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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 22, Number 8

August 1997

New Hope for Peace

The Irish Republican Army has breathed new life into the peace process by announcing that it was restoring its ceasefire of August 1994 effective 12 noon on July 20, 1997.

With that historic announcement, the IRA not only gave the peace process a new lease on life, but it also brought Northern Ireland back from the brink of disaster. A mere one week earlier Northern Ireland seemed to be on the brink of civil war due to the events surrounding the Orange marching season. Now, due to the courageous decision of the IRA to end its campaign, Northern Ireland has been transformed from an atmosphere of despair into one of hope for the future.

While the IRA cessation has renewed the hopes for peace in Ireland, we are a long way away from a political settlement and a successful conclusion to the conflict. Peace with justice is still in the future and will require much work.

The PEC still has its doubts that the formula for all-party negotiations can be successful. Even with an IRA ceasefire, it is hard to believe that all the parties to the conflict in Northern Ireland will be able to sit down at the table, reconcile their widely differing positions and reach an agreement. Already, the Democratic Unionists and Robert McCartney's UK Unionist Party have walked out of the talks process. The Orange Order has called on the Ulster Unionists to do the same. While the UUP has yet to do that, they are already raising further obstacles to Sinn Fein participation to the talks.

There are still many obstacles to peace. If the parties cannot sit down and negotiate a settlement, then the two governments will have to do a deal like the PEC has stated in previous issues of the *American Irish Newsletter*.

This is not an undemocratic or imposed solution as some have suggested. If the two governments were forced to come up with a solution, they would then have to put that solution to the voters in a referendum. Each party could campaign for or against that solution. The ultimate decider would be the voter, the average person on the ground in Ireland, the people who have suffered the most from this seemingly endless conflict.

Now is the time for all parties to act responsibly and show that they are willing to find a solution. We all rejoice that we are one step closer with the IRA ceasefire, to the end of the gun in Irish politics. Now it is time to find a political solution in order to ensure that conflict never returns to Northern Ireland.

Let the parties do it. If they can't or won't, let the two governments and the people of Ireland do it for them.

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Newsbits by Kathy Regan

An RUC Land Rover policing a twelfth parade this weekend was displaying a cartoon entitled "King Rat." King Rat is the nickname of a feared Portadown Loyalist who is believed to have been responsible for the deaths of nationalists in a series of sectarian killings across mid-Ulster. An RUC spokesman last night said: "Initial inquiries would indicate there was no intention to be offensive to anyone." Politicians have condemned the drawing. A relative of one of King Rat's victims criticized the RUC for displaying the motif. Martin Mallon's aunt Rose-Anne was killed by the Mid-Ulster UVF in May 1994 which at the time was led by King Rat. Mr. Mallon said: "If it's a joke, they would have a weird sense of humor to have a symbol like that about a man who has orchestrated hundreds of murders in Mid-Ulster."

(Irlnet 7/14/97)

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam promised Catholic leaders she wouldn't spring an 11th hour surprise on Portadown, but double-crossed them and sent in the overwhelmingly Protestant police at 3:30 a.m. to impose virtual martial law. The cops came in harassing the young people and calling them

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OUR VIEW

The struggle for democracy is not over. Everything remains the same. While we have a new ceasefire, we don't have peace with justice. The PEC welcomes the IRA's announcement that it is restoring the ceasefire, but we want to warn our members not to become complacent. The fight for peace with justice is not over.

As we have stated in previous editions of the American Irish Newsletter, after the IRA ceasefire of 1994, many members thought that it was all over and a political settlement was on the way. The PEC experienced a substantial decrease in membership.

We cannot allow that to happen again with the new cessation. Our work in support of Ireland's reunification and American involvement in the peace process is essential if a democratic conclusion to the peace process is to be achieved.

With the new cessation, the spirit of goodwill which exists for Irish nationalism in the United States has been restored. The Clinton administration, our Congress and our media will be a powerful force in influencing the reunification solution if we assert ourselves. Our task will become easier as violence is taken out of the equation in Northern Ireland. These dramatic changes will enable us to recruit new support from those fellow Americans, particularly Irish Americans, who have shied away due to the lack of an IRA ceasefire.

In the past we have asked that each member make a special effort to recruit a new member. This new ceasefire and the new hope for the peace process should be the impetus for our members to recruit as many new members as possible. Just think, if each member recruited only one new member, we would double our influence and clout.

The PEC's work is more important than ever. We need you to help increase our membership and clout so we can continue that important work.

Please Turn to Action Request #1 on Page 6

World Book Encyclopedia Challenged on "Famine

Encyclopedias, among the most commonly used reference sources, either quickly gloss over Ireland's Great Hunger of the 1840's during which as many as 2 million people died, or report it inaccurately. For the sake of truth, such revisionist history cannot go unchecked. Most encyclopedias refer to Ireland's starvation as a "famine," ignoring the documented fact that there was no famine in Ireland. Only one crop failed and that was the potato. It failed all over Europe as well, but no other nation suffered the catastrophe Ireland did. They fail to report that enough food was shipped out of Ireland during that period to feed the population twice over.

The World Book Encyclopedia states that most Irish people were poor and could only afford potatoes for food. It does not bother to tell us why they were poor or why the

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potato was they only food that was available to them. It also reports that 750,000 people died and thousands more emigrated. Both figures are inaccurate. Imagine an encyclopedia trusted by researchers for its factual information containing such inaccuracies!

Please turn to Action Request #2 on Page 6

**Send Offensive Situations to: Paul Newman,
9 Deltic Road, New City, NY 10956**

From the North: Peace Depends on All Sides

by Sean Kane, *Director of Operations*

Northern Ireland has once again been given an historic opportunity for peace and a political settlement with the announcement by the Irish Republican Army of the restoration of its ceasefire on July 20.

This announcement paves the way for Sinn Fein inclusion at the all party talks on September 15th.

While the restoration of the ceasefire is a very hopeful sign, a just and lasting political settlement is a long way off. What is required is a genuine effort on all sides to sit down and negotiate a settlement. Given the history of political negotiations in Northern Ireland as well as the attitudes of the political parties in Northern Ireland, the belief that unionist and nationalist parties can sit down and negotiate a lasting peace is in no way certain.

The central component of the peace process, is, of course, the attitude of the British government. The peace process will certainly fail if the British government treats this IRA ceasefire in the same way that the last British government treated the last IRA ceasefire.

This new government has made hopeful signals on the issue of preconditions and decommissioning. They have made a definite commitment, that if the ceasefire holds for six weeks, then Sinn Fein will be admitted to the talks. They have also stated that decommissioning will not be allowed to become an obstacle to progress in the negotiations and that the parties will have until May of 1998 to come up with an agreement. Whether they are serious about these commitments will be the first test to see if the British government is genuinely committed to the peace process and a political settlement.

Whether or not a political settlement can be achieved also depends on the actions of the main unionist parties. The fact remains that the

failure of the Ulster Unionists and Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionists to engage positively in the peace process is the main obstacle to a settlement. If, like the last time, these parties refuse to sit down with Sinn Fein and attempt to raise obstacles and preconditions to the talks, then the peace process will go nowhere.

There are already some disturbing signs coming from leaders in both the main Unionist parties. While the ceasefire announcement was welcomed by all shades of nationalist opinion in the North, as well as in London, Dublin and Washington, the response from the unionist parties has not been positive.

The same old arguments, that the new ceasefire is a "phoney" or a tactical one subject to review have already been raised by the UUP and DUP. It still seems that some Unionist leaders prefer conflict and the absence of a ceasefire to the silence of the guns. From their political perspective, it is much easier to refuse to negotiate with Sinn Fein when the IRA's campaign is still on. It is much more difficult to make that same assertion against a background of peace and a cessation.

The main unionist parties have also signaled that they intend decommissioning to remain an obstacle and may walk out of the negotiations if Sinn Fein is allowed into the talks and IRA arms are not handed over.

Once again, this is where the resolve of the Labour government and the Northern Ireland Secretary Mo Mowlam will be severely tested. Will the "settlement train" which Prime Minister Blair said was leaving the station without Sinn Fein if the IRA had not called a ceasefire, leave without the Unionist parties if they refuse to come to the table?

In our view, this is the last chance for the parties in Northern Ireland to negotiate a settlement between themselves. There is a new

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British government which seems to be genuinely committed to the peace process. There is a new Irish government which has vowed not to repeat the failures of the previous administration. And lastly, the IRA has restored its ceasefire thus allowing the negotiations to proceed in a peaceful atmosphere.

Tony Blair's government has a 179 seat majority and is thus able to stand up to unionist stalling and intransigence. It must be made clear to the main Unionist parties, that they will not be allowed to hold up progress in the negotiations. If they refuse to negotiate, then the negotiations must go on without them. It is doubtful that their voters would allow them to stay out of the talks for long.

It will take goodwill, courage and determination on all sides to achieve a settlement. All options, including Irish unity, must be on the table. No side can have a veto. No obstacles or preconditions must be placed in the way. No outcome can be predetermined. The status quo must not be an option.

The people of Northern Ireland deserve a future free from conflict. They deserve a political settlement built on the basis of justice. If the parties are not prepared to negotiate with one another, then the British and Irish governments should end the process, negotiate a settlement between the two governments and then put that settlement up to the voters of Ireland, north and south for approval.

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Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

'Fenian bastards.' Triumphant Orange Order parades are as provocative in poor Catholic neighborhoods as daily Ku Klux Klan marches would be in Harlem. Britain's new Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair, on June 13, raised hopes of restarting peace talks with an offer to include the Sinn Fein party six weeks after the Irish Republican Army declares a new ceasefire. But Mo Mowlam's craven failure to reroute inflammatory Protestant marches from Garvaghy Road calls Mr. Blair's sincerity into question. The Irish can hardly miss the contrast between Britain's pullout from Hong Kong and militarized operations in Northern Ireland. President Clinton should urge Mr. Blair not to blow what could be the last, best chance for peace in a generation to end sectarian violence in the North. (*Cincinnati Enquirer* 7/11/97)

You have Rebecca, aged 10, Abigail aged 7, Katie aged 2, and two little boys aged seven and two who have no father. So Marian Finucane (Irish Television) reminded Caoimhghlin O Caolain when she was taxing him with the IRA murders in Lurgan last week. Quite properly too you would agree. On the other hand, would she have known the names of any of the ten children of John Slane murdered by loyalists in his home off the Falls Road? Does anybody outside of West Belfast? A lot of people last week noticed the different levels of condemnation heaped on republicans for IRA/INLA murders compared to what happens when loyalists kill a Catholic. A number of commentators remarked on the relish with which unionist spokesmen lined up to attack Sinn Fein. There was the amazing spectacle of loyalist condemning republicans when they won't condemn the murders their own organizations carry out. There is no doubt: for these people loyalist violence is less reprehensible than republican. (*Irish News* 6/25/97)

Give Credit Where Credit is Due

by Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

The PEC's long-term campaign requesting a British government apology for that government's role in the horror of the Great Irish Hunger has finally borne fruit.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair recently acknowledged that British government treatment of the Irish led to the deaths during The Great Hunger of the 1840's. The PEC initiated the campaign to the British government in mid-1995. Prime Minister Blair's apology -- acknowledgment that the British government of the time was responsible -- is a tremendous milestone in history. The PEC's ongoing campaign paved the road to that milestone.

However, no Irish American organization or politician, and most Irish American newspapers, has acknowledged or praised the PEC for achieving this significant confession from the British government (their first confession since the Great Hunger). Their confession was reported by the major news media throughout the U.S. and elsewhere. The PEC for its part kept the organizations and newspapers all updated on the campaign which they never supported. Most Irish American newspapers did not even report that we were conducting the campaign, other than publishing our ads that PEC paid for.

The PEC feels that honoring the memory of the victims of The Great Hunger is proper and morally correct. Narrow-minded elements that intentionally don't report on or support these efforts without good reason, especially genuine campaigns conducted by dependable and successful organizations such as PEC, do a disservice to the memories of The Great Hunger victims and the American Irish community. In the long run they cause the divisions and confusion within our community that greatly hinder our joint efforts to pressure Britain to leave Ireland.

The PEC does not seek a pat on the back. PEC is more mature and dedicated to our community's interests than that. What is sad is that this small and misguided group within the American Irish press, organizations and political scene have twisted the joyous occasion of redeeming the memories of Ireland's victims into one of exclusionary and regressive attitudes. This selfishness saddens all fair-minded people.

In true American tradition, the PEC will continue to advocate the freedom and dignity of all Irish people.



Members of the New York City Fire Department Emerald Society march in support of their proposed Great Hunger Memorial in Battery Park in this year's St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Emerald Society has been one of the most important supporters of the PEC. The Emerald Society's Great Hunger Memorial project, led by Emerald Society President Bill Whelan, has faced a difficult struggle to achieve its goal.

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

by Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the Campaign for Democracy,
a predominantly Protestant organization that supports a united Ireland*

Why did they do it? The scenes of the military wing of Orange-Unionism, the British Army and the RUC invading a small nationalist/republican enclave in Portadown in the early hours of the morning to brutalize its inhabitants scarcely did anything for the image of the new Labour government of Tony Blair. The activities of the storm troopers were seen on TV in many countries throughout the world just at a time when they were lecturing the Chinese on how to behave correctly in the face of peaceful demonstrators in Hong Kong.

A South African MP of the Pan African Congress, Mr. Gora Ibrahim, was present on Garvaghy Road as a witness. He described his horror at what he had observed. He stated, "I have seen this kind of thing at Sharpeville in 1960 with the Saracens moving in... I was shocked to see the anxiety of mothers for their children and the brutality of the police." He accused the British government of absconding from its responsibility by putting the decision solely on the RUC Chief Constable, Mr. Ronnie Flanagan. Mr. Ibrahim said, "I don't believe that was the chief constable's decision. I think that the decision had to come from much higher."

Quite reasonably, Mr. Ibrahim then commented: "The RUC is seen to belong to one sector of the community (over 3,000 RUC members are actually in the Orange Order) and you can't leave it to that sector to make a decision on whether a march ought to be re-routed." The MP said he would be telling President Mandela and the South African parliament that the British "have to take a bold decision where you don't leave these decisions to the police force and hide behind it."

In my article for the July issue of the *American Irish Newsletter*, I said that, when it comes to making a decision in the interests of democracy

in Northern Ireland, the British always refuse to acknowledge that they **govern**. In this case they throw everything back on the 'two communities' in which case they can always utilize their surrogates, the unionists, as an excuse for any depredations which take place. Invariably, these take the form of repressing the nationalist/republican community in the manner demonstrated once again at Drumcree.

In two days, since then, they have not been able to conceal Northern Ireland for what it is they have made it -- a sectarian hell-hole, the most miserable, oppressed and retrograde society in the whole of Western Europe. Several years ago, I wrote a pamphlet in which I categorized Northern Ireland as a military and bureaucratic dictatorship presided over by English colonialists. The past few weeks have substantiated this depiction. Over 2,400 plastic bullets have been fired at the nationalist/republican community in the past few days alone.

But to return to the original question: why did they do it? Caught in the act again, the authorities have spin-doctored different excuses. The Chief Constable said that he had received 'intelligence' that, if he were to re-route the Orange-Unionist march, Loyalist paramilitaries would kill Catholic civilians. For some reason, he was unable to act on the basis of this intelligence and decided instead to give in to these threats of violence. But the intelligence which Mr. Trimble, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party had, was different. He said no such threat existed at all. It was then suggested that the British Northern Ireland Office held Mr. Trimble himself to blame. Somehow they had learned that, if the march did not go ahead, he would walk out of the multi-party negotiations which he had been stalling with the aid of the British for two years.

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But the temporizer in chief was Ms. Mowlam herself. After only nine weeks on the job, during which she waged a relentless charm offensive on the nationalist/republican community, her integrity and credibility lay in ruins. The mask has come off. First she said that any decision on the march would be taken by herself and the Chief Constable, then -- when it turned out to be a political disaster -- she said that the decision had been the Chief Constable's alone ... on his stated security grounds which Mr. Trimble had asserted did not exist.

No sooner had these 'explanations' had come out of her mouth than a document was leaked to Eamonn Mallie of the press to the effect that the bureaucrats of the NIO, the RUC and the British military top-brass, the head of a proposed Commission on Parades, Mr. Alistair Graham and Ms. Mowlam herself had 'reached a consensus' on a game plan. The Chief Constable now says that he had never seen such a document. Ms. Mowlam too now brushes it off as one of a series of options. Given the symbioses existing between the concocters of this game plan and the politics of Orange/Unionism, it is most unlikely that any of them expected an accommodation to be reached with those opposed to the Garvaghy Road march. Nevertheless, Ms. Mowlam continued to mislead the nationalist residents group that no decision had been taken when the game plan drawn up three weeks ahead of the march had one objective ... to get some Orange feet on to the Garvaghy Road.

But all of this chicanery and amateur attempts at crisis management does not explain why the political, military and bureaucratic complex gets up to antics

Continued on the next page

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

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which must detract from their self-proclaimed status as the world's exemplar of democracy. For those of us in Northern Ireland who have been campaigning for years for civil rights and democracy, what happened at Drumcree came as no surprise. All that has happened is that Mr. Major's nasty government has given way to Mr. Blair's pathetic one. Orange-Unionism is the bedrock upon which England's colonial rule in this part of Ireland depends.

The one thing successive British governments have avoided like the plague (a possible exception being Mrs. Thatcher in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Agreement) is facing down the unionists. The latter know this and that is why they have been able to humiliate Ms. Mowlam in the way they did over the issue of Orange marches. She has been reduced to 'appealing' to them to show generosity to their Catholic neighbors now that she has given them their triumphalism at Drumcree. But they are not in the least bit grateful and are determined to push to the limit. Mowlam, of course, exhibited her own cast of mind when she assumed that the nationalist/republicans were supplicants for generosity from the likes of Trimble and Paisley and their cohorts, the grand masters of the Loyal Orders.

What the democrats of the North want are their rights, equal citizenship, civil and democratic rights. Since we know that Britain can never concede these, we want London to negotiate the best way in which it can cease its interference in Ireland's internal affairs. If Ms. Mowlam has proved to be a fish out of water, then Mr. Blair is in the stratosphere. With the typical vacuousness of an English-minded politician given to acute memory lapses, (and totally oblivious of his culpability over Drumcree) he thought it time to lecture the people of Northern Ireland about 'not returning to the old ways' -- and this from the man who out-did Derry October 1968.

What about the so-called peace process? In the opinion of the *CFD*, it is still on, but there ought to be only two participants, the Irish and British governments. They can deal with all three stages in the talks: internal six-county governance, North/South linkages and Anglo-Irish relationships. This idea, which the PEC has been proposing for almost a year now, is also gaining credence in some unusual quarters. Mr. Norman Jenkinson, a journalist in the unionist Belfast Telegraph has written: "Concerned people have been urging the politicians to keep talking. If they do, they will talk forever, and outside their talking shop nothing will change. It is time to call an end to it all.

The solution must be imposed

by the British government, backed by the American government and it must include the Republic of Ireland, whether or not anyone likes it. The reality is that if any solution is to be acceptable to the nationalist community then Dublin must be part of that solution. There is no other way."

It might seem inconsistent for a Campaign for Democracy to support a call for an imposed solution. But it is not. Northern Ireland is not -- nor has it ever been -- a democracy. It is impossible to construct a democratic outcome from the material of which its dominant political material is composed. The British imposed the anti-democratic entity in the first place. It is only fair that they should be required to decompose it.

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Casement Accused Member Says Thank You

The Court of Appeals in Northern Ireland has released Casement Accused member Patrick Kane after eight years of unjust imprisonment. Kane was finally released after the Court confirmed what everyone already knew: That Patrick Kane was an innocent man.

The following is a thank you letter written by the Kane family to the PEC and to its members, who have worked tirelessly to see that justice was served in this case. While Patrick Kane has been released, the miscarriage of justice continues because Sean Kelly and Michael Timmons remain in Long Kesh.

To John Finucane and the PEC,

I am sure you know by now that Patrick is home free, all charges dropped after 8 years. We are hoping it will not be long till the other two boys come home. So God Bless you all for all your help and support. We could not have done it without your help.

Yours,

Bernard Kane

The Orange State

by Captain James Kelly, Dublin, Ireland, *the author is a prominent authority on politico-military affairs in Ireland*

The United States is one of the most powerful nations on earth. Over the years it has opened its arms and given succor to the poor, oppressed and deprived of the world. The downtrodden people it so willingly received through the generations included the Irish, many of whom made their contributions to establishing the greatness of America.

It was fitting that the Irish should do so, because both nations had to fight to secure their freedom against the same colonial oppressor, Britain. The American War of Independence against Britain was successful in the 18th century, but the integrity of the United States as a unified country was again in question when the Civil War of the 1860's engulfed the new nation. President Abraham Lincoln clearly recognized the danger when, on February 18, 1861, he declared: "On what rightful principle may a state, being not more than one fifth part of the Nation in soil and population, break up the nation and then cause proportionally larger sub-division of itself in a most arbitrary way."

Thanks to the stubborn astuteness of a great leader, America was not partitioned and divided into political entities. Ireland was not so fortunate. In 1920, Britain, recognizing that it could not contain the Irish Republican Army in its fight for Irish freedom, achieved its aim of retaining its foothold in Ireland by other means. It simply passed the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 without any Irish input of assent be it Protestant, Catholic or Dissenter; Unionist or Nationalist.

This legislation was put in place by the colonial power against the clearly expressed wishes of the Irish people who voted overwhelming for Sinn Fein and a united Ireland in a general election held less than two years previously. As the Anglican Bishop of Salisbury, Dr. John Austin Baker, put it at the time of the 1981

hunger strikes: "England seized Ireland for its own military benefit. It planted Protestant settlers there to make it strategically secure. It humiliated and penalized the native Irish and their Catholic religion, and then, when it could no longer hold on to the whole island, it kept back part of it to be a home for the settlers' descendants."

It was a non-viable solution based on Britain's strategic self interest which took precedence over any concept of democracy or justice. In this way, Britain connived at carving out a six county political entity in nine county Ulster on the purely sectarian basis of a Protestant government for a Protestant people. **This artificially contrived sectarian statelet has been the cause of all political violence on the island of Ireland ever since.**

Central to the evolvement of this British controlled entity has been the Orange Order. It is the umbrella under which all shades of Northern Ireland loyalism shelter. This umbrella includes David Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party, to Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party and to Billy "King Rat" Wright, the imprisoned loyalist who controls the extreme Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) by mobile phone from jail.

In this context, it must be remembered that modern Orangeism is a British creation. Its rebirth came in 1886 at the behest of the Conservative, Randolph Churchill, who came to the Ulster Hall in Belfast waving the flag of the empire and stirring up anti-Catholic feelings. It was a successful attempt to breathe life into a dormant Orange Order and use it as a sectarian vehicle in the British interest. Its aim was to preserve the union with Britain.

There is no need to defend Protestantism or any other religion in modern Ireland. This is the reality and Mo Mowlam, the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, knows it. When in the wake of the debacle of

Drumcree, she attempts to portray the Orange march through Garvaghy Road in Portadown as merely returning from a church service, she is misleading people at home and abroad. She well knows that the Orange Order is a political machine welding politics to religion to preserve the Union with Britain. That is why it was revived by British politicians in 1886, and why it currently exists as a virulent expression of Unionism. To assert its authority and triumphalism as the representatives of British overlordship in Ireland is the only reason why the Order insists on marching through nationalist areas in the six counties.

In American terms, possibly the nearest equivalent to what happened in Drumcree on July 6 last would be to permit the Ku Klux Klan to march through Harlem, while the residents are corralled in their homes and streets by an overwhelming police and military presence, moving into position by stealth under the cover of darkness. Mo Mowlam talks about orchestrated violence. The only orchestrated violence at Drumcree was what she endorsed and stands over.

In his speech in Belfast, the new British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, in promoting Unionism, dropped the Irish dimension from his elucidation of the Joint Declaration. The Declaration was the document that brought about the ceasefires. How can Blair expect peace by removing the Irish leg of that document from the conference table? How can the Irish people trust him when he breaks the word of his predecessor Prime Minister John Major, in relation to the Irish dimension?

It is past time that Britain got its act together and played fair with Ireland and its people. A good start would be to stop complying with the dictates of the Orange Order, Ireland's Ku Klux Klan.

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Action Requests

Write the letters below (or call), preferably in your own words, or as is. Have friends, associates, etc., do the same.

Mention in your letters that you are a member of PEC

1. Hon. Bill Clinton

President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500
Ph# (202) 456-1111
Fax# (202) 456-2461

Message: Please keep pressure on the British government to see that no further preconditions to talks are raised such as decommissioning. Also, as a gesture of goodwill towards peace, please intervene in the cases of the Irishmen fighting deportation.

2. World Book Publishing

525 West Monroe Street
Chicago, IL 60606
Ph# (313) 258-3700

Message: Urge that reference to Ireland's potato blight of the 1840's be revised to state accurately the number of people that died (1.5 million) and emigrated (2 million). Please explain that the English government of the time was responsible for the huge loss of life as was acknowledged by British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Bernadette Martin's Murder and the Media

The murder of an 18 year old Catholic girl, Ms. Bernadette Martin, has outraged the nationalist community in Northern Ireland.

Ms. Martin was shot four times in the head by a Loyalist gunmen as she slept in the home of her Protestant boyfriend, Mr. Gordon Green, in Aghalee, Co. Antrim on July 15.

Martin's murder brought widespread grief to her small community and an outpouring of support from Catholics and Protestants alike.

However, the response of unionist politicians, the RUC and the media to the killing of Bernadette Martin has further outraged the nationalist community.

Sinn Fein and the SDLP have accused the police and the media of playing down the death of the Catholic girl.

Sinn Fein Spokesman Gerry O hEara said that elements had treated the killing in a "cavalier manner." He also stated that the "killing had engendered widespread anger in the nationalist community in Lurgan, Portadown and throughout this island at the manner in which this death is being dismissed by unionist politicians, sections of the media and the RUC. Ms. Brid Rogers of the SDLP also questioned the double standards which operate in relation to Loyalist killings as compared to IRA killings.

This same double standard and lack of quality reporting also applies to our media here in the United States. The killing of Ms. Martin was barely reported in any of the major news outlets. However, when the IRA murdered two RUC members in Lurgan last month, it was front page news in all the major papers. Many of the major newspapers followed their pieces with stinging editorials. When the victims were two Protestant policemen, there were howls of outrage from the political and media establishment. When the victim was a sweet innocent 18 year old Catholic girl, there was barely a peep from these same sources.

The lack of outrage over the killing of Bernadette Martin from British politicians and the media is disgusting and indicative of the double standard applied to loyalist violence.

The PEC would like to salute the bravery and courage of Bernadette Martin's family. Mr. Lawrence Martin has inspired both communities by his willingness to forgive his daughter's killers. His example should be a model for all in Northern Ireland as we move towards the process of democratization and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

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