load the deck in their favor this time. Let us hope Britain will get the lid back on this Pandora's box by taking a page from the nationalist book and refuse to succumb to loyalist pressure.

If the loyalist killer squads do resume their "murder campaign," Prime Minister Blair must immediately go all out to stop them. If he does not, he will be responsible for the collapse of the peace process and the ensuing violence.

Propositions for Heads continued from page 1

6. establishment of a north-south ministerial council and creation of bodies to implement the council's decisions,

7. creation of systems involving both governments covering issues of mutual interest including security and European Union (EU) matters and which would have N.I. Assembly involvement,

8. establishment of a Bill of Rights, and

9. develop measures to deal with security, prisoners, policing and weapons decommissioning.

Reaction to the proposal was mixed. President Clinton encouraged those who have the responsibility to shape the substance of a peace settlement, to seize the moment and begin negotiating details of an agreement. Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble was delighted with it as it would end Ireland's constitutional claim to national unity: his assistant Jeffrey Donaldson predicted the proposals would be a problem for Sinn Fein. PM Bertie Aherne acknowledged the reality of

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a United Kingdom outcome. The SDLP leader John Hume was pleased, stating the document envisioned "leaving the past behind us and building a new future together." Sinn Fein leaders suggested the document does not see a united Ireland in the near future. Sinn Fein chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin said, "there will be no return to partitionist rule." Hardline republicans will never accept a sellout by the Irish government and a return to the status quo.

The document appears to be a sellout to the loyalists and a betrayal of the nationalists-republicans by the British and Irish governments. PEC will give a full analysis in the next newsletter. For now we must all step up our efforts in support of a united Ireland and the Charter for Change Campaign.

During the next several months we may experience our last opportunity to help bring about Ireland's reunification.

Get your friends, relatives, family members, organization members, etc. involved. Get them to write, call, etc. Get them to use the **PEC Telephone Hotline** (914) 429-7849. We provide them the name, address and message.

Turn to page 4

From the North

by Robert W. Heatley, *Belfast (co-founder of the Campaign for Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization)*

The all-party Stormont talks were due to reconvene January 1, 1998 after the Christmas and New Year recess. After two years of stalling on the part of the British government and the unionists, they are supposed to be getting down to discussing the nitty-gritty issues at the core of the dispute. Surprise, surprise, then that in the week preceding the arrival of this moment of truth the unionists should set up a clamor threatening to terminate the talks. Up till this point, Paisley and his lawyer side-kick McCartney, representing the miscalled Democratic Unionist Party and the UK Unionist Party, respectively, had not been engaging in the talks anyhow (nor are they now) and Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party had been doing his best to disrupt them from the inside.

Only the two small Loyalist-Unionist Parties, the Progressive Unionist Party and the Ulster Democratic Party, who represent the sectarian killers of the UVF and the UDA/UFF, respectively, had been, within their own terms, trying to be constructive. But then a strange event happened: loyalist paramilitary Billy "King Rat" Wright was killed in the Maze Prison. The killing took place because of his reputation as a sectarian mass-killer. He had become something of a pariah even to loyalists. Their "Military Command" had wanted him dead. The fact that he was killed by a republican splinter group was helpful to the Unionists. Conspiracy theories, involving British military intelligence etc., abound. Whatever about that, they whipped up a "crisis." The break-away group, formerly led by "King Rat," was given sole blame, which is doubtful, for the renewed campaign of sectarian killings and, in the period of one week, three Catholics were randomly assassinated, with many more wounded, by the group calling itself the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF). Without any foundation whatsoever, Unionism, as a whole -- inside and outside the talks -- started to complain that the talks process was biased against them and that too many "concessions" were being accorded, in a one-sided way, to Republicanism.

The space is not available here to explain just how ridiculous this claim is, but it was employed with good effect by the UVF and the UDA/UFF to threaten to walk out of the talks.

While it was claimed that this was not tantamount to going back to violence, with the ongoing LVF campaign, the community as a whole was not really reassured. In any case, what was the alternative to talking? What other political route was there?

What we were witnessing was a revamped version of an old Orange-Unionist stratagem that is used whenever its ascendancy is threatened, as the case would be with real negotiations underway. It was being implied that an Orange-Unionist "backlash" was in the offing. Croppies, you had better lie down.

How did the British government react to this sectarian violence with the threat of more to come? It reacted in the way that it has always done in the case of Orange-Unionism. It gave in to the loyalists. The Unionists, you see, must never be coerced. Coercion is reserved for the democracy of Ireland, i.e., the nationalists and the republicans. As has been pointed out in this column before (Nov. '97), in the 120 years since the Act of Union until partition, over 100 coercion acts were passed at Westminster to suppress the democracy of Ireland.

We democrats are not asking that a section of the Irish people be subjected to British state violence. We are merely demanding that the British government stand up to Orange-Unionist threats which are intended to maintain the status quo in Northern Ireland. The British have many

non-military ways in which to exercise the necessary persuasion. Instead, the British Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam, rushed into the Maze Prison to talk to men of violence whose own cease-fire was suspect. Yet her government, when in opposition at Westminster, connived with the Tories and the Unionists in stalling all-party talks for 18 months, on the grounds that they could not possibly talk to "men of violence" (the IRA was on cease-fire). Was there some collusion with the LVF going on? The talks process appears to have been saved for the time being, at least, but not only nationalists and republicans are asking: at what price? Even the "moderate" pro-unionist Alliance Party was furious with Dr. Mowlam, accusing her of having handed over the future of the political process to the Loyalist sectarian killers. It ought to be remembered that the political parties representing these people have minimal electoral support.

Throughout the period of the current Stormont talks Trimble of the UUP has been making frequent visits to Prime Minister Blair. Mr. Blair is an ardent Unionist, albeit a Scotsman by birth. Between them they have concocted a plan designed to suck in the Republican part of Ireland into a closer institutional relationship with the UK. Dubbed a Council of the Isles ("British" having been dropped because of sensitivities), it insultingly proposes that the Dail, the parliament of a sovereign politically independent state, should sit along with Westminster and her satellites, the practically powerless devolved assemblies of Scotland and Wales, in a conclave which would include a similarly powerless reconstituted assembly at Stormont in a still-partitioned Ireland.

While this is a provocatively Unionist document, the diehards are still not satisfied. The sole kind of North/South institutions in Ireland contemplatable by them would be

cont. on page 6

**Respond to the
Action Requests on page 6**

**YOU HAVE TO
Use The PEC
Telephone Hotline
914 429-7849**

Ireland's future will shortly be decided, that is, will Ireland remain forever divided, or be reunited?

You are critical to that decision!

It is the job of each of us to make sure that the leaders (Clinton, Blair, Aherne, etc.) are continuously bombarded with letters, calls, faxes, etc.

Charter For Change cont...

The President **WILL NOT** support the Charter unless he quickly receives resolutions adopted by state and local governments, unions, school student bodies and organizations of all sorts, Irish and non-Irish alike, from across the nation. He must also be bombarded with letters, phone calls, faxes, e-mail, etc. The campaign must be massive and continue right up to its success. **Take the following actions as soon as possible.**

1. Make copies of the **RESOLUTION** (see Reproduce & Distribute) and **CEARTA**, from the December 1997 newsletter, for distribution to interested people. (*A copy of CEARTA must be given out with the resolution.*) Get the resolutions adopted by state and local governments, unions, organizations, Irish and non-Irish alike, student bodies, etc. For any information, or to obtain a copy of **Cearta**, contact PEC at 800 777-6807. Make sure that copies of all adopted resolutions are sent to President Clinton and PEC.

2. Contact President Bill Clinton as requested in Action Request #1 on page six, **even if you have already done so.** Get others to contact him. You should contact the President frequently as the talks on Ireland's future move on.

Missouri's American Irish Legacy

By Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

During the great expansion of the U.S. into the western plains, St. Louis, Missouri was the gateway to that epic adventure. Hidden within history are the great contributions of the American-Irish to the formation of Missouri.

In its earliest days, Missouri was a part of the extensive French Territory of North America. The first European to have an impact on Missouri was French Governor-General Marquis de Tracy, a descendant of a Wild Geese Family that fled English oppression in Ireland. Chevalier McCarthy of the French army and Alexander O'Reilly of the Spanish army developed settlements for trade in Missouri in the mid- to late 1700s. The earliest mortgage granted in St. Louis was one to Joseph O'Neill, who was a French-Irish settler. Also, a Mathew Kennedy and a Morrissey and Co. became early developers of St. Louis.

The son of Irish immigrants, Gen. George R. Clark, under orders of Patrick Henry of Revolutionary War fame, led an expedition in the late 1700s to check on the progress of American settlers of Missouri. French Count O'Reilly donated \$70,000 to the Americans to finance the journey. O'Reilly, of New Orleans, was also a descendant of the Wild Geese.

In the early 1800s, when Missouri needed an army to defend it from outside threat, Governor Delassus organized a unit in which the names Sullivan, McCoy, and Regan served with honor in battle. Later, Irish immigrants settled in the Missouri territories. In 1826, Irish-born U.S. Army Captain John Whistler, who founded Fort Dearborn (now Chicago), set up a garrison in St. Louis. Whistler's grandson, James McNeil Whistler, became a famous American painter.

In 1808, Irish immigrant Joseph Charles founded the first newspaper west of the Mississippi River, the *Missouri Gazette*. County Down native William Christy designed the whole North St. Louis section of the city. Irish-born Jeremiah Connors donated several lots on Washington Avenue in St. Louis to Bishop Dubourg for the founding of St. Louis University. Colonel John O'Fallon, a native of Roscommon and an army surgeon under George Washington in the Revolutionary War, became St. Louis's first prominent business leader. Francis Redmond, also a native of Ireland, set up the first schools in St. Louis. The father of the University of Missouri was County Tyrone native Dr. James Rollins.

Missouri is called the "Show Me State." The hard work and ingenuity of the American-Irish certainly left a great legacy to that state. (*Special thanks to Edward Kelley of Dorchester, Mass., for use of his library.*)

Further Action Requested for Hunger Stamp

The United States Postal Service (USPS) has recently issued stamps memorializing the meaningful--breast cancer, Christmas, women in the military--and the superfluous--Bugs Bunny. The USPS should now honor the 150th anniversary of Ireland's Great Hunger of 1845-50, a cataclysmic event that changed the face of the U.S. Stamp collectors' periodicals are a forum for collectors to express their views, as well as for the USPS to market its products and take a reading of collectors' interests. We urge you to write to *Linn's Stamp News* and call on the USPS to issue a Great Hunger commemorative stamp.

Turn to Action Request #2 on page 6

Suggested Resolution for city, village, town, county and state governments, union locals, for any American organization, etc.

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Detach here before making copies

Charter for Change Resolution

Whereas we begin a new year, there is a rare moment of hope in Ireland. All Americans of good will want to see the peace talks in Belfast, under the chairmanship of an American Special Envoy, bring about a just and lasting peace,

Whereas people in Northern Ireland, who for years have been leading peaceful resistance to sectarian bigotry, after reflecting on what changes and guarantees of rights are needed for all citizens, nationalists and unionists alike, to be able to build a future as equals, have designed **The Charter for Change**. The Charter corresponds to the basic ideas of equality and liberty, and democracy and civil rights enshrined in sacred documents, such as the American Bill of Rights, in domestic and international law, and simple fair play,

Whereas the denial of equality and full rights for all has been the root cause of the conflict in Northern Ireland. All people everywhere should have these rights, and so should people in the North of Ireland no matter what governance structures are negotiated by the parties and the governments by May 1998,

Whereas the American role in the Irish peace process arose because Americans, Irish and non-Irish alike, demanded it, and President Clinton wisely and courageously offered to bring U.S. encouragement to bear,

Therefore, be it resolved that the _____
_____ warmly welcomes and endorses the **Charter for Change** as a democratic idea which points the way to peace, justice and reconciliation in Ireland. We will send this resolution and copy of the **Charter for Change** promptly to President Clinton and his foreign policy advisors **so that he knows what Irish America expects out of these talks**, and so that the high hopes of this moment are fully realized. We will also send a copy to the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC and anyone else we deem appropriate.

Signature

Title

One in Three Catholics in RUC Face Harassment

[Excerpt from the Dec. 11, 1997 Irish News e-mail edition]

By Nevin Farrell

[Editor's note: The Newsletter has long argued that the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), Northern Ireland's heavily militarized police force, should be disbanded because it is an anti-Catholic, discriminatory organization. The RUC's own research supports our argument.]

A LEAKED police document which shows high levels of discrimination and harassment against Catholic members of the force by fellow officers has led to further calls ... for the RUC to be disbanded.

RUC Chief Constable Ronnie Flanagan has vowed to erase such harassment and says an education program will be introduced.

The police document, details of which appeared in the *Independent* newspaper, is sure to hit attempts to increase the numbers of Catholics in the police.

The document, entitled "Force Research Branch--Survey of Religious and Political Harassment and Discrimination in the RUC," showed that at least one-third --29 percent--of Catholic members had experienced religious harassment from colleagues.

The findings came after questionnaires were sent to each of the RUC's 12,800 regular and reserve officers ... around one-third were returned, but the survey was unpopular amongst many officers and several were returned ripped up.

The document will be seen in some quarters as giving solid statistical foundation to criticisms that the RUC is in need of urgent reform.

The document said that in most cases, instances of discrimination were not officially reported by Catholic officers who believed they would be victimized as a result or else nothing would be done about their concerns.

There were a few crumbs of comfort for the police authorities in the report which said that a majority of Catholic officers rated the problem of religious harassment as not serious, and many believed it was now less of a problem while more than 40 percent of Catholics felt discrimination was lessening. Half of the Catholic officers believed the force as a whole treated them equally with Protestants and 13 percent thought they were treated better.

Of the Catholics who responded to the survey, 280 said they had experienced harassment. This figure represented 63 percent of Catholic respondents and 29 percent of the force's Catholic membership.

The report said: "These results tell us that at least 29 percent of all 964 Catholics in the RUC, and three percent of all Protestants, have experienced religious harassment during their careers. These levels could be higher if others who had experienced harassment did not reply to the survey."

The report said the most common form of religious harassment was sectarian jokes, banter or sectarian songs.

Other Catholics also reported experiencing inappropriate displays of flags and emblems, displays of sectarian posters, graffiti, circulation of sectarian notes or letters, isolation and non-cooperation....

For further information
contact:

**American Ireland
Education Foundation-PEC**
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Stony Point, NY 10980
Toll free # 800 777-6807

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Overhaul the RUC

The leak of the RUC document coincided with a report released by the Belfast-based human rights group, the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ), which finds that the RUC should undergo an immediate overhaul rather than undertake small, gradual changes.

Among the suggestions is a "register for outside interests" of RUC officers who are members of Protestant marching groups and the Freemasons.

The report also finds that:

- political will is a major factor preventing or facilitating successful change;
- fear and denial of the need to change have been features in many jurisdictions;
- policing problems and therefore solutions are interrelated. Issues have to be addressed in a holistic fashion.

The report also called on the British government to set up a "truth commission" to examine shoot-to-kill issues and the Bloody Sunday killings.

A new commission on policing should be established to canvas views as widely as possible within and outside the Six Counties, the report said.

"Given the [enormousness] of change that is involved (the chief constable has talked of a halving in numbers), such a body would provide the support necessary to bring about effective change," according to one recommendation.

The CAJ also attacks the RUC for being "unrepresentative, highly militarized and insufficiently accountable."

Poverty in North is "Unacceptable" -- UN Committee

by Vinny McCormack

This article is an excerpt from December 1997 Just News, the newsletter of the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice.

- Levels of poverty in the U.K. among certain segments of the population, particularly Northern Ireland, are "unacceptable."
- That the rate of unemployment among Catholics in Northern Ireland is approximately twice that of Protestants and substantially above the national rate of employment is "alarming."
- Vulnerable groups such as Travelers "do not receive sufficient protection against evictions."
- Current government provision in relation to integrated schools is "ineffective and likely to preserve the status quo."
- The government needs "to take more effective steps to combat discrimination against ethnic minorities, women, and Catholics in Northern Ireland."
- The Irish language in Northern Ireland should have the same degree of financial support and status as Scottish Gaelic and Welsh.

These are the trenchant criticisms of a key UN committee in its report and recommendations published Dec. 5, 1997, following its consideration of the UK's record in relation to the UN Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

The report indicates that the UN is far from satisfied that the rights covered by the Covenant are being fully implemented. This report is of particular significance because the committee had up-to-date reports and oral testimony from the main UK government

Loyalists Censor CNN

Media attending the Portadown funeral of loyalist killer and former Loyalist Volunteer Force leader Billy "King Rat" Wright felt the effect of loyalist intimidation when loyalists took tapes and other gear from CNN and other news reporters who got too close to the action. Loyalists forced a BBC reporter to give up the tape in his video camera.

Earlier that day, loyalists placed phone calls to shops, as well as sent letters and notes, telling them to close for the day. CNN did not reveal that their equipment had been taken by loyalists following the incident, according to reports.

This is a blatant act of censorship, and we urge readers to contact CNN to find out whether the network will report on its encounter with loyalists in Portadown. Call CNN at 404-827-8410.

departments; therefore, their comments take into account the policies and intentions of the new Labor administration.

Although the report covers the UK as a whole, the criticisms made indicate that the committee was particularly concerned that many groups in Northern Ireland have inadequate access to the economic, social, and cultural life of the community. We believe that CAJ's written and oral submissions to the committee increased their awareness of social and economic disadvantages here, and this is reflected in their conclusions that government action here falls far short of the rights covered by the Covenant.

The report follows our interventions as well as those from trade unions and many other groups from Northern Ireland. The recommendations also reflect oral evidence from the Standing Advisory Committee on Human Rights (SACHR) based on its recent report. Many of our own comments to the committee echoed those of SACHR, particularly in relation to the potential of Policy Appraisal and Fair Treatment and Targeting Social Need. Clearly, the committee accepted the force of these arguments, for it recommended that "a Human Rights Assessment be made an integral part of every proposed legislative or policy initiative" and that social assistance "should be more carefully targeted to alleviate poverty in the UK and Northern Ireland"--

particularly in relation to the long-term unemployed.

The committee closely questioned a UK government delegation, including civil servants from six of the main departments, over three three-hour sessions. In view of the fact that questions relating to Northern Ireland were raised repeatedly, it was disappointing that this strong delegation did not include any Northern Ireland representation. Nevertheless, some of the comments of the UK delegation were illuminating. For example, they indicated that a mere 3.2 million pounds had been spent in 1996/97 on Irish language projects, a miniscule 0.0005 of total government spending.

Committee members also expressed incredulity that one person in five in the UK (the figure is similar for Northern Ireland) describes him or herself as disabled. It was pointed out to the committee that it is widely accepted that this represents disguised unemployment, because those unable to work because of sickness do not appear in the unemployment statistics. Thus, the true extent of unemployment is very much higher than the 5.2 percent UK average cited.

This brief article has covered only the most relevant aspects of the report, though other aspects--such as, human rights education, children's rights, and the rights of the homeless--have a clear resonance for us.

Action Requests

Please communicate the messages below, in your own words, or as is. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, etc., do the same. Mention your membership in the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC.

1. President Bill Clinton

The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Ph# 202 456-1111
Fax# 202 456-2461
president@whitehouse.gov

Message: Please urge that the solution to the British-Irish conflict will lead to a united Ireland. I ask also that you support the Charter for Change in the North.

2. **Letters Editor**, Linn's Stamp News, P.O. Box 29
Sidney, OH 45365
linns@linns.com

Message: It is time the USPS honored Ireland's Great Hunger of 1845-47, a cataclysmic event that changed the face of the U.S. More than 44 million Americans claim Irish heritage. The 150th anniversary of the famine has been commemorated in the U.S. and in other parts of the world where the famine Irish emigrated.

Irish Art Draws a Blank on Great Hunger

by Sandy Carlson, *Connecticut*

The horses that belonged to the ruling Anglo-Irish Ascendancy during the Great Hunger of the 1840s lived better than the Irish peasants of the time. The horses are also survived by a better historical record of their lives in paintings commissioned by their owners. Paintings of Irish horses depict a world untouched by the economic horrors that Irish peasants faced. Indeed, Irish art of the mid- to late 19th century paid no attention to the grim realities of the Irish countryside--infested, as it was, with poverty, pain, and death.

"The Great Hunger is notable for its absence from Irish art of the time," said Dr. John Lahey, president of Quinnipiac College in Hamden, CT, and former grand marshal of the New York City St. Patrick's Day Parade. An active proponent of Great Hunger education in public schools, Lahey was a guest lecturer at the Yale Center for British Art, which exhibited Irish art from the Burns collection last autumn. "As a result," Lahey said, "no artistic record of what was arguably the worst disaster in 19th century Europe was passed down through the generations."

Illustrators who sent to England images of women and children grubbing for potatoes among rocks or of families emigrating from Ireland were the only artists who captured the reality of the Great Hunger. The effect: the Great Hunger was erased from cultural memory. "Irish-Americans know more about that experience than most Irish people because our being here is a direct result of that disaster," Lahey said.

From the North cont. from page 3

purely of the cosmetic kind, the development of which would lie in the hands of the proposed new Northern Ireland assembly. On a proportionality basis, the Unionists, for the time being at least, would be likely to perpetuate their domination. Furthermore, the Anglo-Irish Agreement would have to go, thereby ending Dublin's "interference" in the north.

Different accounts of Dublin's reaction to this proposal have been given in the press, but on the whole it is, as would be expected, negative. One paper described the reaction of the Irish authorities as "furious." Needless to say, nationalists in the North, the SDLP and Sinn Fein, will not accept this either. If Mr. Blair really thinks that this nonsense constitutes the basis for a "lasting settlement" (his words) of the Northern Ireland problem, then he is already yet another failed British prime minister insofar as Ireland is concerned.

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