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American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN Irish Political Education Committee

Volume 16, Number 12

December 1991

The PEC – *The American Irish PEC, founded in 1975, is the oldest and most experienced American grass-roots organization, working through the democratic process, in support of human rights in Northern Ireland. The PEC leads the way in initiating and supporting MacBride Principles campaigns throughout the US.*

Newsbits by Kathy Regan

British poll finds sixty-one percent of British citizens favor a withdrawal of troops from the North. The poll conducted by MORI was commissioned by Britain's Channel Four for the documentary *Pack Up The Troubles* aired on October 24. 51 percent thought that Sinn Fein should be involved in talks on the future of the North while 31 percent opposed Sinn Fein's participation. *Pack Up The Troubles* also reported how more than 100 TV programs have been censored, banned or delayed since the struggle began. Robert Fisk, a former Northern correspondent of *The Times*, talked of journalists' unwillingness to ask difficult questions about the North. He asks whether, if reporters had been "a little more investigative at the start" in the cases of the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six, those "grave injustices" would ever have taken place. (AIN-PEC 10/26/91)...On October 30 Dessie Ellis, whose extradition to Britain caused great tension in Ireland, was freed by a British court and sent back to Ireland. His release was a major setback for the Irish government which was determined to extradite Ellis. (AIN-PEC 10/31/91)...It was reported in the October issue of the *Irish Reporter* that the Irish Protestant Education and Action Group was formed. The all-Protestant Group supports the reunification of Ireland. Another recently formed group, the Campaign For Democracy, which is made up of Catholics and Protestants, also supports reunification. A main concern of the IPEAG is the Catholic church hierarchy control of the Irish government. (AIN-PEC 11/6/91)...BBC radio's *World News* treated as a major news story the urgent action report by Amnesty International on the ill-treatment and threats to which 17-year old Damien Austin had been subjected by the RUC in Castlereagh detention center...Amnesty issues "urgent action" reports only when it considers there is imminent danger of torture, execution, or medical neglect of a prisoner...Domestic BBC news on neither radio nor television made any reference to the Damien Austin case. Why? It has to be credibility abroad and gullibility at home. (*Irish Post*, 9/7/91)...There have been several initiatives to drop or amend Articles 2 and 3 of the Irish Constitution

SUCCESS REQUIRES SACRIFICE

Shortly you will receive a solicitation from the PEC requesting a donation. Please read below before you respond.

Seventeen years of experience has taught us that many people of influence, whether it be in the media, congress, corporate America or in the private world, are not adverse to the Irish people's legitimate desire for freedom and equality. **They just do not know the truth** about British injustice. Why? Because nobody has been able to reach them.

We must reach these people who number in the tens of thousands and who are located throughout the US. This is not a job for one or two people, but a job for hundreds of people **WORKING TOGETHER** on a full-time basis. And it will require the expertise of determined professionals, with knowledge of Northern Ireland, to carry out this effort.

If you have any doubts about the accuracy of this observation, consider the effectiveness and size of the American Jewish lobby. They number in the thousands and are located not just in Washington, DC, but throughout the US, many of whom are full-time paid professionals.

To win over these people of influence we must begin to build that network of qualified professionals across the US who would work full time to gain access to them. We can do it, but it will require real financial sacrifice!

Our plans include a professional presence in Washington, DC and a professional public relations operation in New York City and Philadelphia (eventually to include other major US cities). These operations would require a minimum of \$100,000 to start. We expect some support from private donors. We have also organized an Annual Campaign Committee to initiate fundraising drives. We also need the support of members.

We already have the people lined-up. They are just waiting for you to say go!

The PEC organization has a proven record of getting things done and has built an effective network at the grassroots level. We can do the same at the higher echelons of society, if we have the opportunity -- if our members choose to give us the chance.

While we are well aware of the hard economic times persisting in the US, we ask only that you give as generously as you can afford. Those of you who can give more, \$100, \$200, or even \$500, please do so. This is the kind of sacrifice that is necessary to be successful.

Give us your financial support and we will give you results!

USE THE PEC TELEPHONE HOTLINE

(914) 429-7849 -- a 24 hour, 7 day-a-week service
Action Request messages change every Sunday night

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FROM THE EDITOR

It came as no surprise, the British government's recent refusal to declare illegal the Ulster Defence Association (UDA). They reasoned that there were already enough groups proscribed.

In reality there is no good reason why the British should not proscribe the UDA. The UDA, the loyalist equivalent of the IRA, is responsible for the murder of more innocent people in Northern Ireland than any of the combatants. They have killed over 650 innocent people, including 114 Protestants, according to England's Irish Information Partnership. And their methods have been brutal and savage. They have shot people, blown people to bits, and even butchered people -- second to none!

The truth of the matter is, the British concern is not who kills more people, but who opposes British colonial presence in Ireland. The UDA, which often works in collusion with British forces, does not oppose British presence in Ireland nor does it attack British troops. Loyalist paramilitaries have killed only 2 British soldiers.

The British government has no intentions of confronting the UDA -- just as it did not confront its violent forbears who successfully forced the illegal division of Ireland against the wishes of 80% of Ireland's population -- as long as they support British colonial presence in Ireland.

The UDA will be allowed to continue its organized and ongoing terror campaign as long as the nationalist community seeks equality and Ireland's reunification.

Action Request #2

Offensive Situations

by Kevin P. Murphy, Massachusetts State Director

Members have complained about an offensive situation that occurred on the October 23 *Morning* show on AM 1430 WXKS Radio in Boston. The disc jockey on the 8:30 AM show played the Irish Rovers song "The Unicorn". A comment was made on the air stating that, "Unfortunately it isn't a crime to be Irish, but it certainly is a sin."

All members are asked to write to: General Manager, 1430 WXKS AM Radio, 99 Revere Beach Parkway, Medford, MA 02155. Include in your letter that *you are offended by the disk jockey's remark "Unfortunately it isn't a crime to be Irish, but it certainly is a sin" which was made on the October 23 Morning show during the 8:30 segment.*

Member Dale Warner of San Jose, California advises us that the following offensive statement, "*Here the void is the biography, George M. Cohan, a smart Mick on the make who became a self-styled king of Broadway...*" by Judith Green appeared in the October 28 Theater Review section of the *San Jose Mercury News*. Dale and a delegation from the Irish Task Force have requested a meeting with the newspaper's management. Write to: Mr. Robert D. Ingle, Senior Vice President, San Jose Mercury News, 750 Ridder Park Dr., San Jose, CA 95190. Include in your letter the comment by Judith Green and ask that she be reprimanded. Suggest that the editor caution all writers to be more alert regarding ethnic sensitivities.

SEND ALL OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS TO: Kevin P. Murphy, PO Box 8895 - JFK Station, Boston, MA 02114

The American Irish PEC

founded 1975

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NATIONAL MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES CONSULTANT: Tom O'Flaherty, RFD #6, Box 153, Laconia, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03246 - (603) 528-5733

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STUDENT ORGANIZER: Sandy Carlson, AIPEC, Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 - (914) 947-2726

Supported in part by the Emerald Society, NYC Fire Department

RAFFLE WINNERS

We are happy to announce the following winners of our recent raffle. The drawing took place on October 26 at the PEC Annual Testimonial Dinner. Thomas Dunn of Stony Point, NY won the grand prize of 2 round trip tickets to Ireland. The winners of the 5 \$100 cash prizes were: Pat Thornton, Sunfish Lake, Minnesota; Catherine Nolan, Trumbull, Connecticut; Kenneth Foley, Rochester, New York; Bill Moore, St. Paul, Minnesota and Margaret Ferris, Haverstraw, New York.

We are grateful to all who supported the raffle. Your continued support is the life blood of the PEC.

Ireland: Europe's Last Captive Nation

Bumper Stickers \$1 -- 3 or more \$.50 each. Make checks payable to AIPEC and mail to Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993.

From The North

by Rev. Des Wilson, Director Spring Hill Community, Belfast

A recent increase in British loyalist killings in Ireland has brought statements from politicians and churchpeople about "tit for tat killings." They give the impression that if there were no violence from republicans such killings by British loyalists would not occur.

This interpretation, created by the British government, is being encouraged, unfortunately, by Catholics who should know better. The CNS (*Catholic News Service*), for example, accepts -- without discussion with Catholics in Ireland -- that the British version is true: If you remove those who demand British withdrawal you stop British loyalists killing Catholics.

There have always been British loyalists killing Catholics whether there was a republican military campaign or not. For the past 120 years there has been a regular and severe anti-Catholic pogrom, or organized onslaught, on average once every 12 years. The result is the so-called ghettos we know today, as real and as confined as the Jewish ghettos of the past in European cities. There is no evidence that if the republican military campaign ceased tomorrow those pogroms would cease. They cannot cease because they are an essential part of keeping the northern Ireland state in existence.

Catholics who live in this situation and know how it is misrepresented abroad are not just fearful when British loyalist killings increase -- they are angry, a sentiment seldom acknowledged in the media either at home or abroad. They are angry most of all when Irish people, or Irish Americans or Catholics misrepresent them. If this occurs under the aegis of an Irish diplomatic mission abroad it is just as offensive as if it came

from British loyalist sources directly. That CNS, a Catholic news service, should issue a false analysis of a situation it has known about for more than 20 years may be due to ineptitude, laziness or a desire to hide the truth. It does not matter to people in Ireland what the real reason is -- their anger is real.

There is, to put it summarily, no such thing as sectarianism as a **primary motivating factor** in Irish politics and the sooner publicists get that straight, the better for us all. Wallace and Holroyd, both of whom worked in Ireland for British intelligence and are now revealing some of the things British intelligence did there, have no difficulty in admitting that the British set up pseudo-gangs, "loyalist" and "republican," created incidents, were responsible for killings and injuries for which sectarianism was blamed. It is ironic that Catholic newspapers and even bishops, not to speak of politicians, are not prepared to admit what British ex-intelligence officers admit without difficulty and even with pride, namely that the spying services did and still do commit murder for political purposes in Ireland.

For those of us who have respect for our fellow citizens it is offensive that our Protestant neighbors should be blamed for sectarian killings when it is government agents who should be blamed for them. The murder gangs of various world dictatorships are alive and well, and those of the British government are alive and well and comfortably hiding under a sectarian cloak.

How the anger of people will express itself can be easily seen. For some, a military response to British aggression is the only answer the government understands. For others, continual revelations of the truth is the answer. The two answers may go together. For those who wish to use non-military means rather than military ones it would help if churchpeople and politicians would interpret our situation truthfully. They can be assured that both time and patience are running out.

Western States Region Report

by Susan Catt, Western Region Executive Director

Oklahoma State Director Appointed

We are happy to announce the appointment of Linda Barker as Oklahoma State Director. Linda can be reached at 1111 South Oakwood, Apt. 1204, Enid, OK 73703 or call (405) 237-2236.

COLORADO -- State Director Terry Deem Reilly will be researching prospective sites for the first Western States Region Conference. Western Region members are requested to relay suggestions to Terry as to potential locations for the Conference. Terry is also urging members in Colorado interested in launching local MacBride Principles initiatives to contact her...**WISCONSIN** -- State Director Nancy Love has sent a letter to all current and prospective members in Wisconsin urging that they join with her in launching a MacBride Principles campaign. She has also written to Representative Jim Moody urging him to contact the Justice Department on behalf of Joe Doherty...**IDAHO** -- State Director John Giesen is developing a list of prospective contacts within the business community for the purpose of educating them with regards to

PEC issues and the PEC's work through the democratic process. John will develop a program to educate Idaho's media, legal and professional communities...**ARIZONA** -- Elizabeth McElligott, a PEC MacBride Principles consultant, has been advised by US Senator DeConcini of his concern about the British government's motives in integrating the UDR into the Royal Irish Regiment. He stated that he will continue to monitor developments in the region to ensure that the Irish minority is protected in Northern Ireland...**NEW MEXICO** -- Willie Lennon and Kathleen Vanston, in conjunction with the IAUC, organized 2 presentations for Paddy Joe Hill of the Birmingham Six. Hill addressed the University of New Mexico Law School and the Taos Pueblo Native American community.

Arizona PEC Fundraiser -- Arizona PEC will sponsor a White Elephant Sale on December 7, beginning at 11:00 AM to be held at O'Conors Pub in Phoenix. Half of the proceeds will go to the *Americans For MacBride* to support the Arizona MacBride Principles Campaign. Entertainment will include a musician from County Sligo, a tin whistler and step dancers. For information call Susan Catt (602) 982-0370.

Potato Politics

by John O'Connor, *Pennsylvania*

Everyone knows that Irish stew without the potato would be something else entirely. But who would have guessed that a gargantuan international force like American politics derives its essential flavor from potatoes, and rotten potatoes into the bargain. That was the intriguing message from a small segment of the currently running T.V. series on Christopher Columbus.

It seems that the first ever sighting of the potato by Europeans was right here in the Americas. The early explorers brought it back to Europe where it became a staple crop for hundreds of years, tried and true, sturdy and dependable. And then it crashed in Ireland in 1845 when the autumn harvest turned black over night and the putrid smell of rotting potatoes fouled the air of the four green fields.

Millions starved and millions fled, driven from their homes by aching hunger. Many came to America, the home of the potato. They found a political system well suited to their gregarious and egalitarian temperament.

Democracy had been applied in the sprawling, brawling, developing new nation for scarcely seventy years. As a political system it was far from perfect. The electorate was often neglected or forgotten or patronized by officials who saw their positions of power more as a prize than a responsibility. The new Irish were to change that. Their contribution to democracy as a system of government would be to proclaim the principle that by ignoring the needs of the people, a politician writes himself a ticket to oblivion. The people's voice must be listened to during the term of office as well as at election time. If it is not, the people speak with their vote at the next opportunity.

An example of this principle at work is the most recent senatorial race in New Jersey. The incumbent Bill Bradley had a nationally recognized name and was frequently mentioned in the media as a hot candidate for the next democratic presidential nomination. His reelection was generally considered a no-contest fight that would give him an easy, overwhelming victory. His female opponent was unknown outside select political circles. She had virtually no money to put against Bradley's financially robust backers. Despite his incumbent's advantage, his national name, his bulging campaign accounts, Bradley retained his senatorial seat by the barest of margins over Ms. Whitman. It was a moral defeat which he has acknowledged publicly and from which he has yet to recover. No one mentions him as presidential timbers anymore. He learned that to drift out of the mainstream of your support is to risk being drowned.

To lead effectively, a politician must follow his people. It is this principle that the Irish brought with them in their flight from the **potato failure**. They arrived in the new world bedraggled and obsessed with the memory of the benign and sometimes malicious neglect of rulers who yawned at every opportunity to relieve the holocaust of **starvation**. They campaigned for office. Their platform was simple: help the people whenever and however they need it.

They got elected and established political machines in many major American cities. An oral tradition associated with the machines always focuses on benefits that came to the powerless and the desperate. Each Ward had someone with an eye out for the needy. No matter how poor, none were allowed to face winter without heat. Jobs were found and sometimes created for the unemployed. Food was quietly delivered to the hungry. If a politician abused his power from time to time to his own advantage, it was looked upon as human weakness and an expression of the ever present evil that accompanies nearly every good.

New York, Boston, Albany, Jersey City, Philadelphia and Chicago were among the cities that experienced machine politics. In the beginning, the Irish dominated these powerhouses. Gradually other ethnic groups asserted their influence and at times controlled the machines themselves. The Poles, Germans, Italians and Jews had their voices heard and their own officials elected by using the instrument of the machine. To be listened to and to get their rights, Black Americans in recent decades have often used tactics first implemented by the machines.

As a way of focusing the resources of elective office on the needs of the people, the machines were far from perfect and the natural evolution of democracy has consigned the machines to history. But their legacy remains. The surest and quickest way for an elected official to get booted out of office at any level is to neglect the needs and ignore the voices of his constituents. It is the soul of the electoral process. It is a political dynamic that is sweeping across the world at this very moment as countries on every continent choose democracy.

The enormous contribution of the Irish politician to American life has been barely recognized. It's easy to overlook because it is so visible and fundamental to contemporary politics. Saved from the rotten potato by the welcoming embrace of Miss Liberty, the Irish returned the favor by giving tongue to the voice of the people. Shakespeare got it right in the "The Tempest" when he said "There is some soul of goodness in things evil, thus may we gather honey from the weed." Paddy, take a bow.

Newsbits continued from page 1

in an attempt to get Unionists to talk to the Irish government ... "Article 3 places the Irish government and Dail under a constitutional obligation to work for a united Ireland. If this article is diluted, it means that we, the Irish people, acknowledge Britain's claim to sovereignty over Ireland as superior to the historic democratic claim of the majority of the Irish people to the political unity of our country. This would entail a massive national capitulation, and would reinstate the totally unequal

relationship that existed between Ireland and Britain before 1921 ... The root cause of the problem in Ireland is not caused by Articles 2 and 3; it lies with Britain's claim to sovereignty over the north. Abandoning the constitutional claim to rightful jurisdiction over the north and replacing it with an "aspiration" to unity would mean that an Irish government would no longer be under a constitutional obligation to do anything about it. This is exactly what the Unionists and the British government want ... (Also, Northern nationalists) would no longer be Irish citizens and could no longer hold an Irish passport." (Irish National Congress Newsletter, 9/10/91)

NORTHERN IRELAND 1969: POINT OF NO RETURN

by Stephanie Finucane

In the last article on the civil rights movement, Derry's Catholic Bogside was afire with RUC drunken disorder in revenge of the success of the civil rights marchers who bypassed RUC and loyalist rerouting and ambushing, especially at Burntollet Bridge, and reached the final destination, Guildhall Square, a symbol of Loyalist supremacy, late January 4, 1969.

That night, the embarrassed, furious, inebriated RUC, joined by gangs of young loyalists, "made a raid into the Bogside area in which over 5,000 Catholics lived in squalid conditions" (O'Ballance, E. *Terror in Ireland: The Heritage of Hate*). Together they "smashed windows, terrified inhabitants, and beat all who opposed them" (O'Ballance). In response, the people set up barricades and Free Derry was born. For a whole week thereafter the RUC stayed clear of the Bogside, the first no-go area for the RUC and other authorities in Northern Ireland.

On January 5th the civil rights movement discovered their march was to be squashed by the O'Neill government which was only interested in quelling agitation via promises that never materialized. Prime Minister O'Neill's speech that day attacked the People's Democracy for staging a "foolhardy and irresponsible" march. He blamed the violence of Loyalists and police on the marchers themselves, claiming the marchers welcomed the violent reaction for the adverse publicity created. Said O'Neill, those responsible for the violence were only "playing into the hands of those who are encouraging the current agitation. Had this march been treated with silent contempt and allowed to proceed peaceably, this entire affair would have made little mark." The marchers were to blame for speaking up for themselves and O'Neill demanded that: "Enough is enough. We have heard sufficient for now about civil rights; let us hear a little about civic responsibility." O'Neill carefully did not address the violence of the loyalists, nor the flagrant police misconduct directing loyalist hostility. Instead, O'Neill threatened to mobilize the B-Specials, which is ironic because almost a hundred of the Burntollet Bridge ambush participants were off-duty B-Specials.

Thus, O'Neill's speech backfired on him. Not only did he isolate himself further from the already devoted civil rights activists, but he encouraged the majority of the civil rights supporters who did not originally support the Jan 1-4 march to declare full, outright support for future civil rights marches. The Burntollet incident was the turning point for the civil rights movement and centralized their demands which now pivoted on the demand for "One Man, One Vote" - no ifs, ands, or buts. Such support is evident in the general election in February, which the Unionist party pressured O'Neill into calling. Although O'Neill was reelected despite strong support for Ian Paisley, there was a noticeable reduction of votes for pro-O'Neill candidates. Similarly, three independents associated with NICRA took seats from the ineffectual Nationalist MPs. (The Nationalist party of '69 accepted the status quo.) In the April by-election, 21 year old Bernadette Devlin was elected as a Westminster MP for Mid-Ulster.

Next, a civil rights march was scheduled for Saturday, April 19, from Claudy to Derry, via Burntollet Bridge. It was called off that morning, yet a large group of people still gathered at Guildhall Square. A crowd of loyalists also headed for the Square. As Dr. Raymond McClean, practicing in his native Derry during the civil

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rights agitation, writes: "Suddenly large stones from Shipquay Street started landing on the people in the square. Several people were hurt and injured . . . the police then intervened and, to my amazement, they once again baton-charged the civil rights supporters. Serious rioting ensued and once again the Bogside area was sealed off by police. The loyalist militants withdrew to Derry's walls unharmed and some of them threw stones from the wall into the Bogside area" (*The Road to Bloody Sunday*).

It was on that day that Sammy Devenney's house was broken into by police and Sammy was given a beating that left him with injuries that brought on his death three months later. Sammy, age 42, was well known and respected in the Bogside. "Everyone knew that Sammy had no interest in politics and didn't belong to any group, either subversive or otherwise" (McCLean). RUC police and some young rioters had been playing tug of war with street space on William Street in the Bogside. Sammy's house was in the middle of the scene and he and a friend watched from the door. During a retreat of the young rioters, four or five ran into Sammy's house, out the back door, and climbed over the backyard wall. In a panic, Sammy "slammed his front door shut and retreated to his living room. Several policemen, apparently in pursuit of the rioters, smashed down the front door, invaded the house, and apparently battered everyone in sight" (McCLean). No one in the house had a chance to explain that the rioters exited the house. Dr. McCLean was brought to the house to treat Sammy. He writes: "We got to Sammy's house and found the door hanging ajar, badly battered, and with a large hole in it. I went into the front room and stood aghast. **There was blood on the floor, on the chairs, on the walls, and even on the ceiling.**" A man was standing in the middle of the floor, dazed, with a brush in his hands, trying to wipe the blood off the floor. Sammy had already been taken to the hospital where he received several stitches in the head. McCLean went upstairs to check on a four year old boy who "got a knock on the head." However, though there was blood on his head, it was not his own. It was the blood of a friend, Freddie Budd, who, the boy explained, "was lying across me to save me, and the policeman was beating Freddie, and the blood was coming down onto me" (McCLean).

The next day the police were in the Bogside in full strength and most of the people had evacuated to nearby Creggan. A week later, O'Neill announced his resignation and James Chichester-Clark replaced him on May 6. He announced amnesty for those arrested at political protests and demonstrations between October 5, 1968 and May 5, 1969. Civil rights people were concerned about how amnesty would affect Sammy and the Burntollet marchers. The new Prime Minister confirmed their suspicions when he explained that, although the amnesty applied to the RUC as it did to everyone, the disciplinary action was the responsibility of the Inspector General of the RUC. As McCLean writes: "The cracks were to be papered over once again."

On Thursday, July 17, 1969, Sammy died at home following the second coronary thrombosis he suffered since the beating on April 19. He left behind a wife and young family.

JOIN OR SUPPORT The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC). For information write: Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 or call 800 777-6807.

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Political Censorship On Northern Ireland

by Hall Elliott, California

What do Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Graham Greene, and Yves Montand, have in common? Their names have all been on the National Automated Immigration Lookout System (NAILS) list. This list, maintained in secrecy by the United States government, names foreign nationals who are not welcome in this country. ("Not welcome" as determined by the current administration.) When a visa request is received by the State Department it is checked against the NAILS list. If the requestor's name appears the visa is denied.

At last count the NAILS list included over 350,000 names. Of these, the Reagan/Bush administrations are responsible for the addition of more than two thirds. Officials caution, however, that there is no easy way to get an accurate count because some individuals are listed more than once and the list is subject to frequent change. Adding to the difficulty of a count is the secrecy of the list as it is released only as a result of the occasional court decision. For some, such as authors, directors, and actors, the persons are excluded from the US while their work is allowed. There is no apparent rhyme nor reason to the list; it is purely political and under the control of the administration in office. Visa denial is censorship.

The British government spends millions of dollars annually to present their version of the Irish conflict. They have established Northern Ireland offices and the Northern Ireland News Service in this country to distribute their version of the news. British news services and/or American correspondents based in London are the primary source of American media coverage of Ireland. In conjunction with biased media coverage, visa denial ensures that only the British/loyalist version of the news is available to the American public in the mainstream media.

Sinn Fein, Ireland's oldest political party, is the political voice of the Irish Republican movement. Since 1974, the president of Sinn Fein, Gerry Adams, as well as virtually all prominent members of Sinn Fein, have been denied visas presumably because of their political affiliation. The State Department denies that the Sinn Fein leaders are on any list. They say that each request is considered on an individual basis; however, no upper-level Sinn Fein spokesman has been issued a visa in the past 17 years. During that time, Ian Paisley, the most notorious of the loyalist leaders has been granted a visa at least twice.

Thus the American people are denied their right to hear the nationalist version of the Irish conflict. Consequently, most Americans have a very limited understanding of the reasons for that struggle and less understanding of the way it's conducted.

Government apologists say the visas are denied because the excluded individuals have arrest records and are therefore undesirable. Of course they have arrest records. As officers of a legitimate political party, they operate completely in the open, denouncing the oppression of the nationalist people of Ireland.

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Such behavior, while guaranteed by "freedom of speech" in this country, risks imprisonment under British rule in northeastern Ireland [Northern Ireland]. The representatives of Sinn Fein are harassed by the crown forces on a daily basis; the more effective they are, the greater their likelihood of arrest and imprisonment. Why should members of Sinn Fein be labeled "undesirable", while the victims of other oppressive regimes are welcomed with open arms?

Nelson Mandela spent 28 years in a South African prison for the same "crimes" that Gerry Adams has committed, yet he was welcomed with great fanfare into this country. Mr. Mandela addressed the Congress of the United States and, in that address, refused to renounce violence as a means of relieving the oppression of his people. Gerry Adams is excluded, in part, because he refuses to renounce violence.

In contrast, in 1984, Margaret Thatcher, then Prime Minister of Great Britain, addressed a joint session of Congress on the British presence in Ireland. Ten congressmen invited Gerry Adams to speak in reply to Mrs. Thatcher, but the State Department denied Mr. Adams's visa request. The US Congress were thus denied the opportunity to hear the other side of the story and to question Mr. Adams about nationalist tactics or the armed struggle. How can the Congress make informed decisions on US policy with only half the story?

Gerry Adams has been invited to speak in the US on many occasions, by many different groups. He has been invited to speak to the Massachusetts State Assembly, the New York Irish-American Legislator's Association, the Philadelphia and California Brehon Societies of Lawyers and Judges, and several universities, as well as a host of Irish-American organizations. In 1990, he was the Honorary Grand Marshal of the San Francisco St. Patrick's Day parade, in absentia, of course. Gerry Adams is a duly elected Member of the British Parliament, president of a legitimate political party, and the spokesperson for at least 40% of the nationalist people in Northern Ireland -- the six counties of Ireland that are British-occupied.

Censorship by visa denial is not an Irish issue. The American government is controlling what political views the public is allowed to hear by denying visas to persons with views contrary to those of the administration or its allies. Freedom of speech must also include freedom to hear. If the American people are only allowed to hear the arguments of one side of an issue -- the side the government chooses for us to hear -- then where is our freedom of choice? How can we make informed judgements? Please let your congressional delegations know your feelings on this insidious form of censorship.

JOIN OR SUPPORT

**The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC).
For information write: Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W,
West Haverstraw, NY 10993 or call 800 777-6807.**

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MacBride Principles Update

New York State will introduce a MacBride Principles contract compliance bill for the purpose of intensifying pressure on American companies with operations in Northern Ireland that have not complied with New York's 1986 MacBride bill. The bill's author, and sponsor in the Assembly, is Assemblyman John Dearie (D-Bronx).

At the request of PEC members and Rockland County legislator Thomas Morahan, a PEC member, Republican State Senator Joe Holland has agreed to be the bill's sponsor in the Senate. His sponsorship will assure non-partisan support for the bill. Senator Holland has also agreed to sponsor another MacBride Principles bill authored by Assemblyman Dearie which calls for a one-percent divestment.

Members in New York State are asked to contact their State Senate (address) and Assembly representatives (address). Ask that they sponsor the bill and that they contact for information, Senator Joe Holland in the Senate and in the Assembly, Assemblyman John Dearie. This will be no easy battle, so we must begin now!

Presidential Primaries

The Presidential Primaries are already underway. Members should be alert to question the candidates on Northern Ireland when they appear in your community. Ask for their positions on British government human rights violations in Northern Ireland, Britain's colonial presence in Ireland, the MacBride Principles legislation and Joe Doherty?

CHRISTMAS CLASSICS

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IN COUPON ON PAGE 6

A Tribute To

Rev. Maurice Burke

Tower View Ballroom
Woodside, New York

Sunday, December 13, 1991-- 8PM

Rev. Burke, who is relocating to Ireland, has authored many writings on Northern Ireland, including *Britain in Ireland: The Facts*. Proceeds will be used to help defray his relocation costs and to enable him to continue his educational work in Ireland. Admission is \$35 per person which includes a Hot & Cold Buffet and Open Bar. For reservations write to AIPEC. Make checks payable to Rev. Maurice Burke. For information call (914) 947-2726.

Dear Editor

In many cases Boston's Mayor Raymond L. Flynn has captured the attention and headlines by speaking out for human rights in Northern Ireland and for the release of Joe Doherty. This positive action by Mayor Flynn has, and justly does, deserve applause. Hopefully the Mayor of Boston will continue to speak out for civil and human rights in Northern Ireland.

Questions have been asked of Mayor Flynn's associations with John Hume of the SDLP party. Mayor Flynn and Hume co-chair the Boston Ireland Ventures program. That program garners large long term investment in British occupied Northern Ireland. That program has come under scrutiny by concerned Americans as to whether the organization will comply with MacBride Principles guidelines.

Mayor Flynn has advocated the MacBride Principles in several interviews in various publications. To many, it is strange that the Mayor is such a close friend and supporter of John Hume. Hume was recently mentioned by California's Governor as one of the reasons he vetoed the California MacBride bill. Why does a Mayor who claims frequently to strongly support the MacBride Principles remain, along with John Hume, a co-chairperson of Boston Ireland Ventures, which has been praised by the British government as the model for MacBrideless investments?

I urge that members question Mayor Flynn on this matter. His address is: Honorable Raymond L. Flynn, Mayor's Office, Boston City Hall, Government Center, Boston, MA 02201.

Lenny Deobrowski, Massachusetts

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Action Request # 1

We will continue to pressure the media to end its silence on British government injustice in Northern Ireland and our government's disgraceful behavior in the case of Joe Doherty.

Progress in Northern Ireland will not take place until the issue of British injustice is fairly and accurately addressed by the media. The media must learn not to depend on British government news reports, via the wire services, for truth and accuracy. They must question British government sources.

All members are asked to write the sample letter below to both: Mr. Pat Buchanan, CNN-Crossfire, 820 1st Street NE, Washington, DC 20002 and Ms. Ginny Hamill, Foreign Editor, Washington Post, 1150 15th Street NW, Washington, DC 20007. Urge family, friends, business associates, organizations, to do the same. Be courteous in your letter.

Address & date

Dear _____:

The American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) has asked that I urge you to publicize British human rights violations in Northern Ireland as recently confirmed by Amnesty International and the Helsinki Committee, and the case of Joe Doherty, now before the US Supreme Court. Details are available through the PEC at (914) 947-2726.

Respectfully,

Detach Here

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The National Telephone Chain (NTC) is most important for our plans for a full-time professional representative in Washington, DC. It will enable the PEC to quickly generate letters from around the country to backup requests made by our representative, of the media, Congress, etc. The NTC will give clout and credibility to our representative.

We need more members for the NTC. Members who have already joined will be contacted when the chain is ready.

As a member of the NTC you would receive an occasional phone call requesting that you write a letter. The caller, a Primary Contact, will provide you with a short sample letter and the name and address of who to write. You would then write your letter and mail it off. That's all there is!

We also need Primary Contacts. A Primary Contact would receive the message and pass it on to others.

To join the National Telephone Chain simply send your name, address and phone number, and the best time you can be reached at that number, to Kathy Regan, 3045 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10468 or call (212) 365-0213.

Be A Letter Writer

We urge all members to respond to our Action Request. Organized letter writing campaigns are effective.

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