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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 23, Number 8

August 1998

We Have a Long Road Ahead

Excerpts from an opinion piece by Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams, MP

Eighty percent of those who voted in the Assembly election voted for change. Our collective task now must be to build on the progress which has been made....The new measures for governance of the North and for human rights are a clear admission that it is not a normal society. The all-Ireland Ministerial Council is an acknowledgment of the need for all-Ireland structures. Clearly, therefore, the Mitchell Agreement has not removed conflict, its causes, or its consequences. It has given us a basis from which to build....

However, within the British establishment, there remains a strong ideological commitment to unionism. This is evident in recent events. Ongoing concessions to the unionist agenda of no change are not acceptable. The selection of the Policing Commission, the handling of the prisoners bill, the refusal to move on demilitarization, the decision to push an Orange march through a nationalist part of west Belfast--all of these have caused a cumulative damage to the process. Most immediately, the handling of the Orange Order's [standoff on the nationalist] Garvaghy Road will be scrutinized in this context. For nationalists, these issues are a real test of the Britain's commitment to deliver real change.

All of the institutions [outlined in the Mitchell Agreement] have to be established speedily. This means that the shadow executive and the all-Ireland Ministerial Council will come into being in the transitional period. Other elements of the agreement must also be advanced without further delay. The Policing Commission must deliver a new beginning to policing....All of the political prisoners should be speedily released. A comprehensive program of demilitarization should begin without further delay.

We need a wholehearted commitment to ensuring political, social, economic and cultural rights. Nationalists, on a basis of equality, must be represented in all institutions and at the highest levels of decision making....Equality of treatment and full human rights protection must be guaranteed. These are rights, not privileges. They are not negotiable.

The British government has a heavy responsibility at this time to ensure that the agreement, which was achieved with such difficulty and which is so finely balanced, is not overturned or undermined by concessions to unionism. The responsibility to deliver on all these commitments falls back on the British and Irish governments.

We are prepared to discuss with the UUP leader now, in the Assembly, and in the executive how to further our shared vision of a new situation in which, as the poet John Hewitt wrote: "Each may grasp his neighbor's hand as friend."

The multi-party talks have finished, the referendum is passed, the electorate have chosen the Assembly but the peace process is not yet over. We need civil and human rights, equality of treatment, and plain justice. Sinn Fein is determined to play a full and active role in moving the process forward and achieving these just goals.

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

The family of Peter McBride, whom two British soldiers murdered in 1992, were refused a meeting with British armed forces minister John Reid for the second time last week. A military assistant to the minister commenting on the request and the possibility of an early release and return to the regiment for the Scots Guards who are currently serving life sentences for the murder said these were "not matters on which he could or should intervene." Paul O'Connor, a spokesperson for the Derry-based human rights group the Pat Finucane Centre who asked for the meeting on the family's behalf, responded: "If Dr. Reid is unable to discuss or intervene in any aspects of this case, why did he meet with members of the Guardsmen Fisher and Wright Release Group on May 13? What did they talk about at this meeting, given that these are matters in which, in his own words, 'he could or should not intervene'?" (RM Distribution 6/17/98)

James McDonald, independent assessor of military complaints in Northern Ireland, revealed in his annual report that limitations in his role had led to a "serious gap" in the complaints procedure. Claims of

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OUR VIEW

As the Orange Order attempted to march down the Garvaghy Road last month, its members puzzled over the democratic role of the barbed-wire fencing them in from their traditional course through a nationalist area.

The Parades Commission had rerouted the parade from its traditional route in consideration of the nationalists who live along the Garvaghy Road. No nationalist on that road denies Orangemen the civil right to march. Rather, nationalists object to the belligerent, coat-trailing exercise of fellow citizens who consider nationalists to be second-class citizens. The Order has played a central role at official and paramilitary levels in oppressing nationalists. Thus, the barbed wire was an ironic British attempt to prevent loyalists from abusing nationalist rights. If it is undemocratic, it is because the loyalists refuse to live democratically and the British know it.

So much for the new, improved version of Northern Ireland a la the Mitchell Agreement. This is sectarian politics as usual, loyalism as usual, and the British failing to insist on democracy as usual. In early July, the RUC arrested 92 people and confiscated 1,000 petrol bombs. Rioters were responsible for more than 400 petrol bomb attacks, 437 attacks on British forces, 44 RUC injuries, 136 hijackings, 166 attacks on houses and other buildings, 279 attacks on vehicles, and the murder of three children.

The US government must continue to pressure the British government to ensure that democracy take hold. Please contact New Jersey Senator Donald Payne (see Action Request #2) and thank him for urging the Parades Commission to reroute an Orange parade from the nationalist Ormeau Road in Belfast. Ask him to continue pressing the British to uphold both nationalist and unionist civil rights with regard to the parades issue.

PEACE PROCESS UPDATE

June 18

Long Kesh IRA chief Padraic Wilson says he sees no likelihood of the IRA's surrendering weapons to the British, but he does not rule out the prospect of the IRA's "voluntary" decommissioning of arms as "a natural development of the peace process once [the IRA] gets a sense that the arrangements envisaged in the [Mitchell] agreement are beginning to function."

June 29

Northern Ireland Alliance Party leader Lord John Alderdice resigns as head of the Alliance Party after it fails to win a cabinet seat in the Assembly. The party will not be entitled to one of the ministerial posts or a place in the ruling executive. Alderdice is then appointed as temporary speaker of the new Assembly.

July 1

UUP leader David Trimble is elected as First Minister of the new Northern Ireland Assembly, and SDLP deputy leader Seamus Mallon is elected as his Deputy First

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Minister. On the unionist side, 30 out of 57 vote for the Trimble-Mallon partnership. On the nationalist side, 24 vote, all in favor. Sinn Fein, having previously backed the appointments, abstains.

Trimble makes his maiden speech as First Minister of Northern Ireland, expressing "gravest forebodings" for the North over the Drumcree Orange parade. He opens a special debate at the Assembly, declaring that the Parades Commission's decision to ban the march from the Garvaghy Road has "pitched us into a dangerous situation where confrontation is looming."

July 2

Loyalists torch 10 Roman Catholic churches in Northern Ireland. Three churches are extensively damaged.

July 4

Tension mounts as loyalists continue a stand-off outside the Drumcree Church. There are disturbances throughout

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From the North

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

The self-styled loyal orders hold more than 3,000 marches each year. In July, they reach a crescendo-- especially on the 12th. Hordes of people rush off to holiday destinations abroad to get away from the 'mad season.' Those who can't afford to do so are trapped as Orangemen, with their Lambeg war drums and bands, blast out tunes fiercely hostile to the aspirations and beliefs of nationalists.

Only about two dozen of these parades are contentious because the others take place in areas where the communities are unionist-inclined, although growing numbers of Protestants now abhor these atavistic spectacles. They do so silently for fear of reprisal.

The Orange Order is a political-cum-religious organization and an integral part of the Ulster Unionist Council, the governing body of the UUP. Only with regard to the contentious ones does a major problem arise, a problem attributable to the loyal orders. Since the setting up of the six-county segment of the UK state in this part of Ireland in 1920, they have been, as the major agents of England's colonial strategy, the top dogs in the devolved government scheme, exercising an overall hegemony within civic society.

With the new dispensation of the Mitchell 'Agreement,' they are being required to treat the nationalist community as having a right to equality of treatment. They cannot get their minds around this concept, and when nationalist communities object to the few marches that insist on going through their areas the loyal orders' instinct is to rush to battle stations. However, since the rest of the world, including a great many people in Britain itself, sees and understands the supremacist and triumphalist motivations underpin-

ning their insistence upon marching through areas that don't want them, they have been careful this year to brush up on their spindoctoring skills.

The loyal orders have sought to present themselves as the persecuted and aggrieved ones with everyone else being insensitive to their hurt sensibilities. Since they have been used for decades to marching anywhere and everywhere, anyone who objects is "trampling on their civil liberties." With DUP leader Ian Paisley at their head, these people have striven to present themselves as innocent victims. The loyal orders refuse to recognize the government-appointed Parades Commission, whose legally binding re-routing of the Drumcree march they have defied; they will not consult the residents (that would be to treat them as equals); and they are, at this point, persisting in their obduracy.

As a result of this intransigence, they have instigated a situation in which the community as a whole is subjected to pro-Orange mob rule on the streets with barricades, car burnings, gangs of roving hooligans, stones and petrol bombs through the windows of vulnerable Catholic homes, canceled bus and train services, and generalized tension and fear insofar as the overwhelmingly non-participant community is concerned.

It was inevitable that something really terrible would happen, and it did. Three boys whose parents are of a mixed Catholic-Protestant marriage were burned to death in their beds in the early hours of the morning by crazed sectarian crazed fire-bombers.

Outsiders can't understand why it is important for the loyal orders to march through a community which does not want them, given all the trouble that it causes. Drumcree is symbolic.

If the loyal orders continue to march through such areas on their own terms, they will have, in effect, rendered the Mitchell Agreement into nothing more than a platitudinous piece of paper. The Orange Order leadership was, on the whole, against the equality aspects of this accord, and so are the politicians associated with its present disingenuous "civil rights campaign." Their problem is that they cannot distinguish a civil right from an uncivil rite. Ironically, Paisley obstructed the civil rights marches of the 1960s/70s and tried to beat them off the streets, even though they were almost entirely corralled into nationalist ghettos.

The BBC has presented the crisis as one arising from the intransigence of two extremist communities. Yet, it is a conflict between the loyal orders and the Parades Commission, whose legal rulings the former will not accept. The residents' groups have consistently agreed to take part in consultations. Nationalists have no great admiration for the Parades Commission, either. Its politically-inspired decision to allow an Orange Lodge down the nationalist Ormeau Road in Belfast was seen by everybody as inconsistent and just plain daft. The Orange extremists made use of it: "If we can march Ormeau, why then can we not march through Drumcree?"

The march passed off peacefully in Ormeau because of the silent protest mounted by the residents in respect for the three murdered boys--Richard (10), Mark (9) and Jason (8) Quinn.

These compromises end up allowing Orange feet on the Garvaghy Road. Rather than the obdurate leaders of Orangeism being marked out as indisputably the culprits, the BBC facilitates the demonization of the democratically-chosen leader of the residents' group, seldom referring to his elected councilor status or displaying equality of esteem by referring to him by his preferred Irish form of his name.

Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

serious assault...cannot be investigated by the military complaints watchdog. Informal complaints, however, can be investigated, and the report shows that they almost doubled between 1996 and 1997. The increase in complaints, he suggests, has arisen not only from heightened community tensions but also from a growing confidence in the effectiveness of the complaints procedure. The report highlights the case of two south Armagh men arrested in connection with the murder of Lance Bombardier Stephen Restorick, shot dead in a sniper attack in Feb., 1997. The men allege that soldiers beat them at a holding center at Gough barracks. The report explains that because the complaint is of a serious assault, it falls outside the independent assessor's role. Also, because it suggests that no RUC officers took part in the assault, it also falls outside the remit of the Independent Commission for Police Complaints. The report calls on the secretary of state to address the deficit. It is understood that two options--extending the powers of the watchdog or giving over greater powers to the new police ombudsman--should be recommended. (*Irish News* 6/19/98)

British soldiers and RUC have raided the nationalist Kilwilkie estate in Lurgan....Soldiers and RUC officers threatened local residents verbally and physically. Dozens of homes and the community center were raided, and community property was taken away. Throughout the day-long siege, RUC clashed with local youths, with plastic bullets exchanged for petrol bombs in what seemed a deliberate effort to provoke nationalists ahead of next weekend. (*RM Distribution* 6/30/98)

Early American-Irish in North Carolina

by Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

Hidden in the history of our southern states is the American Irish influence in settling them. For example, the American Irish played a central role in the settling of North Carolina from as early as 1714. In that year, a Michael Murphy settled land in Paquotank. A William Murphy developed a settlement at Cypress Swamp in 1720.

During the American Revolution, Cornelius Harnett, a native of Dublin, Ireland, and a merchant at Cape Fear, North Carolina, became a supporter of Washington and a delegate to the Continental Congress. Also, Burke County was named in honor of Thomas Burke, a Galway native, Revolutionary War officer, and first governor of North Carolina. Burke was also a friend of George Washington.

President Andrew Jackson was born in 1767 in Mecklenburg County. His father and mother had settled in North Carolina after emigrating from Ireland. Elizabeth Jackson was very active in the American fight for independence from Britain. Though she became a widow five days after Andrew was born, Mrs. Jackson nevertheless helped in America's fight for freedom. During the Revolution, she was to suffer further personal sorrows.

In 1779, the British army occupied this state and constantly attacked Charleston. Andrew's older brother died in battle against British forces that year. British commanders Cornwallis and Tarleton led crown forces in burning down villages in North Carolina. At Waxhaw, the British captured 400 Carolinians. British Commander Tarleton ordered the people to be beaten and massacred. Many died. Yet, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson worked for days to bring help to the wounded. A British officer named Coffin struck young Andrew with a sword for not obeying orders to clean his boots. Coffin later struck Andrew's brother, Robert, with a sword. Robert died of his wounds.

In the War of 1812, the future American Irish president Andrew Jackson handed Britain a major defeat at the battle of New Orleans.

Source: Writings of Michael J. O'Brien, historian, 1915

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the north as loyalists vent their anger at the Parade Commission's rerouting of their parade from the nationalist Garvaghy Road. Barricades are set up on main roads in Belfast, and hijackings are reported in County Antrim. Nevertheless, thousands of loyalists pass unhindered through the RUC's ring of steel around Portadown.

DUP leader Ian Paisley makes no secret of his intention of replacing

Trimble as the leading unionist in the new Northern Assembly, where he needs to sway just six or seven of Trimble's supporters to collapse the talks agreement. Orange Leader Joel Patton of the hardline Spirit of Drumcree faction predicts the collapse of the Mitchell Agreement.

Meanwhile, the Parades Commission grants permission for an Orange parade to pass along the nationalist Lower Ormeau Road Sunday.

Human Rights Must be Upheld

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Though the Mitchell agreement reflects an understanding of the relationship between human rights and a lasting peace, the British and Irish governments have much to do yet to ensure basic human rights in Ireland.

So says Human Rights Watch (HRW). The international organization argues that: 1. human rights in Ireland are essential to the success of new political arrangements; 2. human rights must be implemented at the same time that the governments create new political structures; and 3. the governments must recognize human rights as universal and inalienable, not a by-product of the agreement.

HRW has proposed steps the governments might take to better establish and ensure human rights in Ireland. Highlights from the group's April, 1998, report follow.

Human Rights Standards

The agreement requires the British government to incorporate the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) into law. HRW suggests that the British government discontinue its derogation from Article 6 of the ECHR, which guarantees the right of detainees to be brought before a judge within a reasonable period. This derogation "mocks the crucial importance of the convention's fair trial provisions," according to HRW.

HRW also suggests that the British government look outside of the North when it drafts the Bill of Rights for the North and draw on international expertise in this area as well as from the community in general to create a "broad, participatory process" rather than rely on the input of specially-selected members of a new Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

Likewise, the human rights group urges the Irish government to end its emergency powers of detention and

the use of special criminal courts for emergency-related offenses and bring its justice system in line with internationally-recognized due process standards.

Social Inclusion

HRW urges the British government to end the national security exceptions that exist under the current fair employment legislation. Such exceptions "are often invoked to discriminate against persons on the basis of their political views or membership in a particular ethnic, religious, or social group," according to HRW. The government should take additional measures to close the gap in economic opportunity between Catholics and Protestants.

In addition, the British government should ensure the protection of minority rights by fully implementing the agreement's requirement that it promote the Irish language, remove restrictions on the use of the language, and secure by law a place for the Irish language in schools and the media.

Normal Security

HRW calls on the British to dismantle the emergency regime in the North. The organization is concerned that the British government will merely replace the current emergency laws with one statute and present it as "a non-emergency domestic anti-terrorism law." HRW encourages the British government to exclude provisions from its current laws that violate international standards of human rights.

Normal Policing

HRW welcomes the agreement's call for reforming the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and the role of international representatives on the commission overseeing this project. However, HRW also calls on the

British to address urgent policing concerns immediately—not at the end of the body's work. These issues are the marching season, the report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers Regarding the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, and allegations of police abuse and negligence.

The UN report found that the RUC has engaged "in activities which constitute intimidation, harassment, [and] hindrance" of defense lawyers in the course of their duties. The report also calls for an investigation into the 1989 murder of defense lawyer Patrick Finucane, whom loyalists killed with the help of British double agent Brian Nelson.

Finally, HRW also welcomes the agreement's call for a review of the criminal justice system in the north but believes the justice system should be considered in the context of policing and emergency legislation, not in isolation.

"The new accord is disturbingly vague concerning judicial reform, the prosecution process, and the legacy in Northern Ireland and Britain of miscarriages of justice with respect to defendants charged with political offenses," says HRW. The organization urges the British "to define carefully and execute a full and impartial review of the role of the judiciary and prosecutor's office in the administration of justice in Northern Ireland with an eye toward creating judicial and prosecution arms of the system that are free from political influence."

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Voting Day: All Quiet on the West Belfast Front

by Charles P. Mullaney

Professor, Legal Studies, Western Connecticut State University, Danbury, Connecticut

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On Friday, May 22, voters in Ireland cast an overwhelming "yes" to the prospects of peace and local democracy. If you believed the Irish press, seismic changes were in the offing.

My research grant afforded me the luxury of being anywhere in the North, so I focused on West Belfast, thinking that any election day excitement was bound to unfold in this epicenter of the Troubles.

The polls opened at 7 AM, and I drove to the Corpus Christi Youth Center in Ballymurphy, a republican stronghold. Four RUC officers guarded the entrance to the polling station. Seeking to ingratiate them, I proudly announced that I was not a journalist but a professor and I wanted to go inside to observe.

"Not a chance," said one.

I had to do some fast thinking. After all, I know elections. I was a three-term selectman and twice a candidate for state representative. "Is there an election official I can speak to?"

"Wait here." The officer disappeared inside. Meanwhile, voters calmly waited their turn outside the polling station.

Out came Ed Duggan (an alias by request) of the Northern Ireland Election Office. He told me that he had just shooed away an Italian TV group who wanted to film the balloting, but if I waited until the early voters dispersed, he'd take me in. What euphoria. I would see people voting for war or peace.

Ed took me into the gym, where voters were identified and given paper ballots to mark and deposit into locked steel boxes. Then Ed was called out briefly to deal with another TV crew.

"Germans," he said. "I sent 'em packin'."

I waited for a few hours for something epic to happen. I had been in Belfast for three days, yet I had seen barely a poster or televised political ad.

I drove to St. Catherine's School across from the Royal Victoria Hospital on the Falls Road. There, a large crowd had congregated in front of a polling station. Action, at last.

There were Danish and German TV crews, the Italians sent away earlier from Ballymurphy, a French reporter, and two Americans from the *Columbus Dispatch* talking to one another.

I introduced myself, and a Danish mike was shoved toward my face as the cameraman turned me to face him. "What brings you here? What's your opinion about the election? Where have you been looking for news?" These were the questions I wanted to ask when it dawned on me that all these folks were fumbling for any scoop whatever.

I walked to St. Comghall's Primary School at the foot of the Falls Road. *Columbus Dispatch* journalists Jim Woods and Jeff Hinckly greeted me, and Jim decided to interview me. I wondered what all the fuss was about. I was angry, too. Earlier, my Sinn Fein date had blown me off because *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd was interviewing party leaders Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness at the same place where I had been instructed to be. A loyalist I knew couldn't see me because he was out campaigning. Campaigning? The only electioneering I saw was a single Sinn Fein constituency worker handing out pamphlets at St. Comghall's. Jim Woods wrote it all down, and the next day I made the front page of the *Columbus Dispatch*, grousing that the referendum had been over-rated.

Then, a shaggy-haired waif in jeans, black boots, and a camouflage jacket over an orange, green, and white tee confronted us. A black beret and dark shades completed his look—ragamuffin as urban guerilla. He shook each of

our hands in a deliberate, obviously "secret," grasp and shouted, "Power, brothers." He waved to an RUC officer, who smiled back knowingly. When Jeff said he'd take a picture, our scrawny "IRA" man snapped to attention and saluted. All the while, voters arrived, voted, mingled, and left.

At a dozen more stops—on the loyalist Shankill Road and Sandy Row and the well-heeled Malone Road—voters voted, mingled, and left. Lights, camera, no action.

Nevertheless, 72 percent of voters in the North and 94 percent of voters in the South voted in favor of the Mitchell Agreement outlining political structures to redefine the relationship of the North with Britain and Ireland and to return some local government to the North.

The day after the vote, I drove to Dublin to visit my pal, Noel, a gregarious entrepreneur rarely given to sentimentality. At his kitchen table, he raised his glass and eyed me squarely.

"It truly is the greatest day for the Irish, isn't it?" I never saw Noel so solemn. He spoke with the tranquility of a comforting priest.

Noel's comment disturbed me. I realized I had missed something quite vital in Belfast. In my quest for the historic moment, I expected the gaudy, overkill of American-style politics. What I got was a dose of simplicity. I had failed to notice the nobility of ordinary people going to the polls with the hope that their vote could make things better. When the polls closed at 10 PM, the people of the North, with quiet dignity and sophistication, resolved to govern themselves.

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Little Change in Emergency Legislation

by Fiona Doherty

Excerpt from the May, 1998, Just News,

the newsletter of the Belfast-based Committee on the Administration of Justice

The annual statistics for 1997 on the operation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act show that there has been very little change in the way the British government implemented the emergency legislation last year from previous years.

Despite the drop in the number of defendants dealt with by the Crown Court for scheduled offenses (422 in 1995, 170 in 1996, and 129 in 1997), there has been no appreciable drop in the waiting time which precedes the hearing of a case for those defendants who are remanded in custody. The average time between remand and committal was 28 weeks; 7.5 weeks between committal and arraignment; and 10.8 weeks between arraignment and hearing. The totals for 1996 were 27.1 weeks, 6.7 weeks, and 11.8 weeks, respectively.

Most interesting are the figures that show the numbers of requests for access to a solicitor made under section 45 of the 1996 Act. While

CAJ has long campaigned against the emergency legislation in general, this provision, which allows the interrogation of detainees to begin before they have had access to legal advice, has often been singled out for particular criticism. CAJ maintains that it is contrary to international human rights standards, especially given the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Murray v. UK*.

Whereas, in the first three quarters of 1997, a total of 33 delays in access were granted, none were granted in the fourth quarter. This trend is echoed in the figures for detainees' requests to have someone informed of their detention. In the first, second, and third quarters, 4, 5, and 10 requests were not allowed immediately while no requests were delayed in the fourth quarter.

Another development in this area saw Lord Justice MacDermott dismiss an action against the chief constable for damages for wrongful denial of

access to a solicitor under the EPA. In *Cullen v. Chief Constable*, the plaintiff claimed that there had been a breach of statutory duty when access to his solicitor was improperly deferred on four occasions and three visits by the solicitor had, improperly, been made the subject of a supervision order. MacDermott found that in Cullen's case, there were reasonable grounds for the deferrals—i.e., the risk of information being leaked through legal visits.

In addition and perhaps more significantly, MacDermott also held that there is no action for breach of statutory duty for wrongful denial of access in such cases. Nor is there an action for damages where the procedural aspects of the deferral provisions have not been fully complied with.

The decision is an unwelcome one but not an altogether surprising development in the "emergency" jurisprudence here. However, it is to be hoped that the "silver lining" which emerged from the EPA stats for the fourth quarter of 1997 is an indication that the Cullen action, had it been upheld, would not have been needed.

The Committee Exposes Britain's Role in Loyalist Terrorism

by Ned Delaney, *Indiana State Representative*

Critical issues must be addressed before a permanent peace can take root in Ireland. Consider, especially, the role of the British in assassinations in the North.

Sean McPhilemy's recently-published book, *The Committee* (banned in both Ireland and the UK), is an expose on this topic.

In 1991, McPhilemy produced "The Committee," a British television documentary that revealed the existence of an organization in Northern Ireland—made up of unionist business people, Protestant clergy, the police (RUC), and British armed forces—

that systematically colluded with loyalist terrorists to murder Irish nationalists.

The documentary contained exclusive testimony of a member of this loyalist committee. This source provided a detailed account of how various assassinations had been planned and carried out.

Notwithstanding the conservative British government's efforts at the time to discredit the documentary, subsequent information substantiates the original allegations. There were 36 unsolved murders involving loyalist death squads mainly in the mid-Ulster

area from May 1991 to 1996.

McPhilemy names those who committed many of those murders and gives convincing evidence to back up his claims, so why haven't the RUC been able to solve these crimes? To this day, the matter remains an open issue.

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Action Requests

Communicate the messages below, preferably in your own words. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, work associates, and others, do the same. Please mention your membership in the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC.

Write: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee

United States Postal Service
Room 4474E, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-2437

Message: I understand that the USPS is planning to issue a commemorative stamp in honor of St. Patrick's Day. As a member of the American Irish Education Foundation-PEC, I urge the advisory committee to include the achievements of the American-Irish who came to this country during Ireland's Great Hunger in the content of the stamp. Please contact the AIEF-PEC at 914-947-2726 if you require information about the role of the American-Irish in the development of this nation.

Write: Representative Donald Payne
2244 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3010

Message: Thank you for supporting the civil rights of all of Northern Ireland's citizens by urging the Parades Commission to reroute an Orange Order parade from the nationalist Ormeau Road. I hope that you will further the United States's role in the Irish peace process by pressing the British to set a standard of democracy in Northern Ireland that truly respects the civil, human, and national rights of all the people there.

Cast Your Ballot for a Great Hunger Commemorative

by Leah Curtin, Minnesota

The US Postal Service (USPS) is asking you to vote on new commemorative stamps to "celebrate the century." How about casting a ballot for the Irish?

Some of the commemorative stamps the USPS has issued this year include: Year of the Tiger, Black Heritage, Remember the Maine, skiing, flowers, Mars Pathfinder, love, Bugs Bunny, Tweety, Legends of Hollywood, Folk Heroes, and Classic Movie Monsters, to name a few. Some of these subjects are worthy of stamps; others are silly and frivolous.

For the past four years, the AIEF-PEC has campaigned for a stamp to commemorate the role immigrants to America during Ireland's Great Hunger played in helping to develop this country. Though the USPS and its unelected stamp committee have acknowledged receiving our letters and petitions for the stamp, the USPS has only gone as far as announcing a stamp to honor St. Patrick's Day.

Please contact the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee again to urge them to issue a stamp that recognizes the myriad contributions of the American-Irish to the development of this country when they issue a stamp at St. Patrick's Day. That the USPS will recognize the place of Irish culture in American society is a great step forward that we letter writers have achieved over the past four years. Now we must make a push toward the ultimate goal of having the USPS honor the immigrants to the US during the Great Hunger.

This watershed event in Irish history with its mass starvation and forced exodus of millions of Irish people had a significant impact on the shape of this nation. Their contributions deserve to be honored with a commemorative postal stamp. (*See Action Request.*)

To Join Or Renew Your Membership PEC-AIEF

- ☐ New Membership \$25 ☐ Membership Renewal \$25
☐ Senior Citizen \$20 ☐ Student \$10
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Members receive the monthly *American Irish Newsletter*.

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Town/State/Zip _____

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Name of your Congressman/woman _____

Make checks payable to AIEF. Mail to 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980. To charge your membership or renewal, or for information, call (800) 777-6807 (Visa/MasterCard only).

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