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American Irish Newsletter - October 1996

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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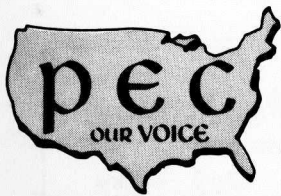


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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 21, Number 10

October 1996

Irish Famine Commemoration "Party" Criticism Rejected

Our August Newsletter reported on our concern about the Irish government's project to close famine commemoration activities with a "celebration" at Millstreet, County Cork, which we believe was not suitable for the topic of the Great Hunger. The government had turned over the organization of the event to an outside group and the "celebration" aspects (including a music festival) seemed to us to have overwhelmed the story of the famine. We communicated our views to the promoters (as did others, notably the Ancient Order of Hibernians) and to the Irish government. We told them that we were particularly dismayed that the stated purpose of the "celebration" was said to "bury the ghost of the famine"! As far as we are concerned, the Irish people cannot even begin to think about "burying the ghost of the famine" until the British government acknowledges their shocking mishandling of the whole episode, leading to the deaths and emigration of millions of Irish people - that is, our British apology campaign answered satisfactorily. Needless to say, the subject of British culpability, not to say an apology, has no part in the "bash"!

We have now received a response from the organizers, in language similar to that of the Irish government's comments, indicating that no changes are being contemplated in the event, repeating our suggestion that the famine must be commemorated in a "serious, dignified and reflective manner", but containing no indication that the event will in fact be conducted in such a manner. The Irish government even suggested that we were trying to use the famine "as a weapon in modern cultural wars", phrasing strangely similar in vacuity to their earlier suggestion that the famine was "a shared experience" between Ireland and Britain. We would prefer to say that we would like to see the truth told.

Their message seems to be, "Send money, and on with the party!" Count us out. We hope Americans concerned with a thoughtful and dignified commemoration of the famine will tell them the same.

Raffle Deadline Approaching Rapidly

This is a reminder for all members that the deadline for returning your raffle books is approaching rapidly. Please send them as soon as you can. The deadline for returning your chance books is October 8th.

As we have told you before, the raffle is a crucial source of revenue for the PEC. The PEC needs the revenue and you might find yourself the winner of a trip to Ireland.

The drawing will be held on October 12th. Winners will be contacted and announced in the newsletter. Please return your books to:

American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC
54 South Liberty Drive
Suite 401
Stony Point, NY 10980

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

Many people are probably thinking, "Let the Orangemen march wherever they wish. What difference does it make? Isn't it better to avoid confrontation so that investment will come to Ireland?" Unfortunately, Orange marches are more than parades. They are demonstrations of triumphalism when loyalists take the opportunity to say once again, "Croppie lie down." "The clear message from Drumcree et al is that fundamentalist unionists are incapable of accepting a democratic solution which would accommodate the diversity of all and threaten none... If they are not prepared to accept the principle of consent on the marching issue, what chance is there that they could accept the principle on more fundamental issues that have to be addressed if we are to reach a settlement? The pogroms of '69, internment of '71 and Drumcree of '96 all took place with the connivance of the British government and the full backing of the so-called forces of law and order. They only served to highlight the fundamentally corrupt and undemocratic nature of the state and strengthen nationalist resolve never to return to a state of second class citizenship in their own homeland."

(Andersonstowns News, 8/10/96)

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OUR VIEW

When John Bruton addressed the Joint Session of Congress on September 11th, many in the audience held hope that he might signal some bold new initiative or signal what the Irish government was planning in order to save the peace process.

Not only did Mr. Bruton offer little in the way of hope for the success of the talks, he chided those who would expect quick progress. Even Mr. Bruton's optimistic prediction of some type of breakthrough between the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists was quickly rejected by those two parties. Mr. Bruton's message did little to reassure those who feel this process is doomed to failure.

Let's face it, the talks process has degenerated into a complete farce. The leaders of the main unionist parties are in no mood to find a solution. They have shown time and time again their unwillingness to come to an accommodation with nationalists. Ulster Unionist Deputy Leader John Taylor recently stated that there will be no progress by the end of this year. No progress ever is the more likely scenario.

Three months into the talks, not only has nothing been agreed upon, not one substantive matter has even been discussed. If the parties cannot agree to talk about the issues, how can there even be a remote possibility that they can find agreements or solutions to the problems facing Ireland?

Paragraph 47 of the Joint Framework Document stated that if the parties cannot find agreement, the two governments reserve the right to impose a solution on them. To us this seems like the only initiative that would have any chance of success.

Time is running out for this process. The two governments should tell the parties immediately. Get down to business and find a solution or we'll find one for you. Most likely, with that ultimatum, the parties will get moving on finding a solution faster than a speeding bullet. If they don't, then obviously, the two governments are the only hope.

Michael Collins Movie - A Great Opportunity

Director Neil Jordan's epic movie about the life of Michael Collins is set to be released in the United States on October 11th. The critically acclaimed film stars Liam Neeson, Julia Roberts and Aidan Quinn. We urge all members to see the movie.

The release of *Michael Collins* also presents a great opportunity for members to help educate the public about the situation in Northern Ireland. Before you go to the theater, make copies of the Reproduce and Distribute (R&D) articles from this newsletter or past newsletters. Then distribute them to movie-goers at the theater. In the past this has proven itself to be an effective way to educate the public, raise awareness about the situation in Northern Ireland and to get more people involved in the fight for peace with justice in Ireland.

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Supported in part by the Emerald Society
NYC Fire Department

PEC members have conducted similar campaigns at such films as *In the Name of the Father* and *Hidden Agenda*. These were very successful endeavors. The Michael Collins movie gives us the perfect opportunity to continue that work.

So please make copies of the R&D's and hand them out when you go to see *Michael Collins*.

Lastly, enjoy the film!

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

From the North

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

After the British government-conducted shambles of the past two years which culminated in the siege of Drumcree this summer, everyone is now asking: what are the prospects for the 'multi' party negotiations which resumed on September 9th? Optimists are hard to find, and with good reason. The political temperature is now almost as bad as it was at the beginning of the civil rights campaign twenty-seven years ago.

First, a short resume of the current situation. Major's imposed elected Forum has become what it was predicted to become - a Unionist bear-garden in which its various species can excoriate nationalists and republicans to their hearts contentment. There is not much else that it can do, given the nature of Unionism which was fathered by Britain for that particular purpose. Also, as the respected public servant, Mr. Maurice Hayes, has observed, every governmental decision has already been taken elsewhere (i.e. in the Vice-roy/Chief Secretary's lodge at Stormont).

And so, after its long summer break spent at Drumcree and other marching venues, its first action was to display the Union flag inside the chamber (refurbished at a cost of around 5 million US dollars, big money for Northern Ireland). Here there are fair employment laws to forbid the displaying of party-political emblems in the workplace. This is to avoid creating a hostile environment for people who do not subscribe to, as is invariably the case, Orange-Unionism. Obviously, the Unionists do not consider the Forum to be a working environment. In displaying the Union flag inside the chamber, the Unionists were trying to circumvent a ruling that it could not be flown outside and over the building.

Their next action was to hold a debate on the efficacy of boycotting Catholic-owned businesses, thereby exacerbating a situation which they themselves had created by their role in the events at Drumcree. Sinn Fein had the foresight to give this Forum, a gift from Major to the Unionists, a wide berth right from its inception. The SDLP has now felt compelled, to save itself embarrassment, to boycott its sectarian reveries as well. The only thing that can save it now is if the SDLP were to return to their seats. Since the British government took out a 10 year lease on the place, it looks as if they may have as yet undisclosed plans for its development.

But the powers-that-be (in London

and in Dublin) are still working overtime to keep alive the illusion that the 'multi' party negotiations are the venue where the movements forward will be taking place. Everyone could be wrong, but that one is not swallowed. George Mitchell will strive his best, few doubt, but his task is immense. The resistance which comes from the British government, acting in collusion with the Unionists, is unlikely to be overcome this side of a general election in the UK. This view is supported by Peter Temple-Morris, the English Conservative MP, who is co-chair of the British-Irish inter-parliamentary body. He is a person who has some empathy with Ireland's cause and he has commented, "I've written the process off until after the election."

Hopefully, we can keep the show on the road and have something to play with. Otherwise, we will have to start the whole show up again. The election could be more than one year away and again there is no certainty what its outcome would be. Would the Unionists again hold a balance of votes at Westminster? No! Something much more than a waiting game is called for, aside from the fact that a political vacuum of that duration in Northern Ireland will allow simmering discontents to build up.

What is needed is for someone (or some thing) to move the British government to move the Unionists and, unless this happens, Mr. Mitchell's task will be hopeless. Given former Secretary of State Baker's comments at the Republican Convention in San Diego and Britain's attempt to present itself as having a special relationship with the State Department, people who belong to the democracy in Ireland are apprehensive after the apparent love-in with respect to Iraq. The apprehension relates to Britain's motives and what might be expected as a quid pro quo.

The difficulties in wait for Mr. Mitchell can be illustrated by the positions being taken by the Ulster Unionist Party's leader, David Trimble. Like Paisley, he rejects the Frameworks for Agreement Document, Sunningdale Mark 2 (i.e., power sharing, so-called) and practically everything else that would be meaningful. In recognition of the anti-Unionist forty-percent of the Northern population, he has been talking to the SDLP but, given these public indications of his stance, it is difficult to see what it is they are talking about. And, like Paisley, he insists on the impossible demand of the IRA's de-

commissioning prior to a negotiated settlement which he makes impossible because of his insistence that the Constitution is off-limits for modification in favor of Ireland.

In the event of Mr. Mitchell not being able to facilitate agreement, given the intransigence of unionism, what then is the likelihood? It is generally agreed that it would be up to the two governments to devise a scheme equitable to both sides, but, at this juncture, Mr. Trimble doesn't trust the 'triple lock' given to Unionism by the British. Namely, that any agreement (government devised or otherwise) to be sanctioned by the political parties, parliament and the people. The people, as generally understood by Trimble and other Unionists to mean, are those confined to Northern Ireland. What if the triple lock failed and the people of Northern Ireland voted for the agreement by what he calls 'a narrow majority in a referendum.' 'It would not be wise', he says, 'for government to think it satisfies the consent (my emphasis) principle by operating by way of referenda. You need the agreement of the principal elements in society' (my emphasis). What he means is the Unionists even if they should be in a minority. He did not elaborate on what the Unionists would do then. Would they use the same methods to overthrow a Northern cross-community majority as those which they employed in 1920 to overthrow the democratic will of a majority in the whole country? So much for the Unionists and their interpretation of the principle of consent.

For several years now, the Campaign for Democracy has been making the point, through me, that Northern Ireland is not a democracy. I am somewhat chuffed now to read that Mr. Major has, at last agreed with me according to the 'Manchester Evening News'. He is reported as being 'appalled' at 'the absence of local political control over Northern Ireland affairs... We need proper government. No Irish politicians for several generations (his time span is wrong) 'have taken any decision, not even local government decisions, that is appalling'.

He has limited perceptions as to the amount of democracy to be devolved. Nevertheless, this is a movement of some kind. Perhaps soon he, or Mr. Blair, will have to - at long last -- take up the challenge from the likes of Trimble and Paisley and move things forward to the advantage of both the Irish and the British peoples. In the political struggle for that day, as was indicated above, the American Irish too could be instrumental.

Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

There is a wider lesson to be learned from the agreement between the Bellaghy Residents Association and the Royal Black Preceptory. First, it diffused a volatile situation which had the potential of turning into a long-running saga such as that of the Lower Ormeau. The maturity and common sense shown by both sides is a telling indicator of what can be achieved through honest and open dialogue. Nationalists and Blackmen are not going to ride off into the sunset together but, by sitting down and telling each other just how they feel and what they want, they all have given a tantalizing taste of how face to face dialogue can bring about a measure of mutual respect and healthy compromise in a relatively short space of time.

(Andersonstown News, 8/31/96)

Irish language is still treated as second class in the north. BBC has ordered that Irish language programs may not be advertised during news broadcasts. Furthermore, the word *Taoiseach* cannot be used to describe John Bruton! These changes came about after the Ulster Unionist Party complained of 'nationalist bias' inside the BBC and asked for details of the religious and political affiliation on all reporters employed locally by the station. In another instance, a man received a letter from the government which stated that those who needed further advice in Chinese, Punjab, Urdu or Welsh could call a toll free number. Those who spoke Irish were not afforded such an opportunity. When questioned, the government said that they assumed that Irish speakers could also speak English. However, couldn't the same assumption be made about Welsh speakers? "If the British government only used Welsh or Scottish Gaelic in cases where they were sure English couldn't be understood, then they wouldn't have a comprehensive civil service bilingual policy in both Wales and Scotland. The reality is that it's not ok to speak Irish here because nationalists are regarded as second-class citizens."

(Andersonstown News, 8/24/96)

Museum Remembers Great Hunger

by Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

The prestigious Museum of our National Heritage in Lexington, Massachusetts is hosting a large exhibit remembering Ireland's Great Hunger of the 1840's. The museum is located near Lexington Green, the site of the start of the American Revolution on April 19, 1775. The museum attracts tens of thousands of tourists each year from every corner of the world. The museum is owned and operated by the Masonic Order, a group which traditionally is associated with English or Scottish society. However, the exhibit vividly portrays the plight of the starving Irish.

In the spacious exhibition hall is a reconstructed famine era rural Irish cottage. Also re-created is a compartment of a typical coffin ship that brought so many Irish to the United States and Canada. The exhibit also deals with the anti-Irish racism that took hold in the Boston area upon the arrival of the starving Irish. Anti-Irish writings of such famous citizens as Ralph Waldo Emerson are shown. It is also mentioned as a historical footnote that Henry David Thoreau of Walden Pond fame actually lived in an Irish immigrant's shanty while writing his immortal book. The famine immigrants who built the industrial cities of Lawrence and Lowell in Massachusetts are given much space in the exhibition.

Paintings and artifacts from the Great Hunger also give the exhibition a sense of reality and highlight the horror of the event that devastated Ireland. The Museum has even planted a potato patch on its front lawn! The exhibit has shown a sense of the impact that the famine immigrants had on US history. That is more than many of our own American Irish institutions have done. The exhibit's only failing is the lack of emphasis placed on the fact that Britain exported tons of food from Ireland for profit while the Irish starved to death.

While the newspaper article displays a vivid picture of Irish suffering, nothing is mentioned of the policies of the inflictor of the suffering, Britain. Hopefully, many of the viewers will already know this. Too bad the exhibit doesn't show this. During the height of the Great Hunger, the *Times of London* ran an editorial proclaiming that: "The Irish race soon shall be as rare in Ireland as is the Redman in Manhattan." The display has many good points; however, it would be like having an exhibit of the Jewish holocaust and not mentioning the Nazis.

Britain caused the horrific situation and did its best to see that the Irish suffering be maximized through harsh British laws and refusal to feed the people. We do not forget. Please visit the exhibit yourself if you are in the area and make up your own mind.

Write This as a Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

At the Republican Convention, when speaking in a prime-time address, former Secretary of State James Baker attacked President Clinton for his involvement in the Irish peace process. The attack was uncalled for and shameful.

The role of the United States in the search for peace with justice in Ireland is the main reason why the peace process has advanced as far as it has. Without the initiatives taken by the Clinton administration, including meeting Gerry Adams, there never would have been an 18 month ceasefire or a peace process to begin with.

All Americans concerned with the issue of peace and justice demand that US involvement in the Irish peace process continue. The Republican party would do well to heed the warning that there will be an electoral price to pay if it intends to end US involvement in the Irish peace process.

Sincerely,

1869 John Bright, House of Commons, April 30: "I say that the condition of things in Ireland which has existed ... for the last 200 years, for the last 100 years, for the last 50 years, would have been utterly impossible if Ireland had been removed from the shelter and influence and the power of Great Britain. The time has come when acts of constant repression in Ireland are unjust and evil...."

1870 Gladstone, House of Commons, March 11: "The oppression of a majority is detestable and odious. The oppression of a minority is only by one degree less detestable and odious."

1875 Prof. Cairns's *Political Essays*, page 197: "I own I cannot wonder that a thirst for revenge should spring from such calamities."

1879 Famine.

1882 Mr. Trevelyan, House of Commons: "At this moment in one part of the country, men are being turned out of their homes, actually by battalions, who are no more able to pay the arrears of these bad years than they are able to pay the national debt."

1885 1,000 imprisoned without trial.

Mr. Chamberlain, at West Islington, June 17: "It is a system founded on the bayonets of 30,000 soldiers, encamped permanently in a hostile country."

1886 Mulhall's *Fifty Years of National Progress*: "Ireland--The present reign has been the most disastrous since that of Elizabeth, as the

following statistics show: Died of famine [est. over 2,000,000]; number of emigrants, 4,186,000; number of persons evicted, 3,668,000. No country in Europe or elsewhere has suffered such wholesale extermination."

Lord Aberdeen, at Leith, October: "These evictions were always carried out in the Queen's name."

Gladstone, House of Commons, April 16: "We are *paticeps criminis*; we, with the power in our hands, looked on."

Between 1838 and 1886, 50 bills and resolutions were offered by Irish members on the land question. Parliament rejected or dropped all of them.

1887 Coercion bill, which is to last forever. Between 1837 and 1887, 43 coercion bills were imposed upon the Irish people by the English government.

1888 Imprisonment of Irish leaders.

Note: Of the four Irish patriots named above--O'Donovan Rossa, William Smith O'Brien, James Stephens, and John Mitchell--O'Brien and Mitchell were Protestants.

For more information about Great Hunger, commemoration activities, books and videos, contact:

**American Ireland
Education Foundation-PEC
Suite 401, 54 South Liberty Drive
Stony Point, New York 10980
(914) 947-2726**

American Ireland
Education Foundation-PEC

When Ireland Starved: England's Shame - II

The following will address 50 years (1837-1887) of British rule in Ireland, citing facts given officially and commented on by the leading statesmen and writers of England and Europe at the time.

1837 Gustave de Beaumont, French writer, noting Ireland's condition, said, "I have seen the Indian in his forest, and the negro in his chains, and I thought I had beheld the lowest form of human misery; but I did not then know the lot of Ireland...."

1838 The Duke of Wellington declared that never was there a land in which poverty existed to such a degree as in Ireland.

1842 Provision riots. Many outrages.

1843 Thackeray, the English travel writer, in *Irish Sketch Book*: "Men are suffering and starving by millions."

1844 In *Travels in Ireland*, German writer: "I doubt in the whole world a nation can be found subjected to physical privations of the peasantry as in some parts of Ireland."

Disraeli, House of Commons, February 16: "We have a starving population, absentee aristocracy, the weakest executive in the world: that is the Irish question."

1845 *London Times*, June 26: "The people have not enough to eat. They are suffering a real, though artificial, famine."

1846 Captain Wynne, government official: "Famine advances us with great strides."

Lord John Russell: "We have made Ireland--I speak it deliberately--the most degraded and most miserable country in the world."

1847 Mr. Bingham, House of Commons: "We are driving six millions of people to despair and madness. The people of England have most culpably and foolishly connived at a national iniquity. The landlords exercise their rights with a hand of iron...."

London Times, February 27: "89,758 emigrants embarked to Canada. One person in every five was dead by the end of the year."

John Morley, House of Commons, June 3: "All men agree that Ireland has been misgoverned. And who misgoverned her? The State."

1848 Great famine fever. Insurrection. John Mitchell condemned to 14 years transportation.

1849 Great famine fever endured. Census heads said "that above 1,000,000

suffered from the fever since the beginning of '46," and added, "but no pen has recorded the number of forlorn and starving who perished by the wayside or in ditches."

In Kilrush Union alone, 15,000 people were evicted. Sir Robert Peel on Kilrush evictions, June 8: "I do not think the records of any country, civilized or barbarous, present materials for such a picture."

July 29: the uprising of Ballingarry: the rebel James Stephens was wounded. William Smith O'Brien and others condemned to death.

1851 282,545 homes destroyed by evicting brigades over the past ten years.

1852 Sergeant Heron, O.C: "Ireland this year received a larger sum in charity from America than was realized by the profits of the trade of exporting horned cattle."

1854 John Bright, July 6: "There are districts in Ireland which no man can travel through without feeling that some enormous crime has been committed by the government under which the people live."

1858 O'Donovan Rossa and James Stephens, out of despair, started Fenianism. A.M. Sullivan's *New Ireland*, page 196, said: "The last endeavor of the Irish masses to accomplish amelioration within the lines of the constitution had been baffled and crushed."

1860 The chief secretary announced, April 17: "A large amount of destitution does in fact exist in the western districts." Among

evictors was Lord Plunkett, Protestant Lord Bishop of Tuam.

"A hideous scandal", said *London Times* of November 27. Lord John Russell pityingly described how an entire Irish village housing 270 persons was razed to the ground. Terrible clearances in Glenbeigh, Donegal.

1865 Lord R. Cecil, House of Commons, Feb. 24: "I am afraid the one thing which is peculiar to Ireland is the government of England."

New Ireland, page 261: "A time of troubles and of terrors. Midnight arrests and seizures, hurried flights, and perilous escapes, wild rumors, and panic alarms scared every considerable city and town."

O'Donovan Rossa sentenced to penal servitude for life.

1867 John Bright at Rochdale, December 23: "The grievances have not been remedied. The demands of the people have not been conceded."

Attempted insurrection.

1868 John Bright, House of Commons, December: "I have not observed since I have been in Parliament anything on this Irish question which approached the dignity of statesmanship."

Goldwin Smith: "Irish legislation within the last forty years...has failed through the indifference of Parliament to the sentiments of Ireland."

Story Requires No Sherlock

by Mike Barnacle, *Boston Globe*

It seems that the British are upset about a 9 year old boy from Northern Ireland who was horribly burned at the age of 5 by two boys who set him on fire. The British are terribly sensitive about violence in the North and they have a right to be due to the fact they've badly mismanaged the situation for years in a pathetic attempt to cling to their shrinking empire.

Anyway, Theresa Evans, press officer for the British Consulate-General's office in Boston, wrote the *Globe* about the lad - Damian Brennan - pointing out that she "was determined to learn why the two nine year olds whom Damian's father said had been responsible for the apparent sectarian attack on his son had gone unpunished. I was surprised to uncover a tragic story as likely to take place on the streets of Boston as of Belfast."

According to her detective work, Damian's burns were due to kids "trying to set fire to a mattress and frame." She indicates a child got paint thinner, and when it sprayed on the mattress, it exploded, burning Damian and three other boys, two Catholics, in a non-sectarian attack.

Ms. Evans, a true sleuth, also wrote that the Brennan family got a settlement of 300,000 pounds - \$450,000 in American money -and that the story is "sad enough without the sectarian scape-goating with which it has been embellished."

Let's take care of these details before moving to the larger picture. Peter Murphy is a solicitor in Northern Ireland who has taken the Brennan family as clients.

"That's not what happened," Mr. Murphy was saying the other day from his office, which is a lot closer to the scene than Ms. Evans' desk. "I know what happened. I've been involved from the start."

"Damian was playing on a swing set with another wee lad. Two young boys, 9 years old, who were then under the age of criminality here, had a

can of cellulose paint thinner. They sprayed it on Damian Brennan. They lit a match to him and Damian went up like a torch.

"There was no settlement paid to the Brennan family. An account was established for Damian but neither he nor anyone in his family can touch it until the boy turns 18.

"Money was used from the account once, to buy the family a home and move them out of the area where the incident happened. The psychiatrists and physiologists treating Damian felt this was essential to his recovery, to help him get over the memory of what took place.

"The money is controlled by the High Court in Belfast. And we had to fight hard to get it for the house. It took time but we managed to do it. And the judge was kind of saying to me 'Don't come back near me for any more.'"

Next we have Ms. Evans' contention that the burns were not the result of sectarian violence. A few days before the Brennan family - Catholics on welfare, which happens to be a way of life in Northern Ireland - finally raised enough money to bring him to the Shriners Burn Institute so doctors might help the nine-year old become someone others don't laugh or cringe at because of hideous wounds or scars, the

BBC carried a report on their radio news about Damian's plight.

The BBC - not exactly known for embellishment- stated the boy was going to America for treatment of burns suffered when he was "set alight" by Protestant boys. Of course there is always the possibility that the BBC does not have the same resources Ms. Evans has at her fingertips here in Boston.

Damian's mother, Jean, right there when her son went up in a fireball, knows the mattress story is untrue. Damian's dad, John, having been imprisoned by the British, knows exactly who he is dealing with and what his boy told him when he emerged from a coma. And both parents know that, to this very day, Damian has never been interviewed by the police.

Understandably, the British government seeks to "spin" anything that reminds the world of how morally corrupt, violent and bankrupt their occupation of Northern Ireland has been. So their predictable letter is no big surprise.

However, the Brennans - a poor, proud, honest family, hurt quite enough already by their sad environment - have been helped spiritually and financially by *Globe* readers, the Sheraton Corp. as well as doctors and nurses at Shriners Burns Institute, where they truly understand that no amount of money can make a boy burned beyond belief whole and human again. But they sure will try and that, Ms. Evans, is a story that could only take place in Boston.

Dole Comes Out For United Ireland- Then Changes His Mind

The Republican National Committee (RNC) issued a press release on September 11th after Republican candidate Bob Dole met with Taoiseach John Bruton. The release stated Senator Dole's support for "efforts to achieve a peaceful and united Ireland." Twenty-four hours later, a substitute release was issued deleting the united Ireland phrase. The RNC claims this was the result of a misunderstanding by the RNC. Maybe. But it does show that they thought it a matter of great importance to so alter the release and that Dole does not support a united Ireland.

But what is most worrisome is the fact that when Mr. Dole was asked by members of the press if US policy towards Ireland would change under him, he refused to comment. Dole also refused to comment when asked to repudiate the comments made by former Secretary of State James Baker at the Republican Convention when he blasted President Clinton's Irish policy.

(See Action Request #1 on Page 6)

Action Requests

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

1. Mr. Robert Dole
Dole for President
810 First Street NE Suite 300
Washington, DC 20002
Ph # (202) 414-6400
Fax # (202) 408-9468

Message: I have been made aware by the American Irish PEC that Senator Dole refused to say if he would change US policy towards Ireland if elected. He also refused to repudiate the attacks on our government's Irish peace policy made by former Secretary of State James Baker. This is very disappointing because, without continued US involvement, the peace process in Ireland is doomed to failure.

Please state publicly that if elected, you will continue US involvement in the Irish peace process, that you will pursue an aggressive and even-handed Irish peace policy and that you will not return America to the blindly pro-British policies on Ireland of past administrations.

Taoiseach Addresses Joint Session of Congress

On September 11th, Irish Prime Minister John Bruton addressed a joint session of the United States Congress. His address to the joint session was the third given by an Irish Prime Minister and only the thirtieth given by a European head of government since the end of the second World War. PEC representatives were in attendance for the thirty minute address.

Bruton's speech paid tribute to the work the United States has done for peace in Ireland, praised the US as the model for democratic government throughout the world and expressed his optimism that progress in the peace talks is on the horizon.

In what could have been seen as a move to challenge Bob Dole for the title of "most optimistic man in America," Bruton claimed that, although he has no concrete evidence that a new IRA ceasefire was imminent, he said that he "sensed a certain optimism." This optimism is supposedly based on Bruton's belief that the SDLP and the Ulster Unionists are nearing some type of breakthrough in the talks process.

Politicians in Ireland were bewildered at the Taoiseach's remarks regarding an IRA ceasefire and imminent progress in the multi-party talks. SDLP Deputy Leader Seamus Mallon remarked after the speech that he was unaware of any evidence that the IRA was contemplating a new ceasefire. Mallon further stated the he has been present at all of the bilateral meetings with the UUP and described Bruton's view of the discussions as a "fanciful interpretation."

Bruton was also criticized by Irish Americans in attendance for describing the ridiculously slow progress of the talks as normal and for stating that people should not expect quick agreement and solutions from the process.

The Taoiseach warmly praised the role played by the Clinton Administration, Senator George Mitchell and Republicans and Democrats in the Congress for their commitment to the peace process, economic development in Ireland and the International Fund for Ireland.

The most hopeful part of the address was when Mr. Bruton also made the firm prediction that in the United States, both Republicans and Democrats will continue US involvement in the peace process. Both sides of the house warmly applauded the remark and we hope that will be the case.

Other highlights of Bruton's trip were meetings with President Clinton, Republican candidate Bob Dole, meetings with congressional leaders and a dinner at the Irish Embassy.

(Editors note: Bruton's trip and address were not covered at all by the New York Times, even though it was on the national news networks. The Times seems to be moving to a position of open contempt for the Irish.)

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