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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN Irish Political Education Committee

Volume 19, Number 2

February 1994

ATTENTION MEDIA

As we go to press Britain's Prime Minister John Major will not clarify the Downing Street Declaration, as requested by Northern Ireland's nationalist community. The official request for clarification was made by Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein. The peace process is at a standstill.

PM Major is under pressure from prominent members of British Parliament to clarify the document (see Clarification Denied on page 5).

We urge the media to take a role in moving the peace process along by focusing on the actions of the British and Irish governments, and Sinn Fein, and the need for compromise. This peace process must not be allowed to collapse. (*Our newsletter is mailed to over 300 news media nationally.*)

MEDIA PLEASE READ:

PEC View: Downing Street Declaration below and the Reproduce & Distribute, Britain's Protestant Extremist: Who Are They?

PEC View: Downing Street Declaration

Our expectations that the widely publicized negotiations between the British and Irish governments would result in a break-through leading to peace have been disappointed by the Downing Street Declaration issued December 15, 1993 by John Major and Albert Reynolds. The declaration, while long on rhetoric, is completely lacking in new ideas or specific commitments on the part of the governments. Even the 'action' language reveals this in calling not for definite actions but rather for promises to 'engage in dialogue', 'consult together and share in dialogue', 'seek to create', and 'encourage'.

"Many will be tempted to compare this Declaration with the recent Israeli-Palestinian agreements. The differences are notable. The Israeli-Palestinian agreement contained specific commitments by the parties which can lead to real peace, e.g. Israel's commitment to withdraw from occupied territories; the Downing Street Declaration is conspicuously lacking in such commitments."

"This is basically an agreement to talk some more. The document makes no provision for a specific next step other than references to a hoped-for dialogue among all Irish parties. It does however contain some significant statements of principle and some concessions, to wit:

- Britain disclaims any responsibility to reach a final agreement, passing that to 'the people of the island of Ireland alone'. (Par. 4) In view of Britain's involvement in the partition of Ulster it isn't clear why this is a good thing although the Irish government appears to think it is.

- The Irish government concedes that the Unionists of Northern Ireland have a veto right on any agreement. (Pars. 5 and 7) We consider this as a virtual

Continued on page 3 (Downing Street Declaration)

Clinton Responds On Northern Ireland

In a recent interview with *The Irish Times*, President Clinton stated that he was reviewing the policy of denying a visa to Sinn Fein President, Gerry Adams. He also said that the idea of a special U.S. envoy to the north of Ireland "remained very much alive."

The granting of the visa and appointment of an envoy were promises Clinton made during his campaign. The President's announcements appear to have been prompted by State Department and National Security Council assessment of Administration policy. It is felt that Irish-American pressure was the impetus for this review.

When asked if recent events in the North would affect his decision on the visa, Clinton replied, "We will, of course, keep the issue under review as the developing situation warrants," indicating that political developments may guide his decision more so than a standard U.S. policy.

In an attempt to deflect criticism of his failure to keep his campaign promises the President pointed to his support for the Joint Declaration by Prime Minister's Major and Reynolds. He also noted that the Irish and British governments had no veto power over the appointment of a U.S. envoy.

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OUR VIEW

If ever there were an opportunity for peace with justice in Ireland, now is the time.

Conditions are ripe for peace with justice in Ireland: the media is providing increased coverage and editorial support for a peace process; the Downing Street Declaration, although ambiguous, provides a starting point for the peace process; and pressure from the public, including the media, on President Clinton to take a public role in a peace process, including the appointment of a peace envoy, is more widespread.

In early December 1993, Clinton suggested to Britain's Prime Minister Major that he begin a peace process. And he has recently hinted that he might reconsider granting a visa to Mr. Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein.

Most importantly, the news media, the issue-makers, have begun to focus on Northern Ireland. The media can make an issue of the north.

Something else has happened in our favor. The timely release of the movie "In The Name Of The Father" is certain to generate much new support for our cause. You can help harness that support (see Volunteers Are Needed, request #2, page 4 of this newsletter).

The Downing Street Declaration can be the beginning of a genuine process to reunite Ireland. But we must keep Clinton and the media focusing on the north.

To achieve this, we must keep the PEC strong so it can: continue placing effective ads in major newspapers countering British propaganda and focusing on Clinton's campaign promises; step-up its lobbying efforts in Washington, DC; and continue its mass mailing campaign to the public. We have already begun that mailing campaign. You should receive your mailing shortly. Please be as generous as you can and be sure to mail the postcards. Clinton can never receive enough postcards and letters.

International Fund for Ireland

Colorado State Director Terry Deem-Reilly met with Jim Lyons, the newly-named American representative to the Board of the International Fund for Ireland, on December 21, 1993. Lyons, a longtime associate of President Clinton, was enthusiastic about his job and emphatic about the new administration's support for the Fund and the peace process in Ireland. He expressed interest in a number of issues and individuals including Reverend Des Wilson of the Springhill Community House in Belfast.

The American Irish PEC

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PLEASE KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP UP-TO-DATE!

The most important thing you can do for the PEC is keep your membership dues up-to-date. With a peace process developing in Northern Ireland, the work of the PEC is critical. Your membership dues are vital to our work.

Please renew your membership when you receive your renewal notice in the mail or use the coupon on page 6. To determine your renewal date, check the four digit number on the first line of your address label on page 6. If your number is 9402 or less, it is time for you to renew.

To charge your membership dues, call 1-800 777-6807.
(Visa and MasterCard only).

From the North

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

Rev. Des has been awarded the annual "freedom prize" from the Norwegian "Sakarov Freedom Fund." The following is an excerpt from his speech at the January 6 award ceremony at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway.

"We cannot make democratic progress in Ireland without international help because what is happening in Ireland is an international problem. It always was an international problem. Unfortunately, this international dimension has been hidden from view because many journalists, politicians, even human rights organizations and universities have not responded to the cry of democrats in Northern Ireland, a cry which has been going out for many decades now.

"This cry of democrats is for journalists and all others to analyze Ireland and its problems and potential with exactly the same kind of analysis, the same tools of analysis as you would use to understand what is happening in other countries. Everywhere else you would find out what military advantage there is for one government or another, you would find out what economic advantage there is for one government or another or for one set of powerful people or another. And having found that, you could analyze the problems accurately and help find solutions effectively.

"In the case of Ireland this has not been allowed to happen. The world has been told - and has too often believed - that in Ireland there are impossible people who cannot live together in peace, who are naturally belligerent both to each other and to strangers.

"All this is false. But if the world believes it, then the world will also believe the British government when it says it is in Ireland as a peacemaker or a peacekeeper. One should always be suspicious of governments which claim to be holding territory as peacekeepers. They may very well have been the primary cause of whatever conflict there was in the first place. People in Ireland are like people everywhere. They live together, they intermarry, they work together, they learn together - when they are allowed to do so. Why they are not allowed to do so, or why they cannot do so, is something we understand only when we understand what really happened in the course of our history. . ."

New Delivery Date For Newsletter

You can expect to receive your newsletter between the 1st and 12th of the month.

This issue was sent out early so that we could get the R&B, *Northern Ireland: Peace is Possible! I can Help!*, in the hands of members on time so that they can distribute copies of it to people going to see the movie, *In the Name of the Father*.

Downing Street Declaration (continued from page 1)

guarantee that nothing will change in Northern Ireland **unless** the British pressure the Unionists in ways not mentioned in the document.

- The Irish government commits to changing its Constitution, in the event of an overall settlement, either enshrine the Unionist veto in the Constitution or to remove its claims to a unified Ireland, or both of these. This appears in the last sentence of Par. 7 ('...put forward and support proposals for change in the Irish Constitution which would fully reflect the principle of consent in Northern Ireland').

- The Irish side humbly acknowledges their presumably theological faults, 'grief and shame' caused by these faults and their claims for national unity, 'elements which are deeply resented by Northern Unionists', and the British, on their part acknowledge...nothing! Nothing about the years of undemocratic rule in the North, nothing about the widely condemned defects in the criminal justice system.

- The Irish government might resurrect the New Ireland Forum, a discussion club for academics which was highly touted in 1983-84 and which produced absolutely no results. This is not a basis for optimism, although it seems to be a major item for the Irish government, judging from their post-agreement comments.

- Sinn Fein is disinclined to future negotiations unless they can cause an Irish Republican Army (IRA) cease-fire for three months (this time period is not in the Declaration but was mentioned by John Major in a statement). This is not a new idea but one might have hoped for a similar no-violence test for Loyalist paramilitaries as a condition for Unionist participation in future talks. There is no such condition placed on the Unionists. This certainly calls into question the assertions of the Irish government that this is a "fully balanced document."

"We can hardly criticize the hopeful rhetoric with which this document is sprinkled, for example: 'The Taoiseach hopes that over a time a meeting of hearts and minds will develop.' We too have such hopes but we are disappointed that these leaders could not have devised ideas more specific than the glittering generalities of this document."

"It is important that the U.S. Administration, the media and public watch developments closely. They should not see this document as an excuse to do nothing. If no progress is made they should reconsider the idea of a U.S. or other Special Envoy to assist in seeking a real solution, having in mind the statement in the agreement that "the most urgent and important issue ... is to remove the causes of conflict..." and not simply to obtain a cease-fire. This document can be a beginning of a peace process provided the British and Irish governments are willing to go the extra mile to make it work."

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!

...to carry out the following important actions as soon as possible.
If you have any questions, please call the PEC office Tuesday - Friday, between 9am and 5pm at 1-800 777-6807.

#1 Clinton Resolution

Below we have printed a resolution that anyone can use. Its purpose is to generate crucial grassroots support for the appointment of a peace envoy by President Clinton.

If Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams should receive a visa, modify the resolution to exclude mention of a visa for Mr. Adams.

How it's done! Call, or meet in person, your government representative(s), whether they be state or local government representatives (city, town, county, and village

councils). Ask them to have the resolution adopted by the relevant council. Do not hesitate to approach non-Irish legislators. Give them a copy of the resolution below.

In most cases, they will be happy to comply. If you're not up to making the contact yourself, have someone else do it. You can also use this resolution with any kind of organization, including Irish organizations and student bodies.

Have the government bodies and organizations send copies to: President Clinton, your state's two U.S. Senators, your U.S. Representative(s), your local newspaper, and the American Irish (PEC). **If you have any questions, give us a call at 1-800 777-6807.**

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in December 1993 President Clinton urged Britain's Prime Minister John Major to do something positive to bring peace with justice to Northern Ireland,

WHEREAS, two and one half Catholic males are unemployed for every one Protestant male in Northern Ireland,

WHEREAS, censorship of the British news media by the British government regarding events in Northern Ireland is the law,

WHEREAS, this censorship is extended to the American people by the White House and the State Department by their denying an entry visa to Mr. Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein, a legal political party in Northern Ireland, and

WHEREAS, during his campaign, President Clinton proposed to send a special envoy to Northern Ireland and to grant a visa to Mr. Adams,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the (enter name of council or organization) calls upon President William Jefferson Clinton to fulfill his campaign promises to appoint a special envoy to Northern Ireland and to end the visa ban on Mr. Gerry Adams, President of Sinn Fein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to President Clinton, (your state's two United States Senators), (your United States Representative(s)), (your local newspaper) and the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC).

#2 Educate Moviegoers

After you see the movie, *In The Name Of The Father*, you will want to do something constructive to help end British injustice against Irish people. Many of your fellow moviegoers will feel the same way.

Please! Take advantage of this unique opportunity to recruit new support for peace with justice in Ireland! DON'T GO TO THE MOVIE EMPTY HANDED!

Make copies of this issue's Reproduce & Distribute article "Northern Ireland: Peace is Possible! I can Help!" Distribute them at your local theatre. Give them to people going to see the movie *In The Name Of The Father*. Have family/friends do the same.

If you have access to a duplex copier (copy on both sides of a page), copy on the reverse side the PEC's *Why England Must Leave Ireland* advertisement that appeared in the *New York Times*.

This movie, which is about British government injustice against Irish people, namely the Guildford Four, could not have come at a better time. Interest in Northern Ireland has increased because of the announcement of a peace process. People, Irish and non-Irish alike, will naturally want to know more about that issue.

If you have any questions, call our toll free number 800 777-6807.

#3 Send Clippings

We want to know what the newspapers are saying about Northern Ireland.

Please send the PEC any editorials or columns about Northern Ireland, other than news reports, that appear in your area newspapers. Include date and name of newspapers.

Send to: AIPEC, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993.

Reproduce & Distribute

Northern Ireland: Peace is Possible! I Can Help!

Please take the following steps:

1. Write President Bill Clinton (White House, Washington, DC 20500). *Request that he fulfill his campaign promise to send a peace envoy to Northern Ireland.*
2. Send a donation to the American Irish Political Education Committee so that it can continue its work to educate the public about British government injustice in Ireland. Make checks payable to PEC-AIEC.
3. Get involved! Learn more about British injustice in Northern Ireland and, the work of the American Irish PEC.

For further information, and/or to send a donation, write:

American Irish Political Education Committee, Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W,
West Haverstraw, NY 10993. Donations are *tax-deductible*.

Phone TOLL FREE 800 777-6807

Britain's Protestant Extremists: Who Are They?

by Sandy Carlson

Reproduce & Distribute

They are the Ulster Defense Association (UDA), the Ulster Freedom Fighters (UFF), and the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF): pro-British terrorists who killed 44 Catholics, attempted to kill 45 others, and petrol-bombed, or arson-attacked, 37 premises in British occupied northern Ireland (pop. 1.5 million) in the first 10 months of 1993. They have killed more than 850 people, more (innocent civilians) than the IRA and British armed forces combined. **A comparable number in population in the U.S. would exceed 136,000.** In lasting 25-years this war has claimed more than 3,100 lives.

The media call them Protestant paramilitaries, loyalist gunmen, Protestant loyalists, pro-British militants, Ulster militants, or loyalist terrorists. These terrorists believe Britain wants to leave Northern Ireland. But the media seldom call them by name - probably because the *Associated Press Style Book* doesn't even list the UDA, the UFF, or the UVF, although it lists the IRA. These terrorists respond with violence against Catholics whenever Britain involves Dublin in decisions concerning the north of Ireland. Their specialty is killing innocent people. **They currently operate as the "Combined Loyalist Military Command."**

Although loyalist violence has a long history, modern loyalists became violent in 1966, when the Secretary of State instituted some minor civil rights reforms. They intensified violence in 1972, when the British held secret talks with the IRA; and in 1974, when Dublin and London signed the Sunningdale Agreement to allow Dublin a limited voice.

Loyalists later intensified their campaign of violence in 1986, after Dublin and London signed the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement that again gave Dublin a minor voice. Their violence rose again in 1991, when the Secretary of State initiated political talks with Dublin; and in 1993 when the SDLP and Sinn Fein proposed their peace initiative.

Although the UDA, UFF, and UVF have said their anti-Catholic killing campaign is intended to force the Irish government to remove from its constitution territorial claims to the whole of Ireland and to force an IRA cease-fire, their violence actually comes in response to Britain's initiatives.

The IRA's upsurge in violence in 1979 and 1981-2 attracted little response from loyalists. The fact that loyalist violence claimed 40 lives in five weeks during the IRA's 1972 cease-fire and 150 during the IRA's 1975 truce gives lie to the loyalists claim that they are trying to force the IRA to end its armed campaign.

Unlike the IRA, who attack economic and military targets and sometimes kill civilians in the process, loyalist terrorists target all Catholics, whom they believe aspire to a united Ireland. They identify the SDLP, Sinn Fein, Gaelic athletes, musicians and language groups, and any other Catholic, as part of a "pan nationalist front" intent on expelling Britain from Ireland. Between July and September 1969, they burned 1,820 families out of their homes. More than 80 percent of their victims were Catholic.

The UVF killed the first victim of this political conflict in 1966. In the same year, they began attacking Catholic schools in response to O'Neill's civil rights reforms. In March and April, 1969, they caused the first explosions in the modern conflict, and blamed the IRA. In October, 1969, a member confessed to causing these and eight other explosions. The UVF has recently claimed responsibility for two no-warning explosions that claimed 33 lives in the Republic of Ireland in 1974, the deadliest bombing campaign of the conflict.

The UDA, who also use the cover name UFF, were not outlawed until 1992, however. Nonetheless, the UDA's violence was an open secret even while it was a legal group. The UDA came into existence in 1971, when loyalists were forming vigilante groups to burn Catholics out of their homes. They were

instrumental in the 1974 Ulster Workers Council strike, which brought Northern Ireland to a standstill for 14 days and toppled the Sunningdale Agreement.

In 1981, more than 320 of its members were in prison for offenses ranging from murder to possession of weapons. In the same year, the UDA gunned down, but did not kill, civil rights campaigner Bernadette McAliskey and her husband.

Attacks on Catholics are political inasmuch as the violence of British occupied Ireland was born of that government's undemocratic, apartheid system of government that guaranteed Protestant privilege so long as Protestants ensured Britain's control of all or part of Ireland.

As Catholics pushed for civil rights, the government made some concessions. Loyalists see this as a betrayal of their loyalty to the British crown, at the same time Catholics/nationalists have questioned the sincerity and value of these reforms. Thus, although the issues that divide Ireland are political, the groups making opposing political demands are defined by their religious orientation.

Indeed, loyalist paramilitary Edna Hanson told author Tony Parker, "the only way Ulster'll be a better place to live is if they're all, men and women Catholics I mean, cleared out and sent across the border to live in the south." Loyalist Geoff Mitchell told Parker "Soon it got to the point when every night you went out to attack places you knew Catholics frequented. You were disappointed if there wasn't any action, because it'd taken over your whole life."

BE A PEACEMAKER

Join or Support

The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC), 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 -- phone# 1-800 777-6807

Published February 1994 by American Irish PEC

On December 15, 1993 Irish PM Albert Reynolds and British PM John Major signed the "Downing Street Declaration," which they call a framework for peace.

The declaration comes after months of work by Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams and John Hume, leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party, who both revived the stale peace process in October when they announced the Hume/Adams peace initiative.

Clarification Denied: Stalemate Once Again

by Stephanie Finucane

The Downing Street Declaration contains several "ambiguities" which the nationalist community, via Adams, recently requested Major to clarify.

Despite support for clarification in the British Parliament from leaders such as former Prime Minister, Lord James Callahan; Lord Carrington, former EEC Bosnia negotiator; MP Kevin McNamara, Labour spokesman on Northern Ireland; and MP John Hume, Major refused to cooperate, claiming Sinn Fein was attempting to lure the British government into back door negotiations. Major's refusal to explain key issues of the declaration may very well be his attempt to look like he's promoting the peace process, although he's really preserving the status quo. So, once again the peace process is at a stalemate.

Adams said Major "cannot complain about the caution with which Sinn Fein has approached the contradictions of the declaration if he refuses the very reasonable request to have these matters clarified. There is a growing belief that the British Government do not want a positive response from republicans to this declaration but that they are seeking a public justification for a renewed onslaught on Irish nationalists" (*Guardian*, 1/6/93).

Major's refusal to clarify is just another effort on behalf of the British to avoid a workable solution to the six-county quandary. "The [Irish and British] governments are putting it up to the Republicans that we cannot afford to reject their declaration. But when the hype has died away and the

details have emerged, if it is judged that both governments have squandered an opportunity for peace, then the sense of disappointment and disillusionment will be greater than at any time since 1969," said Adams (*Los Angeles Times*, 12/22/93).

Some of Sinn Fein's points of concern about the declaration are (as excerpted from the *Los Angeles Times*):

Is the declaration evidence of a real political will to build a genuine peace process? Or is it the best that could be put together by two governments conscious of the popularity of the quest for peace but unwilling to deal in a real way with the core issues?

Is this as far as the British government will go? Is it as far as Dublin wanted them to go?

Will the IRA's positive and open attitude to Hume/Adams apply also to the Downing Street statement?

There is nationalist rhetoric in the document, but have the British merely conceded the wording of certain irresistible concepts and then, by qualification, rendered them meaningless? Can these generalities be reduced to practicalities?

In a speech given early January,

Adams said the declaration contains, "for the first time ever, a recognition by the British, though heavily qualified, that the Irish people as a whole have the right to self-determination. This right has never been acknowledged before by the British and this is a potentially significant development and an indication of the strength of this democratic argument." However, he added, since the signing of the declaration "there have been determined and politically orchestrated attempts to re-define" this right to national self-determination. "It is logical that if the British recognize this right that they then cannot presume to dictate how this right is exercised," said Adams.

How national self-determination is brought about is another area of concern for Sinn Fein. After all, it was Major himself who admitted: "The joint declaration . . . does not set any timetable for a united Ireland. For so long as a majority of the people in Northern Ireland wish to remain within the Union, they will have the total and complete support of the government in doing so."

Sinn Fein is calling for the end of Partition, claiming that the "denial of the Irish people's right to self-determination lies at the very heart of the ongoing conflict in the 6 counties," said Adams. "It is now generally accepted that the Partition of Ireland has had a distorting

and deforming effect on Irish political development and has been recognized as a grievous historical mistake . . . Even the Downing Street Declaration contains acknowledgement of that fact. The root cause of the conflict in Ireland is the undemocratic British claim to sovereignty over the six-counties. The denial of self-determination and the means deployed by the British Government to uphold that denial are the reasons for the continued conflict and instability."

" . . . if it is judged that both governments have squandered an opportunity for peace, then the sense of disappointment and disillusionment will be greater than at any time since 1969," said Adams.

Action Requests

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

Action Request #1

If our efforts are to be successful we must keep the pressure on President Clinton to fulfill his campaign promises. In asking you to do this we are not being redundant. President Clinton has received more mail regarding Ireland than any of his predecessors. **Write:** Honorable Bill Clinton, The President, White House, Washington D.C., 20500.

Dear President Clinton:

I am very disappointed that you have not fulfilled your campaign promise to appoint a U.S. peace envoy to Northern Ireland and grant Sinn Fein President, Mr. Gerry Adams a visa. Please do so and redouble your efforts to help bring peace to Ireland.

Sincerely,

Action Request #2

A major obstacle to a just and lasting peace in Ireland is the British Prime Minister's refusal to clarify the Downing Street Declaration to Irish nationalists. Since this was a joint declaration, the Irish government must have something to say about this problem. **Write:** Ambassador Dermot Gallagher, Irish Embassy, 2234 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C., 20008.

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I urge that Prime Minister Albert Reynolds take all necessary steps to influence Prime Minister Major to clarify the Downing Street Declaration for the nationalist community. Please do what is necessary to get the peace process moving.

Sincerely,

Support Our Fundraiser

When you receive our request for financial support in the mail, please be as generous as you can. Remember your donation is *tax-deductible*. These are important times in Ireland's struggle for freedom. Also, be sure to sign and address (affix 19 cent postage stamp) and mail the postcards. Be sure also to write the letter to President Clinton requested in this newsletter.

Join Or Support

The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC)

I want to join in/support the struggle to end British government civil and human rights violations in northern Ireland. I am sending you this completed form together with my membership fee/donation.

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