



1-1995

## American Irish Newsletter - January 1995

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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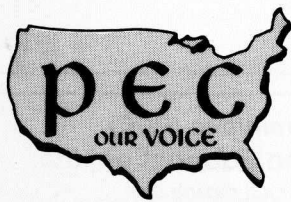
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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 20, Number 1

January 1995

## Attention Media: *Britain Still Controls the News*

The English-Irish Peace Process has had no effect on the way the news about the north is reported. The media is still manipulated by the British government via the wire services such as the **Associated Press (AP)**.

When the IRA was suspected of violating the cease-fire by holding up a post office and killing a guard in the process, it was widely reported by the news media, **before it was even confirmed**. But when the Loyalists violated their cease-fire, there was a media blackout. On Friday, October 22, 13 young Catholic men and women on a bus were brutally beaten by Loyalists, leaving six people hospitalized. As the people lay on the floor, the Loyalists jumped on their heads and banged their faces against metal railings. They threatened to kill the driver if he interfered.

Unfair and biased media coverage of the peace process will not produce a just and lasting solution. Media! You can't trust the wire services such as AP.

## *Economic Aid Alone Is Not The Solution!*

Although the Irish peace process hasn't really gotten off the ground, a big push has started for international "economic aid" to Northern Ireland, with some trickle-down to the Republic. The European Community is reported to be considering a \$360 million package, with lesser amounts promised by various countries, including a paltry \$10 million increase in the US contribution to the International Fund for Ireland. Oddly, the US contribution, literally a drop in the US foreign aid bucket compared to the billions given to other countries no larger than Ireland, was singled out as a **massive give-away** of US funds in a recent TV episode of *Hard Copy*, a CBS TV tabloid show.

Predictably, some Irish politicians and elements of the Irish American press are salivating over the prospects of a check from Brussels, Washington, etc., as a peace dividend. Even assuming that the checks are in the mail, a dubious assumption, of course, it is even possible that the infusion of capital into the Northern Ireland economy **will retard the prospects for real reform** in the politically sick statelet, thus downplaying the need for real structural reform. This is like dealing with the Haitian situation by leaving the Cedras party in power and putting all of the Haitian people on the US payroll.

We are not against investment and the creation of jobs in the north. We merely point out that the changes needed in the system there go beyond sprucing up flower displays and giving low interest loans to parachute clubs. We hope that some of the aid finds its way into community-based organizations such as the Conway Mill which continues to be the victim of official discrimination.

If the aid merely allows the British to substitute money from others for their own heavy cost of maintaining their colony in Ireland, it will be worse than useless; it will be perverse. We are encouraged by President Clinton's appointment of George Mitchell as his economic consultant and hope that he will make sure that aid results in real changes in Northern Ireland. We hope also that Senator Mitchell will soon become a peace envoy.

## Newsbits by Kathy Regan

The PEC welcomes the appointment of retiring Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell as a special Economic Advisor to Ireland. We feel that the appointment of this prestigious individual stresses the importance that the administration has placed on the Irish Peace Process. (PEC-AIN 12/1/94)

Gerry Adams was received by National Security Advisor, Mr Anthony Lake at the White House on 12/6/94. The symbolism of this meeting will hardly be lost on the various participants in the peace process. Adams' agenda was set to include Sinn Fein fundraising and the status of Republican prisoners in the US. The meeting is being seen by some as a consolation prize in face of the US refusal to allow Sinn Fein to raise funds, but that would be a gross understatement of the importance of this encounter. (Irish News 12/6/94)

The decision to deny Sinn Fein full participation in the Belfast investment conference on Dec 13-14 has brought angry protest from Nationalist leaders and the US government. In response to the move Sinn Fein began a picket outside the Northern Ireland Office and the US scaled back its delegation. It is sad that at a conference to aide the most

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## OUR VIEW

The Major government has begun the promised talks with Sinn Fein. While this is a positive step in itself, as Sinn Fein itself has pointed out, the more important discussions must be multi-party talks in which all the nationalist participants -- the Irish government, the SDLP as well as Sinn Fein -- sit down with the British to hammer out **real** changes in Irish relations. Such agreements cannot, of course be reached with Sinn Fein alone, as we all recognize.

It is absolutely essential that the three Irish groups continue to maintain a united front. Only by so doing will they be able to command the wide international support which they need and generally have had. It is even possible that the British will use the individual talks with Sinn Fein to create a breach in that united front. For example, they may make demands on Sinn Fein to procure an IRA weapons hand-over, something they know Sinn Fein cannot do. The aim would be to portray Sinn Fein as an obstacle to forward movement and thus an excuse to make no substantive changes. By the way, let us make it clear, we do not consider joint tourism schemes between the north and south to be the kind of changes that are needed in Northern Ireland.

Although there is a government crisis in the Republic as we go to press -- a crisis may also be looming in England - we don't imagine that any realistically foreseen new government would not continue the process started by the former coalition government. We hope this is the case.

### Don't Forget!

- . Send In Your Donation
- . Mail Your Postcards to Rep. Gingrich and Sen. Dole
- . Return Your National Telephone Chain Application whether or not you send a donation

. USE THE PEC TELEPHONE HOTLINE (914) 429-7849 -- a 24 hour, 7 day a week service. Letter-writing messages change every Sunday night. Your letters are very important!

### Offensive Situations

by Paul Newman, *New York*

Being that this is the Christmas season, **Fox Television** decided to give the American Irish a present! A recent episode of the *Simpsons* cartoon series was centered around Homer Simpson's father becoming sheriff. In describing his qualifications, he mentioned that he was responsible for driving the Irish out of town! Another cartoon character dressed in a green suit, speaking with an Irish accent, congratulated Mr. Simpson for this great feat. This kind of stereotyping will leave a bad impression of the Irish in the minds of the many young viewers of this program.

### Political Education Committee (PEC) American Ireland Education Foundation, Inc.

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

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Please write the letter below in your own words or as is to: Mr. Jerry Choate, President, Allstate Insurance Company, Allstate Plaza, Northbrook, IL 60062.

Dear Mr. Choate:

I urge that your company no longer sponsor the "Simpsons" because of recent ethnic slurs directed against people of Irish ancestry. A recent episode centered around Homer Simpson's father becoming sheriff. One of his qualifications was that he chased the Irish out of town, for which he was congratulated by a character dressed in green speaking with an Irish accent. Many young people were influenced negatively by this bigoted thrash. If you continue to be a sponsor of the Simpsons, my family and I will avoid your services in the future.

Sincerely,

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



## From the North

by Rev. Des Wilson, *Director, Springhill Community, Belfast*

**The British government's refusal to invite Sinn Fein to the recent Economic Development Conference in Belfast was not due to scruples about violence. It was due to the fact that the British have always found it difficult to recognize the right of Catholics and other minorities to have a vote within the British system. Today, while anti-Jewish sentiment is rife in Britain and color riots are only a matter of time, it is only within British occupied Ireland that Catholics are discriminated against to the extent that their elected representatives are denied a place in public life.**

The real issue about Sinn Fein is not that they pose a threat to the state. It is that they represent about 33% of the Catholics in the north of Ireland. For the first time in Ireland's history, the British government has had to concede in theory that Catholics have a right to vote for whomever they wish and be heard through them. But the theory has not been put into practice.

British law is such that any group of people, even the least threatening, can be marginalized and refused a public or private hearing simply by getting a public servant to declare they are a threat to security. The system is similar to the communist dictatorships' use of denunciation as a way of removing political opponents.

The British refusal to admit Sinn Fein to a conference about their future was received with tolerance from church leaders, impatience from political parties and fury from democratic citizens who believe that they have tolerated governmental insult for far too long.

Democratic citizens said that the only proper moral response to this latest racist insult by the British government would be for the SDLP as well as Sinn Fein to boycott the conference. They said also that the American delegation should boycott the conference. After all, the British government was not only playing with our dignity, but also with American money.

Irish democrats were confident that no American would be associated with what is patently an anti-Irish, anti-Catholic racist slur. Or, to put it differently, would Americans go to a conference about the future development of the United States at which the

representatives of one third of the Black population or the Hispanic population -- or the American Irish population -- were excluded by government decree?

There could be no moral justification for attendance at, or complicity with, such a conference because such a conference would itself be an act of violence. Any act which pushes away the possibility of creating a democratic process for everybody in Ireland is an act of violence.

It is becoming more and more obvious that the British government, and it alone, will be the stumbling block in the way of building the peace process in the north.

If the war starts again it is likely to be more severe than before. It will be supported, however sorrowfully, by more people than before. And as for those people who have worked for years to create a peaceful means of achieving peace and justice, they will have to say quite simply that they have no more peaceful initiatives left. They have tried all, invented all, created all peaceful means of which they are capable. Each one has been destroyed not by wicked citizens but by the British government.

One avoidable tragedy then, if war returns in Ireland, will be that those who worked for peace rather than war will have no arguments left.

## *Casement Accused Update*

by Paul Brosnahan, *Massachusetts*

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew, continues to deny Patrick Kane, Sean Kelly and Michael Timmons, **the Casement Accused**, the opportunity to have their cases reviewed further by the courts, in spite of mounting international pressure.

The Committee on the Administration of Justice's October 1994 human rights report, entitled *A Major Miscarriage of Justice* cites uncertain identification evidence, judicial inconsistencies, psychological evidence, denial of access to legal advice and the inappropriate use of the "common purpose" principle in the convictions of the three men sentenced to two life terms each for murders they did not commit. The CAJ demands that their cases be referred back to the Court of Appeal as a matter of urgency.

*Amnesty International's* recent report, *United Kingdom, Northern Ireland: Fair Trial Concerns in Casement Park Trials*, concludes: "In light of its concerns over the fairness of the trials, Amnesty International is calling on the government to initiate a wide-ranging independent inquiry into the events of March 1988 which would also carefully review the cases of all those who have been convicted in the Casement Park trials in order to ensure that no one has been wrongly convicted.

**On a positive note, the PEC-AIEF has been assured by CBS's 60 Minutes that it will produce a segment on the Casement Park convictions. The producer says: "It's a story that has to be told."**

***Turn To Action Request #3 On Page Six***



**Newsbits** *con't from page 1*

disadvantaged areas of Northern Ireland, the British government has chosen to exclude the representatives of the most disadvantaged nationalists. Sinn Fein. (*Irish Times 12/6/94*)

On December 9, 1994, Sinn Fein and the British Government began exploratory talks on the future of Northern Ireland. The delegation, led by Martin McGuinness was met by Northern Deputy Secretary Quentin Thomas. Exploratory talks with Loyalist Paramilitaries were also set to begin on December 15. (*Irish Press 12/9/94*)

Martin McGuinness who led the Sinn Fein delegation at the meeting with the British, commented that "a beginning" had been made and said the Northern Ireland Office civil servants were told it was "time to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor." (*Analysis, 12/16/94*)

A new Irish government with John Bruton, leader of Fine Gael, as Prime Minister and Dick Spring, leader of the Labour Party, as deputy leader and Minister of Foreign Affairs, was formed on December 15. The coalition also includes one member from the Democratic Left, Proinsias de Rossa, as Minister of Social Welfare. In the debate ratifying the new cabinet, Fianna Fail leader Bertie Ahern pointed out that the coalition's program did not include a call for cross border institutions in its section on Northern Ireland. (*LAIS, 12/15/94*)

**Two DUP councilors [Rev. Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party] and one former councillor announced that they were resigning from the party because of the DUP leadership's "negative attitude" to the peace process. DUP leaders were warned that if they did not change their attitudes towards the peace process they would lose their members and electoral support. (*Irish Times 12/14/94*)**

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## **MacBride Conference A Success**

by Sean Kane, Director of Operations

The New York City Comptroller's office sponsored a conference celebrating the tenth anniversary of the MacBride Principles on December 10, 1994 at Columbia University in New York. The PEC was represented at the conference by Vice-President Albert Doyle, Membership Coordinator Loretta Fitzgibbons, Recording Secretary Kathy Regan and Director of Operations Sean Kane. The conference consisted of three panels regarding achieving fair employment in Northern Ireland, strategies for economic development and lastly, human rights and the peace process. The more than twenty panelists were very distinguished members of the economic and human rights community from both traditions in Northern Ireland. Some of the conclusions of the panelists were that: **Discrimination is still a huge problem in Northern Ireland and the MacBride Principles are more important than ever.** Secondly, all investment by the US in Northern Ireland should be monitored for fair employment standards by outside supervisory agencies. And lastly, Northern Ireland

and the actions of the British regarding human rights is still a grave problem.

The conference was informative, well run and a testament to just how far we have come on both the MacBride Principles campaign and the campaign to bring peace with justice to Ireland.

The PEC received a special commendation from the City of New York for its leadership role in promoting the MacBride Principles.



*PEC Vice President, Albert Doyle, accepts award from New York City Comptroller, Alan Hevesi.*

## **Congress Must Adopt MacBride**

More than 40% of the jobs in the north are tied to security. If the peace holds, many people in security will become redundant. The vast majority of these are Unionists and will certainly have first and best pick of the newly created jobs. Nationalists as always will get the few remaining and most menial jobs. That is unless the MacBride Principles become the law of the land. If Britain has its way, most of these new jobs will go to Unionists and the Nationalists will get visas to leave the north. **Discrimination against nationalists is still rampant in the north.**

Fortunately, the new Chairman of the House Committee on International Affairs (formerly the Committee on Foreign Affairs) is **Congressman Benjamin Gilman**. Gilman, co-chairman of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on Irish Affairs and a close friend of the PEC since 1976, is an avid supporter of the MacBride Principles. He recently had adopted by Congress an Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) re-authorization bill, which makes Ireland and Northern Ireland eligible for an equity fund to help American firms that want to invest in Northern Ireland. The Administration has up to 120 days to act on Gilman's OPIC bill which could lead to up to \$200 million in investments. In an effort to assure the status quo is not maintained, Gilman has requested the Administration to apply the MacBride Principles to any US investment in Northern Ireland.

As the first discussions begin between the British government and Sinn Fein, the political arm of the Irish Republican Army, one must wonder if the American media will ever report the truth about Ireland. Journalists write about Ireland without bothering to study the country's history or even make sure their facts are right. No other country in the world is the subject of more misinformation than Ireland.

## *As talks begin, some Irish truths*

by  
Andrew M. Greeley  
(Taken from the *Boston Herald*, 12/7/94)

Thus William Safire, columnist for the *New York Times*, recently filed a report from London that purported to explain to "most Americans (who) don't get the picture" the truth about the Irish situation. He spoke of the danger of "abandoning a million British subjects to bloody civil war." In fact there are 900,000 Protestants and 600,000 Catholics in Northern Ireland's six counties. Moreover, there have been two pogroms in the six counties in the last 70 years, and Catholics were the victims of both. At the time of partition in 1921 more than 500 people were killed and 2,000 injured. Eight thousand Catholics were fired from their jobs.

Twenty-five years ago the nonviolent civil rights movement was brutally suppressed by rioting Protestant mobs who beat Catholics and burned their homes while the Royal Ulster Constabulary stood by and watched.

Indeed, the "Provisional" IRA came into existence in response to the violence against the civil rights movement, a product rather than a cause of the ongoing violent oppression in Ulster. While this fact is well known in Ireland, American journalists like Safire seem to have missed it. Of course, he wrote from London without bothering to talk to any one in Ireland (like John Hume, the moderate Catholic leader who engineered the cease-fire) or even visit there.

But Safire pontificates: "To pull out peacekeeping troops . . . would turn the place into an orange and green Bosnia. A million British ethnic Irish do not want to be nationally cleansed and the English cannot in honor set their nationals adrift."

It is apparently all right that for 70 years the English have stood idly by while Catholics in the six counties have been the victims of economic, political, civic and religious oppression. That, it would seem, does not violate English honor.

One wonders if Safire saw "In the Name of the Father," the critically acclaimed film about Gerry Conlon, the young Belfast man who spent 15 years in a British jail for a crime he didn't commit. It's a good example of English "honor" in Ireland.

Moreover, to suggest that either Sinn Fein or the Dublin government has plans for "ethnic cleansing" and that they would engage in murder, torture and rape as the Serbs in Bosnia have done is to abuse language (about which Safire is so punctilious) unconscionably.

In fact, the Dublin government has repeatedly insisted that it will not force Northern Protestants into a united Ireland. Even the Irish Republican Army has recently agreed that the unity of Ireland is a long-term goal.

Yet American journalists like Safire cannot understand that the issue in the six counties is and always has been the end of oppression of the Catholics. Until there is justice for Catholics in Northern Ireland there will always be an

### *Reproduce & Distribute*

Irish Republican Army.

The present IRA (like the Marxist-oriented "Official" IRA which believe in nonviolence) may disappear but another one will take its place. Lasting peace in Ireland depends on whether the English have learned that lesson.

There have been other cease-fires and negotiations, like the one in 1973 that produced the so-called "Sunningdale" power-sharing agreement. The English, in another exercise of "honor," reneged on that commitment.

At other times during the last quarter-century, English government leaders bragged privately about how they had tricked and outsmarted the IRA in negotiations. Merlyn Rees, Prime

Minister Harold Wilson's man in Northern Ireland in 1975, wrote to Wilson about the negotiations at that time: "We set out to 'conservatives' them and we did."

Like virtually every other English official, Rees and Wilson did not comprehend that such treachery may seem very

clever but it cannot end the violence. The English have used these tactics with the Irish ever since the Act of Union in 1800, usually getting away with it. Their cleverness has suited their purposes, one supposes. But cleverness has not brought peace. Only justice for Catholics will.

(Andrew Greeley is a Roman Catholic priest, novelist and sociologist.)

*No other  
country in the  
world is the  
subject of more  
misinformation  
than Ireland.*

### **Help Make The English-Irish Peace Process Work!**

#### **Contact:**

PEC-American Ireland Education  
Foundation, 54 South Liberty Drive,  
Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980  
**800 777-6807**

Reprinted January 1995 by PEC-AIEF



# *Ireland Needs Speaker Gingrich's Support!*

The new Speaker of the House of Representatives, Newt Gingrich, is now one of the most powerful people in our government. He can make or break the English-Irish peace process! He can support our Government's current Irish peace policy, which is responsible in large part for the current cease-fire and peace process now underway in Ireland. Or he can adopt the blindly pro-British policy of his predecessors. Such a policy would guarantee a collapse of the cease-fire and the peace process. The US is the single most important influence in the English-Irish conflict.

**YOU CAN HELP** influence Speaker Gingrich to come on board as a supporter of our government's Irish peace policy.

**PLEASE CALL OR WRITE HIM TODAY USING THE MESSAGE BELOW.** Your personal communication will represent the views of 1,000 people. **MAKE COPIES OF THIS LEAFLET AND DISTRIBUTE THEM** to family, friends, business associates, etc. Be sure to send them to friends in Georgia. If you don't have time to call or write him, simply sign and address the form letter below and mail it to him.

His address and phone number: Honorable Newt Gingrich, House Speaker, House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515 -- (202) 225-3121.

**If you would like information** about our national network of letter writers/phone-call makers who seek to end British colonial presence in Ireland, please contact: PEC-American Ireland Education Foundaton, 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980 -- TOLL FREE phone number 800 777-6807.

Cut Here



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Honorable Newt Gingrich  
House Speaker  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Gingrich:

I respectfully request that you support and promote the Irish peace process and oppose the return by our government leaders to a pro-British policy.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_

## ***British Actions Endanger Peace Process***

Once again, British government activities have placed a great strain on the fragile peace process in Northern Ireland. In a move that expresses their deep antipathy for the Irish culture and Irish language, the British government has decided not to fund the Belfast Irish language secondary school Meanscoil Feirste. The school, which has received numerous accolades for its high standard of education, will now seek funding from alternative sources including the Irish government and the International Fund for Ireland in order to stay afloat.

In a move typifying the anti-Irish bias of the government, the day the Meanscoil was denied funding, 20 million pounds was allotted for the only Gaelic third level college in Scotland, even though ten times as many people in Northern Ireland have a knowledge of Gaelic as do in Scotland.

Nationalists reacted angrily to the move. Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams described the refusal to grant aid as "racist, discriminatory and cultural colonialism of the highest order." Seamus Mac Seain of the Meanscoil commented, "This is a direct assault on the peace process because many people will now realize that the idea of 'Parity of Esteem' is simply a non-starter. If the British Government isn't willing to move on an issue as fundamental as this, then people will quite naturally infer that it's "as you were" as far as the British Government is concerned."

For centuries the British tried to destroy the Irish language and culture. Sadly, even with the recent stage of events and the ongoing hopes for peace in Northern Ireland, this British campaign is still in full swing.

## ***PEC Makes A Difference***

Through its letter-writing campaigns and by calling the publishers of encyclopedias, PEC is doing important work. PEC is correcting erroneous information relative to Ireland's Great Hunger in encyclopedias that have been misinforming the public the world over for decades.

We have already advised you that *Worldbook Encyclopedia* is recommending to its editors changes in the numbers of people who died and emigrated during the Hunger.

**We have more good news!** We have been in contact with *Colliers Encyclopedia* who advises us that they are undertaking to make corrections to its 1995 edition. Previous versions stated that the failure of the potato crop resulted in the deaths of "almost 250,000 peasants and the sale of land by landlords to speculators caused another million to emigrate. Their 1995 edition will list the total of deaths and those who emigrated at 2 million

## ***Please Read! Reproduce & Distribute Notice***

You are not asked to write the letter or make the phone call requested in the Reproduce & Distribute article, *Ireland Needs Speaker Gingrich's Support*. It is more important that you get others to respond.

*We ask you to make copies and distribute them to the public right on through the St. Patrick's Day festivities. We need as many people as possible to contact Speaker Gingrich. His support for the English-Irish peace process is very important.*

each. The new edition will also contain a more detailed explanation of Britain's colonial policy and the real reason for Ireland's starvation.

In future issues of the newsletter we will ask you to write to more publishers of encyclopedias.

## ***Educate The Public***

With permission by Harcourt Brace & Company we have reprinted thousands of copies of chapter four from *Paddy's Lament* by Thomas Gallagher. This piece is perfect for educating the public about Ireland's Great Hunger. According to Mr. Gallagher, our distribution of this same piece in 1984 led to a dramatic increase of sales of *Paddy's Lament*.

**Don't forget!** 1995 begins the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Great Hunger. **WE NEED YOUR HELP** to distribute this brochure. Upcoming St. Patrick's Day festivities (dances, parades, concerts, etc.) will provide excellent opportunities to get them out. Students can distribute them in school. You can also mail them as they have their own mailer. The public will appreciate your efforts.

We have already begun mailing these brochures out to people across the US. **REMEMBER!** A public informed about the Great Hunger will be supportive of the Irish people's campaign for freedom from English colonial rule.

**WE ALSO HAVE PLENTY OF BACK ISSUES OF OUR NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE FOR THE ASKING.** The newsletter is an excellent handout for any occasion. Not only does it recruit new PEC members, but it also generates new phone-call makers and letter writers.

**SO ORDER YOUR COPIES NOW!** Call 800 777-6807 or write PEC-AIEF, 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980. Let us know what you want and how many copies.



### Action Requests

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

**1. Cokie Roberts, ABC News**  
1717 De Sales St. NW  
Washington, DC 20036

**Request:** Please use your influence to pressure the British government to stop stalling the Irish peace process.

**2. Hon. \_\_\_\_\_,**  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
**Phone Number: (202) 224-3121**

**Request:** Please support our Government's Irish peace policy and the Mac-Bride Principles of Fair Employment for Northern Ireland.

**3. Sir Robin Renwick**  
Ambassador to Great Britain  
3100 Massachusetts Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20008

**Request:** Please immediately refer the cases of Patrick Kane, Sean Kelly and Michael Timmons -- the Casement Accused -- to an appropriate judiciary body as requested by Amnesty International and the Committee on the Administration of Justice.

## Lessons Learned From PEC U.S. Senatorial Survey

by Kevin Brady, Washington Representative

Prior to the 1994 elections, PEC surveyed the US Senatorial candidates, 64 in all, to solicit their views on the peace process in Ireland. The official responses to our questions were disappointing -- only seven candidates responded. After we published the results and sent the findings to our members, three more candidates responded--thanks to the efforts of PEC members in their states. Fortunately, the survey exercise proved profitable to planning future information gathering methods. The survey results were sent only to members in states where US Senate races were underway.

We mailed the survey to the candidates in August with a follow up request in late September. Although only ten candidates responded, an additional seventeen candidates contacted the PEC, most of them requesting information about the English-Irish conflict. Apparently the vast majority of Senatorial candidates did not grasp the importance of the Irish issue. This scanty response means:

1. candidates and their staffs know little of the Irish situation and regard it as not important because they were not being pressured by their constituents, or
2. candidates who did know about the situation did not have to take a position because they were not being pressured by their constituents.

In both scenarios candidates told us that there was little voter interest. We accept this as true.

**We have work to do** if we are to keep the spotlight on the English-Irish issue. Obviously, Members of Congress are now much more sensitive to the concerns of their constituents. Many of them were elected as the result of a citizens' backlash against Democrats because they did not listen to their constituents.

We must start immediately to put pressure on our US Senators and Representatives to commit themselves in writing to support the Irish peace policy, to oppose a return to a blindly pro-British policy and to support the MacBride Principles. They will listen to us, if enough of us contact them. Get your family, friends, business associates, etc., to call or write.

In this newsletter we ask you to contact your two US Senators. **If you don't know your US Senators names, call your town hall.** In the next newsletter issue (February) we will ask you to contact your US Representative.

### Go To Action Request #2 On This Page

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