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## American Irish Newsletter - November 1996

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 21, Number 11

November 1996

## Clinton and Dole

Since the beginning of the campaign, the PEC has been working to make sure that, whoever wins the election, America's Irish peace policy would remain the same and the issue of peace with justice in Ireland would be safe. We don't know if we have succeeded, but we do know that we have been heard by both campaigns.

**Let us reiterate, the PEC does not take any position on issues other than Ireland. We try to provide our readers with the facts relating to issues surrounding the Irish peace process. We do not make endorsements. Our analysis is as follows.**

President Clinton has a good record on the issue of support for the peace process. No President in history has shown greater concern with the issue and, by a wide margin, he has done more to secure peace in Ireland than any president in recent history. Without his efforts, there never would have been an IRA cessation or a peace process to begin with. President Clinton has consistently pursued an active, even handed policy on Ireland. His accomplishments are well documented.

Bob Dole's record on Irish issues is not as positive. Since 1993, the PEC generated thousands of communications to Dole asking that he support US Irish policy and that he not return America to the blindly pro-British policies of previous administrations. Dole finally answered some of these communications in September of 1996. He said that he would support efforts to achieve peace in Ireland.

One month after the IRA ceasefire, Dole met with Gerry Adams. He reportedly criticized Clinton for not meeting him at that time. (Clinton did not meet Adams until the IRA ceasefire was six-months old). In March of 1996, Dole said he supported Clinton's Irish policy but no longer supported the granting of visas to Adams. At the Republican Convention, James Baker blasted Clinton's Irish policy, claiming that Clinton invited terrorists to the White House and hurt relations with Britain. Dole, when meeting with Irish Prime Minister John Bruton, refused to repudiate Baker's comments. Dole also refused to comment when asked if he would change US policy towards Northern Ireland if elected. Lastly, Dole has attacked Clinton's policy towards Ireland on the campaign trail and accused him of inviting a terrorist (Adams) to the White House.

*(Editors note: We have provided greater documentation on Dole because his positions are not as well known as the President's)*

## Raffle Winners

We are happy to announce the winners of the 1996 annual raffle: first prize of 2 round trip tickets to Ireland or \$1,000 cash: **James P. Hogan**. Flushing, New York.

The five \$100 consolation prize winners are: **Ed Walsh**, Whitestone, NY; **John O'Brien**, Woodacre, CA; **Maureen O'Dea**, Bayonne, NJ; **Ellen Collins**, Bronx, NY and **Mary Power**, Manhattan, NY.

We are especially grateful to all who supported the raffle and all who sold extra raffle tickets.

## Newsbits by Kathy Regan

The borough council in Castlereagh, County Down recently got themselves into a bit of trouble. The council which is dominated by the DUP and led by Iris Robinson, wife of Peter Robinson caused themselves a bit of embarrassment. DUP councilors raised a storm of protest claiming that buses running through Protestant areas were causing offense because of advertising on the side in Irish. These Loyalists, raged against UlsterBus' embracing of "republican culture" and the Irish language. Well the fine Loyalist councilors of Castlereagh were not going to let this "injustice" go unanswered. They passed a resolution, condemning the company for allowing advertisements in Irish on its buses. Satisfied that Protestant culture would be saved by their heroic actions they awaited a response. The head of UlsterBus responded to the council informing them that "there aren't any advertisements on any bus in Irish. There are however a number in French." The council apologized for the stink they caused and their inability to distinguish between irlandais et francais. (AIN-PEC 10/9/96)

The British and Irish governments have to put their hands up and acknowledge the complete mess they have made of the peace process.

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## OUR VIEW

*We have always supported the principle of all-party talks to resolve the Northern Ireland situation. However, after serious consideration, our Executive Board has concluded that the time has come to face the fact that this plan is not working and has virtually no chance of succeeding, even though it could conceivably drag on for years. To pursue it further at this stage would only allow an unacceptable stall in moving toward peace in Ireland - a stall which may be in the interest of some, but which is not in the interest of the people of Ireland.*

*The reasons for the collapse of the all-party concept are not difficult to see. The principal cause is the failure of the Unionist parties to indicate even the slightest desire to compromise despite many indications from the nationalist side that they were willing to compromise. The exclusion of Sinn Fein from the talks through the raising of new and impossible conditions for their participation has dealt a fatal blow to the hope for a solution through negotiations among the political parties.*

*Does this mean that there is no hope for peace? No, it certainly does not mean that.*

*The peace process was created by the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and it is the responsibility of those governments to insure that the process is not abandoned. They can, if they want, agree between themselves on proposals to make changes in Ireland. After all, this is why democratic governments are elected. Any such proposals would, of course, have to be put to the people of Ireland for approval and this includes the people of the North and the South.*

*The matter of peace and justice in Ireland is too important to allow petty party considerations to block forward movement. We call on the two governments to assume the responsibility which, after all, has always been theirs.*

## Offensive Situations

by Paul Newman, New York

They're at it again! In the past, the PEC has conducted massive campaigns against Hallmark greeting cards for its offensive anti-Irish line of St. Patrick's Day Cards. After a six year campaign, the PEC influenced Hallmark to discontinue the line and, for some years now, they have kept their word.

However, we have been alerted that Hallmark is at it again. Once again, Hallmark has been distributing offensive St. Patrick's day cards that depict the Irish as silly drunken idiots.

One card has one person saying to another, "It's St. Patrick's Day! Hoist up a green one!" Then the other character exclaims, "No! Get your finger out of your nose and grab a beer you idiot!" There are also other offensive cards.

We dare say that Hallmark or any other card company would not attempt to defame any other ethnic group in this manner. Furthermore, no group would tolerate it.

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**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

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Please write the following letter in your own words or as is to:  
Patricia Harrigan, Hallmark Cards Inc., Consumer Affairs  
#216, P.O. Box 419034, Kansas City, MO 64141.

*Dear Ms. Harrigan:*

*I was deeply disturbed and angered that Hallmark Cards is once again printing its line of offensive anti-Irish St. Patrick's Day cards. These cards which portray the Irish as silly drunken fools are disgraceful. I doubt that your company would make the same racist attacks on other groups during their special holidays. If the line is not discontinued, I will be boycotting Hallmark cards in the future.*

*Sincerely,*

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

## **From the North: Where it all Went Wrong**

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

On Monday October 7th, the IRA's de facto two-year ceasefire in Northern Ireland came to an end. Given what the British government (facilitated lately by Mr. Bruton's Irish government) and the Unionists had been doing during the two years of peace, the bombing of the British Army's headquarters base at Lisburn came as no great surprise to a great many people.

With their usual displays of hypocrisy, the failed politicians who had not the wit to avail of the opportunity to cement the peace nauseated the people by staking claims to some hypothetical high moral ground. Major's display at the Tory Party Conference was particularly repellent.

Only Mr. Albert Reynolds, Ireland's previous Taoiseach, talked sense on the failure of the peace process. The bombing of the British Army base "underlined political failure" he said. And the reason? The British Prime Minister, Mr. Major, had "adopted a full blooded unionist agenda." Who could disagree with that? Check the record. The unionists have been given what they wanted. The nationalists/ republicans are still waiting for anything substantial.

Furthermore, according to Mr. Reynolds, the Irish government (of Fine Gael, Labour and Democratic Left) had "failed to prevent the (peace) process getting stuck on decommissioning." He also noted that "four months into the Northern talks process there wasn't even agreement on an agenda." It could be added that meanwhile Drumcree had shown the temper of Northern Ireland unionism.

The so-called constitutional politicians, throughout two years of peace, had not only frittered away opportunities to copper-fasten the ceasefires, they had behaved in ways continually to threaten what had been achieved. According to Mr. Reynolds, what was needed was to, "get Sinn Fein into all-party talks as soon as possible." It didn't happen. The Irish government bears a lot of the blame

here. According to Mr. Reynolds, "the Irish government should not have allowed the British government to foist this delaying tactic of decommissioning on the process."

There is no doubt that the present leadership of Sinn Fein was very interested in talking, even for the purpose of securing an acceptable interim arrangement. Their membership and voters are desirous of peace too. A genuine political road forward to further progress would have been welcomed, whatever Mr. Major purports to believe.

But Mr. Reynolds understands that the conditions for a restoration of the IRA ceasefire do not presently exist. The two governments have done, and are doing, the exact opposite of what is required. Sinn Fein can sell a package to the IRA. This consists of all-inclusive, meaningful negotiations, taking place within a time-frame and with no preconditions attaching to any party with an electoral mandate to participate. Given that, a renewed IRA ceasefire is probable and the talks could take place in an entirely peaceful atmosphere.

But the two governments and the unionists come at it from a different angle. Not talks and then agreement- (the way in which most conflict resolvers see things) but first agreement and then talks. In any case, Northern Ireland's problem goes far beyond paramilitary decommissioning. What is required is a demilitarization of the whole society, especially in respect of policing from which the British Army should be withdrawn.

Just prior to the IRA's return to the military option, the precondition demands of the British government and the Northern Ireland unionists were being scaled up again rather than down.

Which poses a question. Just how provocative can you get? Again, according to Mr. Reynolds, who is an acknowledged peacemaker, the British Premier John Major then had dumped

the report of the Mitchell Commission in the bin and this was the ultimate insult to those who had tried to bring about a ceasefire. With the tacit support of the British government the unionists had reverted to so-called Washington 3 - Mayhew's demand that some actual armaments be handed over before entry to talks, presumably regardless of electoral mandates. This has never been demanded of the Loyalist paramilitaries who have minuscule electoral support.

And so where did it all go wrong? According to Mr. Reynolds, the Irish government should not have allowed the British government to "foist this delaying' tactic of decommissioning on the peace process." But in point of fact, when little Sir Echo, John Bruton has not been grovelling at the feet of British Royalty, he has been playing the part of the Irish Candide, the perpetual optimist who no matter what disasters are taking place around him, persists in believing that he lives in the best of all possible (British?) worlds. Thus the British government and the unionists have been able to get on with their own agenda:

- \* The isolation and marginalization of Irish Republicanism and the democracy which it frequently obscures by its penchant towards militarism .

- \* The utilization of Ireland's desire for peace throughout the whole island to achieve this republican marginalization and to present themselves as peace-loving democrats

- \* The demolition of the pan-nationalist alliance (already damaged with Bruton's defection) and the dispersion of its international support, especially American backing.

- \* The enticement of the SDLP into the UUP's spider web so that the unionists could claim an acceptably-faced middle ground' and then pick over the Frameworks document and dole out innocuous pieces or bin the whole thing.

- \* Return the IRA to its 1965 level of capability and since, to the British, a containable level of violence is acceptable, they would have won again - at least for some period ahead.



### Newsbits *cont. from page 1*

Drumcree and its aftermath are symptoms of a deeper malaise created by the British government's decision to abort the peace process. Meanwhile, the Irish government's bungling policy of crisis management, coupled with its hysterical and almost schizophrenic reaction to each new controversy, has contributed to the dominant sense of insecurity in both communities. The Irish government needs to pursue a policy designed to bring about joint sovereignty-actual or de facto -that will establish once and for all the rights of those Irish people here for whom they have a responsibility, like it or not. The British government has to recognize that its total abdication of responsibility over the summer did nobody any favors. If we accept that political inertia and uncertainty have brought us to where we find ourselves today, then we must accept that it is only by firm action that we can be extricated.

*(Andersonstown News, 9/7/96)*

The incompetence of both governments has been shown by London's appointment of a succession of secretaries of state without adequate abilities and by Dublin's refusal to address real issues. It is this incompetence and not the paramilitaries which has caused the blockage in progress towards even reasonable discussions. If the London and Dublin governments had taken a firm line from the beginning, all this need not have happened. Dublin should have insisted that all parties be heard or the issue brought to the United Nations and the European Courts. London should have withdrawn gun licenses, disarmed the RUC and put all their weapons under lock and key. They should have also made it clear that subsidies are going.

*(Andersonstown News, 9/14/96)*

Again nationalists living in north Belfast have been subjected to sectarian graffiti. Four cars had UVF painted on them in black. The front windows and the car of one woman were covered in more sectarian graffiti. The Bunscoil Bheann Mhadigan, which had recently been awarded government aid, was targeted by the vandals and had UVF painted on its door. "Close or be closed" was the message and the threat was that unless the bunscoil did not stop teaching in Irish, it would be burned out by the UVF.

*(Irish News, 10/11/96)*

## The Shooting of Diarmuid O'Neill

by Captain James Kelly, *Dublin Ireland*

Diarmuid O'Neill was buried at a quiet dignified ceremony in Timoleague in West Cork on October 3rd. It was a simple family occasion with no military trappings, attended by the friends and neighbors of the O'Neill's.

A tall, red haired, 27 year-old, London-born son of Irish parents, Diarmuid O'Neill was the latest victim of the British shoot-to-kill policy in relation to those whom it chooses to classify as Irish terrorists. The unbridled savagery of the British police killing of an unarmed man was dramatically illustrated by a Press Association photograph, which showed how the victim was dragged from the house where he was shot. The blood smears on the tiled floor clearly indicated the rough manner in which the bullet-ridden body was handled. One can only speculate that since O'Neill died at the hospital and not at the scene, what impact this treatment played in hastening his demise.

First, media cohorts, obviously relaying on official sources indicated that O'Neill died in a gun battle with police. Then ten tons of explosives, the material to make five major bombs capable of causing chaos in London, were found in the house where O'Neill was shot. It turned out that there was no battle, no explosives in the house or weapons of any description. The bomb-making equipment was found miles away in another area of London. For good measure the accusation that O'Neill was involved in the February London Dockland bombing that broke the IRA ceasefire was also thrown in.

As Auberon Waugh, an English columnist and no friend of the IRA, writing in the London-based "Sunday Telegraph", put it: "If that (the Docklands bombing allegation) is so, why did they not arrest and charge O'Neill months ago? Mere suspicion is not good enough reason to throw CS gas through his bedroom window and then riddle him with bullets from their Heckler and Koch submachine guns as soon as he opens the bedroom door."

Waugh went on to discuss suspicion versus lack of proof stating, "There is nothing complicated or elitist about the notion of proof. All it means is that you must convince a jury where the truth lies, subject to a few sensible rules of evidence forbidding gossip and hearsay. When the police say they know who committed an offence but can't arrest the villain for lack of proof, what they mean is they don't know who committed an offence, but have a suspicion. If they knew he was guilty of something, they could arrest and charge him. O'Neill may have been guilty, but there can be no doubt his shooting was a terrible mistake. It simply will not do for the rest of us to play along with this degree of incompetence, where matters of life and death are involved."

Incompetence, however, is too mild a term. The specialist units in such operations by the British know exactly what they are doing. Their philosophy is based on shoot first and ask questions afterwards in dealing with alleged Irish terrorists. The evidence is there. It was not mere incompetence that led to the Gibraltar killings or made it necessary to halt the Stalker investigation into shoot-to-kill. In British counter insurgency terms, operational necessity takes precedence and, if this demands "shoot-to-kill" of unarmed suspects, so be it.

At this time, with the Irish peace process teetering on the brink, the shoot-to-kill policy is another factor militating against peace. It certainly does not help to inspire Irish trust.

# Sinn Fein and the Prospects for Peace in Ireland

by Gerry Adams, *President of Sinn Fein*

Eight months ago the peace process collapsed. The current situation is in deep crisis.

It would be nice if we could simply wish it all away - if there were a magic formula which meant no more war, no more divisions, no more fear, no more threats, no more inequality, no more second class citizens - no more conflict - but we all know that there is no magic formula.

The reality is that conflict can't be wished away. We have to work hard to tackle and remove the causes of conflict. In short we need to create the conditions for peace.

Three and a half years ago John Hume and I, with Albert Reynolds and Irish America, succeeded in creating a peaceful environment for negotiations. Even John Major acknowledged that this was the best opportunity for peace in seventy-five years.

Yet two years later, with the raised expectations of August '94 still unrealized, we face our greatest challenge yet.

This 'best opportunity' for peace, so painstakingly put together by Irish nationalists, was systematically dismantled by the British government. The peace process was slowly strangled.

## Why?

The British government lacked the will to make peace! It knows how to make war in Ireland. That is the mind-set which it brought to the new situation. That is why they put forward the demand for the IRA to surrender its weapons before Sinn Fein would be able to represent our electorate in talks. The last thing they wanted was real talks involving all the parties to find a peaceful alternative.

The British government knew that the IRA was undefeated. It knew

that this was precisely the basis for the IRA cessation. It knew that the space created would have to be filled with a viable peace process. Instead of encouraging this, the British Government sought to micro-manage the process and to reduce the momentum for change so as to control the dynamic.

Mr. Major and his advisors calculated that if the peace process was falsely protracted that the IRA would find it impossible to go back to the war; that the IRA would be defeated. Mr. Major miscalculated. He stretched the process to the breaking point on a number of occasions. Eventually it snapped.

The result was the collapse of the peace process, and an end to the IRA's cessation after 18 months. The subsequent creation of a talks process is for some little more than a tactical wrangle, serving the agenda for further delay; for avoiding, rather than tackling, the substantive issues.

Moreover, the civil rights of Sinn Fein voters and the electoral mandate of this party is ignored. Our vote is more than the sum total of the votes of five of the other parties at the Stormont talks. Having declared that any party which secured a mandate on May 30th would have a direct and automatic route into all-party talks, John Major again changed the rules and shifted the goalpost and excluded this party.

Having excluded Sinn Fein, London then capitulated to Unionist violence and the threat of more violence at Garvaghy Road. The summer saw loyalists kill Michael McGoldrick in Lurgan and the British Army kill Dermot McShane in Derry. IRA Volunteer Diarmuid O'Neill was killed in London and James Bradwell was killed by the IRA at Lisburn. But perhaps the continuing tragedy of this conflict was most distressingly highlighted by the death of 12-year-old Darren Murray, a young catholic boy

who died in an accident as a result of raised sectarian tensions following Drumcree.

So, where do we all go from here?

The fact is that we need a viable peace process which can achieve a negotiated settlement by tackling the issues at the root of this conflict. This process must not be simply to bring about an IRA cessation, though that is a central element, but it must be a credible and effective peace process. That is Sinn Fein's commitment. It is hardly an excessive or unreasonable position.

So what is a viable peace process?

It clearly has to be inclusive. Excluding people won't work. It hasn't worked anywhere else in the world and it hasn't worked here since this little Orange state was founded.

Similarly, preconditions are deliberate obstacles to dialogue and progress. They allow those who do not want change, an excuse not to get involved. The harder the preconditions, the less likely it is that negotiations will take place. There must be no preconditions placed on any of the parties.

An important element of any process of negotiation must be a time-frame. In other conflict resolution situations, as well as in disputes between trade unions and employers and between governments, a time-table or time-frame for discussion provides the dynamic and momentum essential to focus minds and produce agreement. The experience of obstruction at Stormont since June 10 illustrates the need for the two governments to agree a realistic time-frame for the conduct of these negotiations.

And as is evident a successful peace process will only be built if

**Continued on next page**



# Sinn Fein and the Prospects for Peace in Ireland

continued from previous page

confidence and trust exist. This is a matter for all the parties to the negotiations but especially for the British government. Mr. Major must show that he will not treat a second IRA cessation and a restored peace process in the same cavalier fashion as he did the last one.

Of course in bringing all of these disparate elements together as a package and making them work, it is crucial that no one has a veto which can block progress. A proper process of negotiation cannot be held hostage to the narrow interests of any group.

The Unionist leadership does not want change. They have used the preconditions introduced by the British to prevent negotiations. In some ways the loyalist parties have shown more openness and imagination than the mainstream unionist leadership. But the unionist leaders' stance cannot be divorced from the British one. They will not engage in meaningful negotiations until the British government does.

As for the loyalists, they have to be part of the solution also. Sinn Fein has consistently stressed that the loyalists have a right to be involved in an inclusive peace process. But let none of us forget that the current threats to break the loyalist cessation are in reality and to a very large extent threats of a return to the indiscriminate killing of innocent Catholics. No republican wants to see that.

I was one of those who actively encouraged the loyalists to ceasefire and I am glad that they did so, even on a tactical basis. There are clearly some elements within the loyalist camp which genuinely wish to see an end to this conflict and they should be encouraged.

The others and their cheerleaders should also know that they could not intimidate Sinn Fein in the past. They will not do so in the future.

Recent days have also seen the return to the calls for more security and for the demonization of Sinn Fein.

It is a fact that there are some politicians and others who remain stuck in the old psychology - those who three years ago vilified John Hume, Albert Reynolds and myself are again part of the very same chorus which is demanding a return to the old ways. Censorship, marginalization and repression. Back to shoot-to-kill, torture and mass imprisonments; forward to the past. Yesterday's failures with yesterday's agenda and no vision of tomorrow.

Well, that's not for this party and for those others who want something better for our children.

We have important things to do and they do not include knee-jerking or descending to name-calling and abuse, whether at the British Tory party conference or from those who know better in Dublin. The situation is much too serious for that.

Let me say again that Sinn Fein is wholly committed to pursuing with all vigor the goal of a lasting peace in Ireland. We will not be deflected from this task.

Despite the opportunistic demands for this conflict to be treated as a security problem, it is obvious that this is a political problem requiring a political solution.

Two weeks ago when the Middle East was convulsed in conflict, the British government was among the first to call for dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians. A move which was strongly supported by the

European Union and the United States.

Clearly, the international community recognizes that, where there is no attempt to bring about dialogue, you have a perpetuation of conflict.

Obviously, peace negotiations which can effectively tackle the causes of conflict and which can overcome the failures of the past four years, are best held in a peaceful environment.

There is a time to compete and a time to co-operate. This is a time to reach out beyond the narrow mind-sets and agree to cooperate.

Sinn Fein is prepared to go the extra mile for peace. Is John Major?

Two days after the IRA announced its "complete cessation" in August '94, I pointed out that the onus was on John Major to "recognize Sinn Fein's democratic mandate" and to "respond speedily to consolidate the peace". None of that happened.

But the challenge of peace is still there. It is there for Mr. Major. It is there for Unionist leaders. It is there for Irish nationalists and republicans. It is there for Sinn Fein. For the Irish government, for the IRA. This struggle has been a challenging one for republicans. The establishment media are ventilating the demand for IRA cessation. I regret the breakdown of the last cessation and I continue to work with others to create the conditions for real talks in a peaceful environment. But there has been no indication so far that the British are really interested. So the question has to be asked of John Major. Will he treat another IRA cessation the way he treated the last one? The key is in his hands.

*Published November 1996*

**For further information contact:**

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Stony Point, NY 10980  
(914) 947-2726

## PEC Members Visit Paddy Kelly in Portlaoise

By Thomas Enright, *New York*

On a recent visit to Ireland taken by myself and fellow PEC member Martin Lyons, one of the priorities was to try to see Paddy Kelly who is diagnosed with back cancer and is incarcerated in Portlaoise Prison.

We visited the prison on Wednesday August 28, 1996. We went to the gates, told the officers we were from the United States and would like to see Paddy Kelly. They asked us if we were relatives or did we know him. We had to reply in the negative. After a few moments, we were ushered into a waiting room where we waited about one-half hour. We were then brought to an office where our passports were photographed and then searched by touch and electronically. Every possession on our person was then put into a paper bag with our names on it and our shoes were removed, the soles of our feet were rubbed by a prison officer and the heels of our shoes were checked.

Our search completed, we were then sent to a row of small huts. We entered one door in front, our escort entered a door to the rear. In the hut there were four chairs, a small table and a young lady prison officer present all the time of our interview.

We fully expected to be taken to the prison infirmary to see Paddy but to our great surprise a young man with a tray containing four cups of coffee entered the rear door. The officer then introduced us to Paddy Kelly. He was delighted to have unexpected visitors from America. He told us in graphic detail of the daily torture he endured while in the hell of the British prison system. For twenty-three hours a day he was chained to his bed, both hands and feet. He was under twenty-four hour surveillance by eight guards, four of whom were armed. When he was allowed to walk the corridors his hands were shackled behind his back and he was in leg irons. These big leg iron had a trailing chain and these ruthless British guards would step on the chain causing Paddy to fall forward on his face. When Paddy could not endure the torture any longer, he refused to be moved from his bed and went on the "dirty protest" for five months. The "dirty protest" is the second to last weapon left to an Irish

political prisoner, the last being hunger strike to the death, if need be.

We asked Paddy about food and conditions in Portlaoise. He said they were very good. We particularly asked him if there was any ill treatment towards political prisoners? He said absolutely not. We asked about the clothes he was wearing, if they were prison garb? He laughed and said it was his jogging suit. He had just finished walking five miles on the treadmill in the gym. All political prisoners wear their own clothes in Portlaoise.

He then pulled down the top of his gym suit to show us the wounds from his operation. At the top of his spine there is a cavity that could conceal half of a large orange or a small full sized plum. The operation was performed in the town of Portlaoise. His doctors told him it was a very dangerous operation and the chances of paralysis were very real. Paddy told them to do their best as he had his trust in his fellow Irishmen.

We found Paddy to be in excellent mental condition, you could almost say content. He is most thankful to Fianna Fail deputy Eamonn O'Cuiv who witnessed the deplorable conditions in England when he visited Paddy in prison there. Mr. O'Cuiv then "raised Cain" in Dail Eireann and the pressure mounted for Mr. Kelly's transfer to Ireland under the Transfer of Sentenced Persons Treaty. This treaty saved his life. He could not have endured the torture in an English prison much longer.

When our visiting time was up, we shook hands and hugged this brave Republican prisoner. The only show of emotion was when his voice cracked expressing his thanks to the Irish in America. He thanked Congressmen Peter King, Tom Manton, Eliot Engel, Ben Gilman and many other public officials who helped him make this great recovery from what was certain death.

One must experience the trauma of going to a prison to fully realize what visits and letters from Americans mean to political prisoners. We give them strength and hope. Anyone who is planning to visit Ireland should consider visiting these brave men and women. It means so much to them.

## RIVERDANCE FOR CHRISTMAS

Bring **Riverdance** home for the holidays by ordering the newly released video, **RIVERDANCE THE SHOW**. Riverdance has returned to the United States and is now available on video from the American Ireland Education Foundation-PEC.

Breathtaking, thrilling and visually stunning, **RIVERDANCE THE SHOW** is the ultimate celebration of the very best in Irish culture. This video captures the exhilarating 78 minute show performed by the original cast, live from the Point Theatre, Dublin, Ireland.

**RIVERDANCE THE SHOW**, composed by Dublin born Bill Whelan, features a cast of eighty with a host of international performers, including the unique talents of American dancers Michael Flatley and Jean Butler, with the haunting sound of the Irish choral group Anuna and the dynamic energy of the Irish Dance Company.

**To order:** send check or money order payable to American Ireland Education Foundation, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980. Include \$2 P&H. New York State Residents add sales tax.

**To charge:** call (800) 777-6807 Tuesday thru Friday, 9am to 5pm (Visa/Mastercard only).



## 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. John Bruton**  
An Taoiseach  
Upper Merrion Square  
Dublin 2, Ireland

**Message:** Because of the obvious failure of the peace talks, the time has come for the your government and the British government to take charge, propose a solution and put it to the voters of Ireland. This is the only way forward that has any chance of success.

**2. Governor George Pataki**  
Executive Chamber  
State Capitol  
Albany, NY 12224

**Message:** Thank you very much for signing the Irish Famine Curriculum bill into law in New York.

**3. Don't forget!**  
Please send a  
monthly donation to  
support the PEC.

## New York Mandates Famine Curriculum Into Law

On October 9, 1996, New York Governor **George Pataki** signed the Irish Famine Curriculum into law at a signing ceremony in Manhattan.

The Bill, which was sponsored in the State Assembly by **Assemblyman Joseph Crowley** and in the State Senate by **Senator Michael Hoblock**, mandates that all students in secondary schools be taught about 'The Great Hunger'.

The PEC is especially grateful to all members who joined in our letter writing campaigns in 1995-96 in support of the passage of this Bill. Without the work of these individuals, our mission to see that students in New York are taught about Ireland's Great Hunger and the evils of genocide would not have been accomplished.

At the ceremony, which was attended by **PEC National President John Finucane** and **PEC Director of Operations, Sean Kane**, **Pataki** stated that, "just as our children must be taught about the horrors of the Holocaust, or the horrid condition of slavery, or the evils of genocide, they need to be taught about the famine."

**Pataki** also described the conditions in Ireland that placed the "famine" squarely in the category of genocide. He spoke about the fact that the British government shipped enough food out of Ireland that would have fed the people more than adequately. The Governor also described how the population was decimated and cut in half by the "famine" and how future generations need to be made aware of the tragedy.

New York's action comes on the heels of similar action in the state of New Jersey. The state's Holocaust Education Commission recently approved the Irish Famine Curriculum for inclusion in secondary schools education program on the Holocaust and other genocides.

The PEC welcomes these measures in both states. For too long, the subject of the Great Hunger and the issue of genocide has been ignored in the history books. While they are just the beginning, both these measures go a long way towards remedying that fact.

PEC would like to thank **Assemblyman Crowley**, **Senator Hoblock** and all those who aided the passage of this legislation. We would also like to thank **Governor George Pataki**, who has been a friend of the PEC and President Finucane, since we worked with him on the MacBride campaign while he was in the State Assembly many years ago. **Jim Mullin** and the Irish Famine Curriculum Committee are also to be praised for their work, without which the measure which was approved in New Jersey never would have happened.

Lastly, the PEC would like to thank **Cheryl Harrington** from **Joe Crowley's** office, whose work assured that passage of the bill would be successful.

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