



Sacred Heart  
UNIVERSITY

Sacred Heart University  
**DigitalCommons@SHU**

---

American Irish Newsletter

The Irish American Community Collections

---

2-1996

## American Irish Newsletter - February 1996

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish\\_ainews](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish_ainews)



Part of the [European Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), and the [Political Science Commons](#)

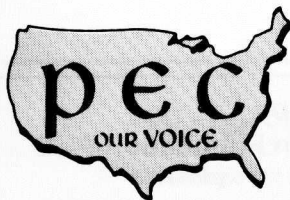
---

### Recommended Citation

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - February 1996" (1996). *American Irish Newsletter*. Paper 79.

[http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish\\_ainews/79](http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/irish_ainews/79)

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the The Irish American Community Collections at DigitalCommons@SHU. It has been accepted for inclusion in American Irish Newsletter by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@SHU. For more information, please contact [ferribyp@sacredheart.edu](mailto:ferribyp@sacredheart.edu).



# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 21, Number 2

February 1996

## *Major To International Commission OUT! OUT! OUT!*

As we all know, after the Irish Republican Army cease-fire of September 1994, the British government introduced a new obstacle by insisting that the IRA must disarm as a pre-condition to all-party negotiations on change in Northern Ireland. To deal with this new issue an International Body, headed by Senator George Mitchell, was charged with finding a solution.

On January 24, 1996 the Mitchell group produced a Solomon-like compromise suggestion, not entirely satisfactory from our viewpoint, but at least providing a way forward. The idea was simply that "the parties should consider an approach under which some decommissioning would take place during the process of all party negotiations, rather than before or after as the parties now urge." The disarming would take place "one step at a time during negotiations." The body also gave the tip of the hat to the other "new idea" of the Loyalists, the "elected body" -- **but they did not make it a pre-condition.** The Mitchell approach was firmly rejected by Prime Minister John Major that same day.

Rather than reaching out the hand of compromise, he opted to support the Loyalist position 100%. Maggie Thatcher couldn't have said it better. His words: "There are two ways in which all party negotiations can now be taken forward... The first is for the paramilitaries to make a start to decommission before all party negotiations... the second is to secure a democratic mandate for all party negotiations through elections specifically for that purpose." Undoubtedly, Major's Tory party reliance on Unionist votes for their parliamentary margin is the reason for this slap in the face of the Mitchell report. The Nationalist side has already given much ground - perhaps too much - to advance matters to the present stage.

So what can be done now to get the train moving again? It seems that it is up to the international community, including the US government, to deliver a firm message to Mr. Major that this kind of dealing will not be accepted. We must redouble our efforts and, as we have said many times, the US side must involve both the Clinton administration and the Republican leadership so the British will get the message. Perhaps it is time for President Clinton to appoint a special envoy!

### **Don't Forget To Send Your Donation!** *Your Support Is More Important Now Than Ever!*

You recently received in the mail a request from PEC for financial support. Please send that donation.

As you can see by Britain's response to the International Commission that our government's role in pressuring the British government is now more important than ever. As you know, generating that pressure is what the PEC is all about, but we cannot do it without your generous financial support and active participation.

### **Newsbits** by Kathy Regan

An American Irish Presidential Candidates' Forum on issues concerning the peace process is scheduled for Sunday, February 11. It will take place at 2 pm at New Hampshire College in Hookset, NH. For information call (603) 472-7355. Sponsors include: AIPEC, AOH, IAUC, INC and INA. (AIN-PEC 1/19/96)

\*\*\*\*

This campaign [to elect an assembly] would do nothing more than emotionally redefine the demarcation lines between the two communities in the North at a time when these lines should start to blur. And the body which finally emerged from the election battle would naturally be dominated by Unionists. In other words, back to square one. Unless later elaboration proves otherwise this plan is one which is simply not a real runner from the nationalist communities viewpoint.

(Irish Independent 1/25/96)

\*\*\*\*

"The British have no interest in addressing the real problems that confront us on the path to peace. Their interest lies in a gradual weakening of the republican position through inertia and inaction and that is why everything is progressing at tortoise's pace. That's why, even though they know that there is absolutely zero prospect of a unilat-

cont. on page 4

### **INSIDE**

From the North . . . . .	3
Offensive Situations . . . .	4
Human Rights In N Ireland. R&D	
The Great Hunger. . . R&D	
Great Hunger Memorial . . .	6
Action Requests . . . . .	6

## OUR VIEW

*January 24, 1996 started out as a very promising day for the peace process. The Mitchell Commission Report produced an honorable compromise that could have finally put the peace process on track. Most importantly it called for the commencement of all party talks and called on the British Government to drop its controversial pre-condition that the Irish Republican Army begin decommissioning its weapons before the start of negotiations. The commission set a path where all parties could get down to negotiations with their pride and principles intact.*

*However optimism would soon turn to gloom as the British Government decided to place new preconditions and obstacles in the way of all party talks. John Major once again demonstrated that his government is not serious about wanting to see the peace process succeed. Before the ink was even dry on the commission report (a commission that his government established) Major bowed to the Ulster Unionist Party and the Paisleyites and rejected the findings of the Mitchell Commission. He then proposed a new elected assembly (Stormont), something which Paisley and the Unionists have been demanding, as the new pre-condition to all party talks. Once again the reckless actions of John Major have placed the peace process in peril.*

*It has become inherently clear that Major's government does not want peace and compromise. Since the cease-fires of seventeen months ago they have placed obstacle after obstacle in front of the peace process. The actions in the aftermath of the Mitchell report shows that they will most likely continue to do the same.*

*This is why we cannot stress enough just how important American involvement in the peace process is. We must increase the pressure on our government's leaders to intervene in the conflict. We feel that in light of British actions, the time is ripe for a US Peace Envoy to Northern Ireland. A peace envoy is an idea that is long overdue. It is obvious that American involvement, which has played such a crucial role so far, is needed if there is to be a solution. A US Peace Envoy may be the best way forward.*

## Make Your Views Count!

Please respond to our Newsletter *Action Requests* and use our *Telephone Hotline* (914) 429-7849. Your help is needed more so now as we approach the Presidential election. The Presidential candidates will listen, especially when they receive communications from across the country.

### Assert Yourself!

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

## Published by

### American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC

*A non-profit, tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization*

National President.....John J. Finucane  
Vice-President.....Albert Doyle  
Membership Coordinator.....Loretta Fitzgibbons  
Recording Secretary.....Kathy Regan  
Financial Secretary.....Tom Sheridan

#### National Headquarters

54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980  
(914) 947-2726 Fax (914) 947-2599

**STATE DIRECTORS:** Jack O'Brien, 11109 Belton St., Upper Marlboro, MARYLAND 20772-(301)336-5167; Leah Curtin, Hibernian Life, 790 Cleveland Ave., Ste. 221, St. Paul, MINNESOTA 55116-(612)690-3888; Kathy Regan, 3045 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NEW YORK 10468-(718)365-0213; Frank O'Day, 21 Pierce Ln., Madison, CONNECTICUT 06443-(203)245-4739; Bob West, 683 Walnut Rd., Wauconda, ILLINOIS 60084-(708)526-6520; Terry Deem Reilly, 1123 Clarkson, Denver, COLORADO 80218-(303)837-9443; Ned A. Delaney, 1211 El Grande St., Lafayette, INDIANA 47905-(317)474-2546; Larry Doyle, 2036 Calhoun, Bellevue, NEBRASKA 68005-(402)292-5291; Phil Chaney, 662 West 70th St., Kansas City, MISSOURI 64113 - (816) 363-6523; Kathy Whitford, 15910 Lucille Dr., Cleveland, OHIO 44111-(216) 251-7551; Andy Kelly, 168 S Coeur D'Alene Street-102E, Spokane, WASHINGTON 99204 - (509) 747-7431; Nancy Love, 201 North Prairie Ave., Waukesha, WISCONSIN 53186 - (414) 542-4767; Dr. John T. Giesen, 1107 Ironwood Dr., Coeur D'Alene, IDAHO 83814 - (208) 667-7459; Hal Cousins, 905 Shalimar Dr., Del City, OKLAHOMA 73115 - (405) 677-3623; Elizabeth McElligott, 7747 E. Dale Ln., Scottsdale, ARIZONA 85262 - (602)585-3602; Joe Joyce, 32111 Discovery Ln., Hanover, VIRGINIA, 23069-(804) 994-2218; Robert J. Fuhrel, 1901 Rio Canyon Ct. #202, Las Vegas, NEVADA 89128-(702) 255-9619; Sean Kane, 140 Boston Ave., Hillside, NEW JERSEY, 07205-(908) 354-1976; Mary Holford, 6555 Tam O'Shanter Dr., San Jose, CALIFORNIA, 95120-(408) 268-4548; Mike Flannery, 3065 Prestwicke Dr., Edgewood, KENTUCKY 41017-(606)341-9028.

**GREAT HUNGER AWARENESS CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR:** Frank Morris, Jr., 821 Briarwood Ln, Camp Hill, PA 17011-(717) 737-7013

**NATIONAL ORGANIZER:** Pete Foley, 3177 Villa Ave. #3H, Bronx, NY 10468-(718)933-7196

**Supported in part by the Emerald Society  
NYC Fire Department**

## Important Campaign Underway

In November 1995, as part of our campaign to win the public support of Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senator Bob Dole for the peace process, PEC began mailing out informative mailers to people with Irish surnames in the states of Kansas and Georgia. Our mailer simply informs people of how important Dole and Gingrich's public support is for the peace process and urges the recipient to contact them requesting they publicly declare their support for the peace process.

In January 1996 we began sending the same mailer to people with Irish surnames in New Hampshire. Due to the Presidential primary there in February, we hope that this mailing will influence Senator Dole to declare his support. The peace process, to be successful, needs the public support of the Big Three in American politics, President Bill Clinton, Senator Bob Dole and Speaker Newt Gingrich.

With your financial support, we will carry out similar mailings throughout the US, right up to the election. These mailers will also include the fact that none of the Presidential hopefuls have declared their support for the peace process.

The United States must be perceived as speaking with one voice, if the peace process is to succeed.



## From the North: *British Duplicity*

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

This article was written on the morning following the day the Mitchell Commission report was released. There have been quick reactions to it, but neither Sinn Féin or the IRA have, as yet, given their responses to it. This makes it impossible to give a definite conclusion as to the ultimate efficacy of the Commission's work for progressing the peace process. One thing is clear: The British government's immediate response has been to jump in and try to sabotage its chances of success.

The Mitchell Commission disposed of the British government's ridiculous pre-condition that the IRA must decommission its arms before all-party talks could begin.

In a recent article in this newsletter, I pointed out that the Irish coalition government, the opposition party Fianna Fáil, the two Northern Ireland nationalist and republican parties, as well as Loyalist paramilitaries, had all disagreed with the British stance. The Mitchell Commission upheld their assessment. Only two northern Unionist parties, representing a minority of the Irish people (and an even greater minority of the UK's population) supported the British.

Nevertheless, despite their invidious position, the British Government has still not abandoned decommissioning entirely although it has recognized that it is untenable. And so, in a fit of resentment, it has substituted another obstacle.

Mitchell and his co-commissioners, probably not comprehending the depths of British governmental duplicity, inadvertently threw the British a lifeline. Tucked away in their report almost as a 'tentative aside', in the words of a BBC interviewer, was the thought that perhaps an elected assembly in the north, **provided that it was broadly acceptable** and properly mandated, could serve as a vehicle for all-party talks on substantive political matters. The BBC interviewer noted that, strictly speaking, this referred to a matter which was outside the Commission's remit and he wondered why the British had fastened on this one small piece of its overall recommendations,

when it had potential for raising a whole host of further obstacles to the beginning of talks and was supported by only the north's Unionist population. The British government's excuse was that an opinion poll (of 1,000 people in the North, biased towards Unionism?) had shown support for it.

In fact this was the British government's fall-back position in anticipation of Mitchell's putting to rest decommissioning. It had been trotted out some weeks in advance by the newly elected leader of the north's major Unionist party which is at once a surrogate and upholder of the present British government.

There have been widespread expressions of astonishment at the behavior of the British and their Unionist side-kicks. Ireland's foreign minister, Dick Spring, accused them of taking an *à-la-carte* approach to the Commission's findings and some high profile TV-radio interviewers have expressed shock at the government's stalling tactics and pro-Unionist bias.

But what exactly would be wrong with pursuing an elected assembly approach, aside from the fact that a **majority of the Irish people do not want it**? There are a myriad of reasons, among which these are some of the most important:

It is a device for frustrating the Mitchell Commission's intention to clear the way for the commencement of all-party talks on substantive political matters before the end of this coming February. An unlikely target date for such an election, given the lack of support for the idea (two previous attempts in 1975 and in 1980 ended in acrimonious fiascos) has been casually suggested - May. Meanwhile, with all its attendant dangers the peace process continues to flounder, after seventeen months of patience.

Given that such an election would be about constitutional matters (i.e. partition), it would exacerbate sectarian tensions in the North and in no way contribute to 'confidence building' on a

cross community basis.

There is no way such an assembly could produce a negotiating body. The determination of its mandate could take ages. Meanwhile, what would happen to the two governments and inter-governmental inputs?

Northern Ireland is not - nor has it ever been - an entity within which *bona fide* democracy is capable of being exercised.

As the BBC interviewer said, the proposal raises a whole host of problems which would postpone the achievement of a settlement into the unforeseeable future. As such it is malicious, cynical, provocative and threatening to a continuation of the peace. As matters stand already, the Mitchell Commission, with its suggestion that the decommissioning of paramilitary weapons could take place on a staged basis **during the talks process**, has raised enough problems for the IRA. This perhaps explains the delayed response from the republican side, regardless of the modalities suggested. To that extent the British government ought to have mollified. The IRA's position was that decommissioning would take place only after a political settlement.

For some strange reason this has not been good enough for the British government. Given the renewed threat to the peace process raised by the continued behavior of this disreputable British government, it is evident that concerned Americans are still needed to exert whatever pressure they can.

While the Irish side has never, at any time, stipulated preconditions for the beginning of all-party talks and is therefore ready to consider if an elected Northern Ireland body/assembly is capable of facilitating the continuation of the process, it is not willing to be pressurized into accepting one which goes against their better judgement and is a **condition** for those talks.

Should nationalism/republicanism (i.e. Irish democracy) be forced into resisting the brow-beating by a boycott of such imposed elections, concerned Americans will be provided with an opportunity to once again give their support.

\*\*\*



## Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

eral hand over of arms by the IRA in advance of all-party talks, they are continuing to insist on it now in the full and certain knowledge that, had the subject even been hinted at in advance of the IRA ceasefire, the whole delicate process would have collapsed like a house of cards... While Bill Clinton isn't about to send in the Marines to end our 75 year nightmare, his presence and the willingness of John Major to jump and put his name on a communique to suit the Clinton schedule are an implicit but powerful admission that the British have failed." (Andersonstown News, 12/2/95)

Writing in the Journal of Conflict Resolution, Robert White and Terry Falkenberg White of Indiana University insist that an upsurge of loyalist terror attacks in 1972 was not countered by the British Army. "Instead of responding to the loyalist paramilitary activity by repressing it, they followed the lead of loyalist paramilitaries and attacked the northern Irish Catholic community," they say in their study, *The Case Of Northern Ireland 1969-1972*. "This finding has serious implications and we do not report it lightly... The fact that the number of Catholics killed by the British Army increased in tandem with the number of loyalist killings may be because British soldiers, sympathetic with northern Irish Protestants followed the example of loyalist paramilitaries and killed 'traitorous' Catholics. This finding might also be evidence of some kind of coordinated activity between loyalist and members of the security forces... It is not difficult to imagine that British soldiers... came to believe that their objective in Northern Ireland was to subdue the Catholic community and possibly to work with the Protestant community in doing so." (Andersonstown News 12/9/95)

The United Campaign Against Plastic Bullets plans to address the Mitchell Commission on arms decommissioning, brief them on the devastating history of plastic bullets and make a recommendation that they be taken off the streets. In the 15 months since the ceasefire, the RUC has continued to use plastic bullets indiscriminately, with eight people having been badly hurt by them. (Andersonstown News, 12/16/95)

## Offensive Situations: *Bigotry In Berryessa*

by Dale Warner, Attorney, California

*Under the negligent leadership of Superintendent G. Herbert Wadley, the Board of Trustees of the Berryessa Union School District in San Jose, California, openly embraces anti-Celtic and anti-Irish bigotry. The school district's educational and curriculum policies openly scorn the contributions of Celtic-Americans to our American society, and knowingly ignore and suppress the part that the six Celtic nations have played in American history.*

*The remarks below, presented by Mr. Dale Warner on November 21, 1995 to the Board of Trustees of the Berryessa Union School District, are a part of an integrated public campaign to cause the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees to reverse their anti-Celtic policies in the classrooms of Berryessa.*

When I appeared before this board several years ago, I complained about the district's lack of commitment in teaching diversity to its students. I'm back on the same topic.

I know two children who attend two different schools in this district. The ethnic and cultural background of this brother and sister includes Latino because their deceased father was from Colombia, and Celtic because their mother's parents are from Ireland. When I talk with them about the education they receive in BUSD schools, one complaint emerges over and over again: that they are given education and sensitivity to their Latino culture, but their Celtic heritage is completely ignored.

They tell me that they enjoy school activities regarding their Spanish language, but that they are forbidden to express interest in their Gaelic language heritage.

One child told me that a teacher said that it would be racist to study Celtic issues in the same way that students are encouraged to study Latino issues **because the Irish people have never suffered from repression, oppression, or the loss of their language.** (*Emphasis ours*) In fact, however, Ireland was invaded by King Henry II in 1171, and his [English] political heirs have oppressed the Irish island peoples since then with 824 years of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural genocide.

The other child told me that a teacher actually laughed at a request to learn about Irish immigration issues (at a time the class was looking at immigration issues in connection with Proposition 187). The teacher said that the Irish were never banned from immigrating to any part of North America. However, Irish immigrants were excluded from South Carolina by law in 1698 and Maryland by law in 1715.

You board members set the tone for the anti-Irish (and anti-Celtic) bias by declining to recognize Celtic Heritage Month in March. And the entire BUSD system has smothered all knowledge, so far as I can tell, of **The Great Hunger**, an event that took place in Ireland just 150 years ago that caused the death and forced immigration (ethnic cleansing) of millions of Irish people.

About one-fifth of the population of Santa Clara County trace their ethnic roots to one or more of the six Celtic nations. While the proportion of Irish (and Celtic) people in Berryessa is less than that of Santa Clara County as a whole, the Celtic diaspora is an important one to understand if we are to understand the history of the US and the world.

So far as I can tell from listening to students and parents, BUSD (1) has not made even the slightest attempt to encourage self-esteem for students with Celtic roots, (2) has not recognized the national month of March by board resolution as Celtic Heritage Month, (3) has failed to teach about the Great Hunger of 150 years ago, and (4) seems committed to smothering the complex and many-faceted diversity within ethnic and national-origin groups in Berryessa.

I urge you to do the right thing, and encourage a well-rounded education for each student instead of the one-sided, biased education now presented.

**Turn To Action Request #2 On Page Six**

# Human Rights In Northern Ireland: Britain Is Running Out Of Excuses

by Albert Doyle

For many years Britain has been criticized by the principal international human rights groups, including agencies of the United Nations and European Community, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others, for a variety of human rights abuses in Northern Ireland. These have included the official use of torture, "shoot-to-kill" practices, biased judicial rules (special non-jury courts, denial of the right to remain silent without prejudice, imprisonment without charge and harsh sentencing practices), restrictions on free movement under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, lack of legal recourse for human rights violations, entry into homes without judicial warrant, and failure to deal with abuses by security forces. A sorry record by any standards.

Remember, unlike other modern democracies, **Britain has no overriding written Constitution--and certainly no Constitutional Bill of Rights**--to protect its own people from Executive or Legislative abuses of generally recognized human rights. In short, much as they hate admitting it, Britain has the tools of oppression of a third-world dictatorship--and they use them.

In response to all these criticisms Britain has always cited the "special situation" in Northern Ireland, including the need to resist "terrorism", a position well-calculated to create support from other governments, particularly those with skeletons in their own closets. Britain has even had the gall to refuse to comply with European Community rules relating to these

matters. It is called "derogation" in polite diplomatic circles.

To its shame, our own State Department has supported these British cop-outs, particularly in their annual *Congressionally-mandated* human rights reports (you can be sure that State would not do anything in this area unless forced to do so) These reports have become a bitter joke in human rights circles with their crude attempt to excuse human rights violations by politically "friendly governments" while demonizing "unfriendlies".

Well, with the cessation of violence in Northern Ireland over the past year and the end of the "special circumstances" there, one might expect some steps by the British to relax the draconian rules which have embarrassed them in the past in the view of democratic countries. Perhaps this would be the reaction of a normal democratic government--but not Britain -- not where Ireland is concerned. Interestingly, on the eve of the British Queen's recent visit to New Zealand, where historic British mistreatment of the Maori people has long been a subject of complaint, the British decided to apologize to the Maoris and to make compensation. They still deny an Irish apology although the Irish seem to have been treated at least as badly as the Maoris, i.e. land seizure, racism, discriminatory laws, etc!

Most people are unaware that Britain has **always** governed Ireland by "special rules", even when they ruled the entire country. Martial law was the norm of Britain's policy, not

Reproduce & Distribute

an exception. "Coercion Acts," the last resort of tyrants, were regularly used at the raising of an Irish head. We know that it's hard for them to change their thinking when it comes to Ireland, but their peculiarity is becoming more apparent.

Recently, the *Norwegian Helsinki Committee for Human Rights* and the *Committee on the Administration of Justice* (Belfast) have called attention to Britain's failure to act to eliminate the legal apparatus which allows such abuses. All supporters of peace with justice in Northern Ireland should call this situation to the attention of United States opinion leaders and the American public.

If aware of the truth, we are confident that the American people will not support Britain's policy of arrogant contempt for world opinion. It would be the justice of history if Britain were dragged, kicking and screaming, into joining the rest of the civilized world, by, of all people, the Irish in America.

*The author is the Vice President of the American Ireland Education Foundation, aka American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC).*

**For further information contact:**

**American Ireland Education  
Foundation-PEC**

54 South Liberty Drive  
Stony Point, NY 10980  
Phone # (914) 947-2726

Published February 1996 by AIEF-PEC



# The Great Hunger: TIME FOR AN ENGLISH APOLOGY

The great British writer William Makepeace Thackeray described English colonial rule in Ireland as follows:

*"It's a frightful document against ourselves -- one of the most melancholy stories in the whole world of insolence, rapine, brutal, endless slaughter, and persecution. There is no crime ever invented by eastern or western barbarians, no torture of Roman persecution or Spanish Inquisition, no tyranny of Nero or Alva but can be matched in the history of the English in Ireland."*

On July 19, 1995, the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC commenced a grassroots campaign to seek from the British government an apology for causing much of the death and suffering during Ireland's Great Hunger "famine." **We need your help to make this campaign a success.** Since that time Bertie Ahern, leader of Ireland's largest political party has called for an apology as has Dr. John Austin Baker, former Anglican chaplain to the British House of Commons. Ireland's President, Mary Robinson has urged the British to express regret.

An English apology must be one of the goals of the Irish American community during the 5-year commemoration 1995-2000, of the 150th anniversary of Ireland's Great Hunger. This man-made starvation during the 1840s caused the death of 2 million people and the forced emigration of millions more. During the potato blight, England shipped out of Ireland enough food to feed the population twice over.

Such an apology would be in keeping with other worldwide reconciliation efforts. The Southern Baptist Church in America has apologized to black people for their past support of slavery. Germany has apologized to the Jewish race for Nazi atrocities. Japan apologized for wartime abuses against Korean women. These are wise international healing gestures. Recently England apologized to the indigenous Maori people in New Zealand for atrocities committed by English colonists 150 years ago.

Reputable scholars now recognize that rigid English adherence to *laissez-faire* principles of political economy, lack of sympathy with the Irish people and outright anti-Irish hostility converted the tragedy of the potato blight into a disaster. Why not an apology by the English?

An English apology is long overdue the Irish people. The first step toward reconciliation, which would demonstrate the sincerity of the British government, would be to acknowledge responsibility for the magnitude of the disaster. An apology could be the spark which starts to melt the hard blocking movement to bring peace with justice to Northern Ireland.

The British government's acknowledging responsibility for the Great Hunger is important to today's English-Irish peace process. The British portray themselves as impartial brokers in Ireland keeping peace between Catholics and

## Reproduce & Distribute

Protestants. Yet history shows they are responsible for fomenting dissent among the Irish people and for supporting the loyalists' pro-Union position. By acknowledging responsibility for the neglect that caused the famine, we hope the British will acknowledge their partiality in Irish affairs and, therefore, accept the need for an impartial negotiator to broker the settlement in Ireland.

People like you have a major role to play in making this just campaign a success--as you did with the Boston College-Margaret Thatcher campaign. **The campaign must continue until the British government acknowledges its responsibility.** This means that you can hand out this R&D throughout the 5-year duration of the commemoration. We can obtain an English apology, **but only with your help.** Get others to assist you.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. It is important that you write the message below to: Prime Minister John Major, 10 Downing Street, London SW 1A0AA, United Kingdom. We must keep up the pressure.

*Dear Mr. Major:*

*In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Ireland's Great Hunger, please urge you government to issue an apology to the Irish people in acknowledgment of responsibility for this enormous calamity. Such an acknowledgment is essential to establishing peace and reconciliation in Ireland.*

2. Make copies of this flyer and send them to the different newspapers, radio & TV news programs, college media, Irish American organizations, etc. in your community. Distribute them at dances, festivals, concerts, etc. Mail them to friends, relatives, etc. throughout the U.S. and abroad.

## Petition Campaign

3. Help collect signatures for our British Apology Petition. For a copy of the petition contact PEC at the address below.

*For further information contact*  
**AIEF-PEC, 54 South Liberty Drive  
Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980, USA  
(914) 947-2726. fax (914) 947-2599**

**published February 1996 by AIEF-PEC**

**Make Copies For Distribution!**

## Write A 'Letter To The Editor'

by Frank Morris, Jr, *Great Hunger Awareness Campaign Director*

Take advantage of the St. Patrick's Day good will that exists during the month of March. Write a 'Letter To The Editor' for your local newspaper. Use our suggested letter below as a guide, or as is.

Daily newspapers welcome letters from readers. Letters To The Editor must be signed (no initials or pen names). Include your address and daytime phone number (so authorship can be verified). Limit your letter to 250 words, and double space if type-written. If handwritten, allow comparable space between lines. Newspapers do not publish copies or form letters ...that is why it is important that you, a local reader, write to them. So, go to it. Use the suggested letter below.

Letter To The Editor:

As we celebrate St. Patrick's Day 1996, let's remember the millions who perished in Ireland 150 years ago as a result of the Great Hunger, the so-

called "Potato Famine." As a result of that 5-year period of starvation and disease, Ireland's population was cut in half, millions died, million migrated.

Enough food to feed the Irish population twice over was exported by absentee landowners under the protection of British troops to the markets of Liverpool. The Great Hunger surely was the 'seed crop' for the 'Troubles' that have plagued Ireland during succeeding generations. Hopefully soon peace talks will begin. As St. Patrick's Day approaches, let us -- 44 million Americans of Irish heritage -- pray for and work for peace and a permanent, democratic solution to the 'Troubles' that have persisted through these 150 years.

Sincerely,  
signature

*Note: By writing you bring some historical information to your local community...and increase the dialogue for peace in Ireland. Please do it!*

## WE NEED YOUR HELP This St. Patrick's Day Season

All members are asked to make a special effort this St. Patrick's Day season to promote our issues: winning support for the peace process from all of our government's most important leaders; educating the public about Northern Ireland; the **British Apology Campaign** (See R&D *The Great Hunger*); and recruiting new members for PEC.

There will be plenty of opportunities to reach the public during March: dances, parades, concerts, etc.

In the last two newsletters and in this newsletter, we have provided you with important *Reproduce & Distribute* (R&D) articles: *When Ireland Starved*, (about the Great Hunger), and *What They Don't Tell Us About Northern Ireland*. In this issue we again include a R&D designed to recruit public support for a British Apology.

We have available for you plenty of **FREE** postcards addressed to Senator Bob Dole and Speaker Newt Gingrich requesting they support the peace process. We also have British Apology postcards addressed to the British Ambassador. We also have available back issues of our newsletter, PEC membership brochures, and Great Hunger brochures, for you to distribute.

During March everybody will be Irish and will want to help. **Please take advantage of that goodwill.**

To order newsletters, PEC membership or Great Hunger brochures, and/or the Gingrich/Dole/British Ambassador postcards, write PEC or call (914) 947-2726. Be sure to tell us which postcards you want (Dole, Gingrich, British Ambassador or all three) and how many of each.

Book for sale:

### **FAMINE**

A novel by Liam O'Flaherty

*Famine* is the story of three generations of the Kilmartin family set in the period of the Great Hunger.

It is a magnificent assertion of sympathy with the perpetual struggle of the mass of humanity for bread, freedom and civilization. It is an indictment of tyranny and the callous misgovernment of a people treated as if they were in a state of armed insurrection instead of near death by hunger.

It is an appallingly lifelike study of extreme, prolonged, and widespread poverty, a poetical but never gushing or rhapsodic expression of love for the Irish people.

*Irish Times* critic John Broderick says O'Flaherty is "the most heroic of Irish novelists, the one who has always tackled big themes, and...in this great novel, succeeded in writing something imperishable.... Mary Kilmartin has been singled out by two generations of critics as one of the great creations of modern literature."

*Famine* is available from the PEC for \$12.95, plus \$2 p&h. NY State residents add sales tax. To charge (MasterCard or Visa), call the PEC at (914) 947-2726.

## *St. Patrick's Day Gift Idea!*

For only \$7 you can give a 6-month gift subscription of the *American Irish Newsletter* to friends, family, etc.

Send us their names and addresses and \$7 per gift subscription. We will notify them that the gift is from you unless you tell us differently.

**Call the PEC Hotline  
for the weekly action request.  
(914) 429-7849**



## Action Requests

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

**1. Haley Barbour, Chairman**  
Republican National Comm.  
310 First Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Phone# (202) 863-8500

**Message:** Please have your party's Presidential candidates publicly call upon the British government to begin peace talks in Ireland without pre-conditions, and that they support the peace process. By not doing so they are creating a needless problem on an issue which should not be a partisan matter in US politics. Is anyone not in favor of Irish peace with justice?

**2. G. Herbert Wadley**  
Berryessa School District  
1376 Piedmont Road  
San Jose, CA 95132

**Message:** I was shocked to read that your school district refuses to teach students about Ireland's Great Hunger of the 1840s and the many contributions of the Irish and other Celtic people in building this nation, including their prominent role in the American Revolution. I urge that you immediately reverse this unfair policy.

## Great Hunger Memorial Monument

We are happy to announce that ground has been broken for the erection of The Great Hunger Memorial Monument at Battery Park in New York City, a point of entry for millions of Irish immigrants which is visited annually by millions of tourists. The monument will consist of six larger-than-life, bronze figurines that depict a typical Irish famine family.

In December 1995, as directed by the New York City Arts Commission, a three-foot temporary version of the monument--phase one--was placed on the site in order to claim the plot. In 1996 the full family bronze figurine (a father, mother and four children) will be placed--phase two. In 1997 a nine-foot Celtic Cross and fencing will be placed.

The Great Hunger Memorial Monument project is chaired by Bill Whelan, President of the Emerald Society, New York City Fire Department. In 1991 Mr. Whelan and Mr. Thomas Fawcett of the Emerald Society began the process of obtaining permission to erect a national famine memorial to pay tribute to the millions of Irish men, women and children who perished during The Great Hunger or who were forced into exile. Getting the site and approval of the monument took almost five years. In 1993 they commenced a fund-raising drive to raise the necessary \$600,000.

According to Mr. Whelan, raising funds has been a struggle. He notes that most financial support comes from grassroots Irish America, with little support from Irish American business leaders. But he expects that to change as the project gets more publicity and is confident that the necessary funds will be raised to complete the monument in 1997. The project has been endorsed by many prominent people and organizations, including: American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC; Cardinal John J. O'Connor, New York's Roman Catholic leader; Concern World Wide; New York State AFL-CIO; and Irish Foreign Minister, Dick Spring.

You can be sure that the success or failure of this important project is being watched not only by concerned American politicians, but also by British government interests. The outcome will influence how our political leaders react to the concerns of the American Irish community. In other words, this project must not fail.

For further information or to send a donation, write: The Great Hunger Memorial Fund, PO Box 290-690, Brooklyn, NY 11229. If you send a donation, be sure to mention that you are a member of PEC.

### Assert Yourself -- Respond To The Action Requests

#### To Join Or Renew Your Membership PEC-AIEF

[ ] New Membership \$25 [ ] Membership Renewal \$25  
[ ] Senior Citizen \$20 [ ] Student \$10  
[ ] Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
[ ] Donation Only \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Members receive the monthly *American Irish Newsletter*.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of your Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to PEC-AIEF and mail to 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980. For information call (914) 947-2726.

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC  
54 South Liberty Dr.  
Stony Point, NY 10980

Address Correction Requested

First-Class  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Garnerville, NY  
Permit No. 29