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## American Irish Newsletter - October 1991

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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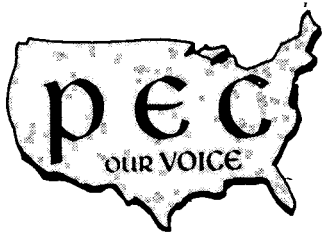
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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN Irish Political Education Committee

Volume 16, Number 10

October 1991

## **DON'T FORGET !!!**

The PEC Annual Testimonial Dinner, Saturday, October 26, 1991 located at Bishops in Tappan (Rockland County), New York. Honored guests are Paul Hill of the *Guilford Four* and Elizabeth Logue of the *Doors of Hope* and *IAUC*. Tickets are \$40 per person. Music provided by Jimmy McPhail and The Regals. Make your reservations now - call (914) 947-2726.

## **Pennsylvania's Senatorial Race Will Be Watched Closely By Joe Doherty**

Joe Doherty will be watching closely the Pennsylvania November Senatorial race between Democrat incumbent US Senator Harris Wofford and the controversial outgoing US Attorney General Richard Thornburgh. And why not? Thornburgh has been hard at work keeping Doherty incarcerated hoping to have him deported to Britain.

Surely Doherty will be rooting for Democrat Wofford who signed his Amicus Brief as did Senator Arlen Specter a Republican. Doherty is not a partisan issue with these gentlemen.

Doherty knows that Thornburgh is beatable, not only because of his prominence in the S&L and BCCI scandals, but because Thornburgh places the interests of the British government above those of American citizens.

Surely if Joe was a free American citizen, he would send a donation to *Citizens For Senator Wofford*, 230 South Broad St, Philadelphia, PA 19102 and call his office at (215) 893-1102 if he had any questions. He would certainly vote for Wofford.

## **Newsbits**

by Kathy Regan

When the recent interparty talks began, the *Shankill People* [Unionist] did a survey which showed that 98% of people on the Road wanted something positive to come from them. This now seems as far away as ever. The politicians should have taken their lead from the people who are sick of the petty wrangling and want peace. (Shankill People, 7/91).... Amnesty International will probe the case of 17 year-old Damien Austin, the son of Sinn Fein member Joe Austin, after allegations that the youth was severely beaten during his four-day detention in Castlereagh. Amnesty approached the family and asked for details on the case. (Andersonstown News, 8/24/91)

After writing to the chairman of the Northern Bank asking him to address employment inequality against Catholics and receiving a two-line statement dismissing its request, the Campaign for Economic Equality launched a campaign to bring pressure

*Continued on page 6*

## **Freedom: How About Ireland?**

by Kevin P. Murphy, *Massachusetts*

The media have recently been almost totally dedicated to reporting on the good news of the independence and freedom sweeping through the former Soviet Republics.

As newly-freed democratic nations emerge from the former captive nations of Eastern and Central Europe up into the Baltics, it is quite evident that colonialism and oppression are on the way out. But that new beautiful face of European freedom has a blemish. The ancient and proud nation of Ireland remains divided by the British Colonial Army.

While Germans, Lithuanians, Poles and other formerly oppressed people rejoice, the Irish continue to live in a land forcibly divided and can only dream of human or civil rights. Will Northern Ireland be the catch-word in the 1990's when one refers to a denial of self-determination?

I can recall that during the 1981 Irish Hunger Strikes the people of Poland were engaged in a struggle against a repressive Communist regime. Many concerned Americans stated that at least Ireland was not in the Iron Curtain category and had a better chance of freedom than did Poland. A decade later, Poland and other former captive nations are free. While Berlin and Budapest today are free from foreign troops, Ireland still remains entangled in a vicious web of British colonialism. Belfast is an armed camp where the British system of division and denial of justice is enforced at the point of a gun.

President George Bush and British Prime Minister John Major recently talked of the "New World Order" and praised the freedom sweeping across the European continent. Does the "New World Order" have a policy **No Irish Need Apply**?

Why does every nation except Ireland have the right to self-determination? Why does Britain continue to get away with dividing and waging a war of bigotry and violence in Ireland?

In the former Soviet Union, a minority organization, the Communist Party, denied freedom and justice to the majority. Thanks to the bravery of freedom-loving people, that organization was overcome and leveled to the ash heap.

In Northern Ireland a similar repressive organization, the Orange Order, continues to prevent the majority of the people from enjoying full democracy and nationhood. Unlike Eastern Europe, the seekers of peace and freedom in Northern Ireland are put down and intimidated by Britain's Colonial Army and its sectarian police and the Loyalist Orange Order. Britain's policy of hatred is kept in power by forces of oppression.

While Europeans look forward to freedom and promise, the Irish can only look towards more military occupation, division and bigotry courtesy of the British government.

**FROM THE EDITOR**

On August 21, 1991 the British government rejected an offer from Sinn Fein for talks about ending the violence in Northern Ireland. (See *Sinn Fein Proposes Peace Talks*, page 5). Sinn Fein is a democratically elected political party.

It is the opinion of many that the British government will not conduct direct talks with Sinn Fein until it is ready to leave Ireland, even if there were an IRA ceasefire.

Such talks, if covered fairly and accurately by the media, would force the British government to publicly address the real issues in Northern Ireland. These are a lack of justice, equality and democracy, the very foundation of British colonial presence there. End these injustices and Britain will be forced to withdraw.

The solution to Ireland's "British problem," the last festering sore in the European Community, lies in exposing the true nature of British colonialism in Ireland which you can help do through our *Reproduce & Distribute* and letter-writing programs.

Britain cannot afford to have these issues exposed to public scrutiny. Exposure would prove a major political embarrassment, especially in light of the massive advances made by democracy in the Soviet Union. With clear knowledge of the truth, fair-minded people would never support a continued British colonial presence in Northern Ireland.

Imagine the headline -- *Ireland under British rule, Europe's last captive and undemocratic nation.*

**'Irish' No Longer A Relevant 'Distinct' Subject In Minnesota History**

by Leah Curtin, *Minnesota*

In 1974, *Reference Guide to Minnesota History* was published. This subject bibliography of books, pamphlets and articles in English was compiled by Michael Brooks and published by the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Mn, carrying the International Standard Book #0-87351-082-8.

In the chapter, *Population and Immigration*, under the subtitle: *British and Irish*, page 37, there is listed among a few others: Ancient Order of Hibernians, Minnesota Official Souvenir Program, Irish and Irish American Centennial Celebration Day for Minnesota, September 17, 1949: "A Hundred Years with Minnesota Irish," and James Shannon's PhD Thesis detailing Irish settlement and history in Minnesota. The other publications listed all pertained to British, Scotch and Welsh.

In 1983, a supplement to the above was published, *A Supplement to Reference Guide to Minnesota History* (A Subject Bibliography, 1970-80). This supplement was also compiled by Michael Brooks and assisted by Sarah P. Rubenstein.

In the introduction to the 'supplement', it is written on Page 2: "In the 'Population and Immigration' category two subheadings were created for the Finns and Mexican Americans, while the Irish and slavery and abolition disappeared as distinct subjects." (Emphasis ours)

This elimination of the "Irish as a distinct subject" occurs during the period when Minnesota became the center and seat for the largest and most diverse of Irish cultural organizations

**The American Irish PEC**

**founded 1975**

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 Vice-President.....Albert Doyle  
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Supported in part by the Emerald Society, NYC Fire Department.

**DICK BARRY**

The passing of Dick Barry on August 25 is a sad loss to the PEC. He will be missed by all those who had the privilege to know and work with him.

Dick's role in the PEC was an active and, indeed, important one. He was the librarian at the PEC's American Irish Library & Research Center and handled all mail orders.

Dick, who exemplified the true American value of caring for his fellow man, cared much about the human rights struggle in Northern Ireland -- enough to take an active role. He will be missed greatly.

in the world, The Irish American Cultural Institute, not to forget the great contribution played throughout Minnesota history by the Irish.

Check your State's historical society and their records. Are the Irish being erased as a 'distinct' subject, also?

## ***From The North,***

Rev Des Wilson, *Director of Springhill Community, Belfast*

For some time now British military and police have been arresting large numbers of people in Northern Ireland. While politicians and some churchmen call for internment -- and John Hume says he would accept it under certain conditions -- the British are creating a form of internment which does not have to get any special permission. They are arresting large numbers of teenagers.

At first sight this seems like a policy of revenge, which is always possible, when frustrated police and military are given their way. But there is another reason for it as well.

During the past twenty years security within "citizens" military groups has been tightened. So unless people are caught in the act the police and military do not know who did what. Proponents of internment say that police and military intelligence is better now than ever. If it were, internment would not be considered necessary. What the authorities are doing is rounding up large numbers of vulnerable people, beating them to get confessions and on the basis of these confessions telling the world they have solved their problem of who threw a bomb here or shot a soldier there.

When one reflects on how little evidence it takes to convict in political cases in the British system, one realizes how little real information the police and military must have. Arresting the most vulnerable members of a community and forcing confessions from them make the police look successful and satisfies politicians that their policies are working. They are not working, but appearance is everything. Another advantage for the British in Ireland is that the arrest of young people puts pressure on parents and families, an apparently unbearable pressure.

They face the possibility of their sons and daughters being put in prison for many years, maybe for life, for something they did not do and could not conceivably have done. This, the British hope, will make parents and families turn against the IRA.

They do not believe the families may turn in fury against the British government or against the complacent politicians or churchmen. After all, the tactic worked in 1916 when Pearse,

instead of taking to the hills, surrendered because the British were killing civilians not just in crossfire but as a matter of policy.

But in Belfast in 1991, putting pressure on civilians may not have the desired results after all. People are angry at the continuing abuse, lying and slander they have had to put up with, and especially the failure of public representatives to protect them. When parents and relatives of young people arrested in Belfast met the local SDLP representative Dr. Joe Hendron they told him bluntly that they were not interested in statements anymore. They said that unless their children were out of prison within three weeks they would campaign against Hendron and the SDLP in future elections.

The SDLP knows that with such opposition as it has already managed to arouse in West Belfast, the parliamentary seat there is absolutely out of their reach. Just how vulnerable other seats may be is open to question, but the parents and relatives are desperate to get their children out of jail.

An hour before I started to write this article one of my colleagues in Springhill Community House arrived for work with a story which is as horrible as it is frequent. The British military and police arrived at her home this morning, kicked their way in and arrested her sister. Women police and police men were equal in their abusiveness as they told herself, her sister and her child to "f...ing get up" or "f...ing get out" or do whatever they demanded. They did not need a warrant, they simply had to announce they were acting under such and such a section of law. That girl can be kept for two to seven days, she can be beaten, sexually assaulted, mocked, taunted and made in the end to sign a confession to something she did not do and could not have done.

I remember the fuss we all made -- churchmen and politicians especially -- when a Cardinal was arrested years ago. He told the world as the time drew near for him to be dragged to prison: "From now on do not believe anything I will be reported as saying."

He knew, and we all knew, that the communist regime which arrested him had ways of forcing confessions out of people even as strong as he was.

The British are doing the same to my neighbors every day. And because the same politicians and church officials are silent there is nothing we can do. *PEC*

### ***GET ACTIVE WITH THE PEC!!!***

We invite members throughout the United States to play an active part in the PEC organization. We need leaders and organizers to help expand PEC effectiveness. The more members promoting the PEC message and programs throughout the United States, the greater will be our effectiveness.

Ways in which you can help: be a PEC organizer and/or a membership recruiter in your state or community, organize a PEC Support Group in your community, help raise funds, join our national telephone chain, organize a MacBride Principles Campaign, set-up PEC membership and/or information tables.

Your participation will help make your organization stronger and more effective.

Members wishing to get involved, should contact: in the western half of the United States, Susan Catt, PEC Executive Director, 2292 North Ironwood, #110, Apache Junction, AZ 85220 or call (602) 982-0370; in the eastern half of the United States, AIPEC, Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993 or call (914) 947-2726, fax # (914) 947-2599.

**WITH YOUR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION WE WILL GET THE JOB DONE!!!**

## ***Irish Musical Tradition***

by Margaret E Fitzgerald, Ph.D.

In 1169 the invading Normans claimed that they were bringing civilization to the barbarous Irish. In his history of the conquest, Giraldus Cambriensis said that the Irish were animal-like and had tails. Yet, much as Giraldus wanted to denigrate the Irish, he was unable to contain his admiration of Irish music. He wrote: "It is only in the case of musical instruments that I find any commendable diligence in the people. They seem to me to be incomparably more skilled in these than any other people that I have seen. The movement is not, as in the British instruments, slow and easy, but rather quick and lively, while at the same time the melody is sweet and pleasant. It is remarkable how, in spite of the great speed of the fingers, the musical proportion is maintained. The melody is kept perfect and full with unimpaired art through everything -- through quivering measures and the involved use of several instruments -- with a rapidity that charms, a rhythmic pattern that is varied, and a concord achieved through elements discordant." Welsh, Scots, and Britons were brought over to learn the music of the Irish.

Ancient Irish musical instruments were the harp (cruit), the drum or tambourine (timpani), the clarion horn (stoc), the pipes (pipai), and the fiddle (fidil). The Irish did not invent these instruments. The harp was in Ireland at least as early as the 18th century BC. The Irish did develop their own forms of instruments, especially the small harp which became renowned throughout Europe for its wonderful melting lyric sound.

Pre-Norman music in Ireland is associated with the fili, the bards, and the harpers and musicians. The fili were learned men who preserved history and genealogy and chanted their versions of these for the chiefs and assemblies. The bards sang the same sagas for the common people in hut and home. The musicians, though not of aristocratic status, were held in high esteem and often moved up to the ranks of bards and fili. Professions usually descended in families, but organized bardic schools appeared as early as the 6th century AD. At the same time the monasteries were blending Christianity with druidic customs and adapting Gregorian chant to Irish culture.

The Dark Ages of Europe were the Golden Ages of Ireland, an Ireland untouched by the Roman legions, by the barbarians who brought about the fall of the Roman Empire, or by the followers of Mohammed who pushed at the southern and eastern borders of the continent. Missionaries and scholars from the western emerald isle brought to war-desolated Europe the light of culture: literature, learning, art, music. The abbey founded in Switzerland in the 7th century AD by St Gall, an Irish monk, reached its zenith in the 9th century when Irish St Moengal (Marcellus) was in charge of its cloisters. St Gall's Abbey became the foremost school of music and its talented scribes provided Europe with manuscripts of Gregorian chant that were noted for illuminated art as well as music.

Patrick Galvin, who wrote "Songs of the Irish Resistance" said that "Ireland's songs reflect Ireland's history with a fidelity probably unparalleled anywhere in the world."

Soon after the invasion, England realized that Anglo-Normans were being absorbed by Irish culture and were becoming "more Irish than the Irish themselves." Strong steps were taken to suppress the Irish race, to destroy its language and culture, and to keep the "mere Irish" out in the bogs and woods. To prevent assimilation, the Statutes of Kilkenny in 1366 made it high treason for the Anglo-Normans to intermarry with the

Irish, to adopt Irish dress, to speak Irish, or to follow Irish law and custom. The Statutes specifically forbade the coming among the Anglo-Normans of singers, pipers, poets, rhymers, harpers or minstrels. But most Anglo-Normans remained "ipsis Hibernicis Hiberiores."

The rebel song began to evolve outside the Pale as fili and bards attacked and ridiculed the English through words and music. A century after the Statutes of Kilkenny, rebel songs were used before battle against Yorkist and Tudor kings of England who aimed to extend the Pale to all of Ireland and to wipe out both the "wild Irish" and the "tainted" Norman Irish.

Since the 16th century songs of resistance and rebellion have become part of Irish folk culture. Laws have not stopped the people from singing songs of protest against 800 years of occupation and oppression. In 1697 Penal Laws banned under pain of death pipes, pipers, pipe melodies, and any instrument played while standing. The Irish developed the Uileann pipes that one could play while sitting and the Wild Geese overseas in continental armies kept alive the Irish warpipes. Penal laws also banned "traitorous songs," and this ban lasted past lifting of the penal codes and still can be used. In 1919 a ballad singer was sentenced to ten years for singing "The Peeler and the Goat," a satire on the Royal Irish Constabulary.

Some songs popularized by today's singing groups are translations from the Irish or adaptations of older music. Some were written long after the events they commemorate. Doighre O'Daly, bard to Wicklow chief Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne, harangued O'Byrne's men with a warpipe lyric on the eve of the 1560 battle against the English. Three centuries later, Patrick McCall captured the beat of the bodrain and wail of the pipes of the O'Byrne war song "Carry Me up to Carlow."

The "O'Driscoll War Song" brings us back to the fight against all intruders in southwest Cork. The "O'Neill War Song" and "O'Donnell Abu" evoke memories of the Elizabethan Nine Years War. "Our Hope Is in God and Rory O'More," "Brian Boy Magee" and "The Death of Owen Roe O'Neill" remind us of the Great Rebellion of 1641. The Williamite wars and the Stuart pretenders come alive in "The Ballad of Galloping Hogan," "The Bridge of Athlone," "The Blacksmith of Limerick," "Lament for Patrick Sarsfield" and "The Blackbird."

The Penal Laws after Limerick sent traditional pipers, harpers, and poets into hiding, but street balladeers appeared and risked sales of broadsheets in both Irish and English. Many of the anonymous ballads of the 18th century street balladeers were translated, adapted, or rewritten in the surge of Irish rebel ballad popularity in the 19th century. The second half of the 20th century has seen the popularity of Irish rebel ballads outside Ireland. The Irish of the diaspora in England, Canada, Australia and the United States sigh, clap and cheer to memories of the United Irishmen of 1798 ("Shan Van Vocht," "The Rising of the Moon," and at least a hundred others); the famine ("Old Skibbereen," "Lament of the Emigrant"); the Young Irelanders ("A Nation Once Again," "John Mitchell"); the Fenians ("Glory O! Glory O!" "Peter Crowley"); the War for Independence ("Lonely Banna Strand," "Kevin Barry").

The rebel song continues to exist because of the tradition of the Irish for versifying their history and because current history leaves one of the Four Green Fields still in bondage and the other three apparently in awe of England. It may be that the descendants of those who were forced to emigrate must be the ones to awaken the minds and soften the hearts of those who were able to stay at home so that those in the "free 26" support their brothers and sisters in the Occupied Six Counties. *PEC*

# **British/Loyalist State Collusion**

by Sandy Carlson, Reporting from Ireland

## **Reproduce & Distribute**

The ongoing collusion between the British forces (RUC, UDR, British Army) and loyalist paramilitaries was exposed in September 1989, after the UFF (Ulster Freedom Fighters, the military wing of the UDA) murdered Loughlin Maginn. The UFF alleged that it had obtained from British military intelligence information on IRA suspects and therefore knew Maginn was an IRA suspect. The UFF showed BBC reporter Chris Moore information supporting this allegation. Moore said the photos and documents appeared to have come from the RUC Special Branch.

Soon after, it was discovered that security documents were missing from Drummurry RUC station in Belfast and Ballykinlar UDR base in Co. Down. In response, the British government set up the Stevens Inquiry, which began on September 14, 1989.

During the inquiry, British intelligence files on suspected Republicans were found in a variety of places, including:

1. The bedroom of a Shankill teenager who had received from the UDA information on IRA suspects and radio communication codes used by the RUC and army (September 27, 1989);
2. An acting British soldier who leaked to the Stevens Inquiry 200 names from photo montages issued to soldiers on patrol and police operating at vehicle checkpoints (September 29, 1989);
3. Loyalist paramilitaries who sent 25 photos of Republicans in Donegal to an English newspaper. Gardai in Dublin had supplied the photos to the RUC, who had requested them for Special Branch and UDR patrols (September 29, 1989);
4. Loyalist paramilitaries who had submitted 60 names and photos to *The Independent* (English newspaper).

Remarking on the easy access to security documents which members of the British armed forces have, one ex-serviceman said, "I wanted to demonstrate...the shambles of internal security. Anyone from an Army cook to a paratrooper is issued with montages like this when on tour in Northern Ireland.

"However, when you leave no one debriefs you or tries to track down where restricted documents go. There must be hundreds of ex-servicemen around who have these sort of montages and other restricted information." (*Irish Times* October 3, 1989)

Then on September 29, 1989 Belfast's *Irish News* reported that a secret organization of serving and former RUC members made available to the paper files and documents on 233 people. This organization, the RUC "Inner Circle", claimed that since it was formed after the signing of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, its objectives were to "remove" Irish Republicans and to bring down the Anglo-Irish Agreement. They claim to have members in 36 of the 37 RUC subdivisions. The Inner Circle said it had received much of its information from the south's police. According to the *Guardian* (October 3, 1989), an Inner Circle spokesman said, "The stockpile of material which we have been able to build up...is detailed, highly accurate, and is being constantly maintained at full operation level. There is no way that the Stevens Inquiry will stop the information flow which we have access to."

In the midst of this controversy it emerged that the only soldier ever convicted of leaking documents to loyalists had been returned to duty only after a four-month suspension from duty.

John Stevens completed his investigation in March 1990. As a result of the inquiry, 59 people were either charged or referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions. Thirty-two of the 59 charged were members of loyalist organizations.

Two members of the UDR and one member of the British Army were charged with responsibility for 59 of the 187 documents which had gone missing by the end of September 1989. A UDR member Andrew Browne stated at his bail hearing that he had passed on the names of 14 suspects to the UDA, had followed some suspects, gathered information, passed on ammunition to

loyalists, and gave information on Loughlin Maginn to the UDA.

One of those charged was Brian Nelson, who worked simultaneously for British intelligence and as a UDA information officer. According to Amnesty International, it has been reported that Brian Nelson had provided the intelligence which led to the February 1989 murder of Belfast lawyer Pat Finucane. The UFF claimed that before the killing, detectives had told UDA members that Finucane was a member of the IRA and implied that he should be shot. Nobody was ever charged with the murder.

Although the Stevens Inquiry did result in a number of arrests, it was an inadequate investigation into loyalist paramilitary/British armed forces collusion. For instance, the inquiry failed to identify members of the British armed forces responsible for passing on the information to loyalist groups. Also, the inquiry did not look at evidence of the ongoing nature of collusion. The inquiry did not look into allegations that RUC officers regularly drew detailed layouts of houses during searches. The Stevens Inquiry report admitted that "in the present climate", security information leaks "may never be completely eliminated".

As soon after the inquiry as March 1, 1990 Sam Marshall, on remand for possessing ammunition, was shot as he exited the Lurgan RUC station. No road blocks or checkpoints were set up for over an hour, even though the shooting occurred outside the RUC station. According to Sinn Fein, the RUC had visited Marshall a week before and told him that confidential security documents were in the hands of a loyalist paramilitary organization.

Then, in June 1991, the *World in Action* television program makers said they had received documents from loyalist paramilitaries "to show what the Stevens Inquiry was all about". The documents included briefing notes on the movements of Fine Gael leader John Bruton in Derry in March 1991, when he met with the SDLP and church leaders.

The program makers pointed out that a previous document which fell into the hands of loyalists included the names of Sinn Fein councillors Pat Davey (shot by the UVF on February 14, 1989) and Eddie Fullerton (shot by the UFF on May 25, 1991).

The UFF gang which murdered Fullerton broke into his home with sledgehammers at 2:30 am on May 25, 1991 and shot him to death. The precision and ease with which the UFF killed him suggest that there was no fear of confrontation with the police on either side of the border.

Less than a month later, there arose allegations that confidential documents found on a rubbish dump in Derry were evidence of RUC/loyalist collusion. The documents had originated from Strabane RUC station. Sinn Fein councillor Hugh Brady suggested they were left on the dump for collection by loyalists. However, the RUC insisted that the documents, which contained information on John Bruton, John Hume, and suspected IRA members, were erroneously mixed with kitchen waste.

The most recent incident of collusion was the UVF murder of Thomas Hughes. The UVF shot him in his black taxi at a traffic light near Divis Flats, at the bottom of the Falls Road in West Belfast. Because the traffic light is in full view of the British Army's observation post atop Divis Tower, it is unlikely that the UVF could or would have murdered him there and gotten away without the complicity of the British army.

This litany of loyalist murders, brought to the nationalist people compliments of British armed forces' information and complicity, continues, just as John Stevens predicted.

**For further information on Northern Ireland write or call American Irish Political Education Comm. (PEC), 18 Route 9W, West Haverstraw, NY 10992-3 (800) 777-6807.**

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# Northern Ireland Civil Rights Struggle

by Stephanie Finucane

Late 1967, the housing shortage was literally leaving Nationalists (predominantly Catholic) out in the cold. For example, Dungannon, Tyrone, had a 53% Catholic majority; yet 71% of the publicly built housing went to Loyalists (predominantly Protestant). To protest the sectarian housing shortage, two Nationalist families denied housing squatted in new council houses in Caledon, a small town in Dungannon, and were supported by MP Austin Currie and the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA).

When one family ended their sit-in, a 19 year-old Loyalist secretary to the local Loyalist councillor's solicitor moved in. Days later the other Nationalist family was evicted. These incidents changed the course of the civil rights movement in that action now replaced fact finding and the mere making of complaints.

The next step occurred when NICRA organized the first civil rights demonstration for August 24, 1968, which was supported by 2,500 people. They marched from Coalisland to Dungannon where they were joined by 1,500 more people. Although they wanted a non-violent demonstration, the marchers were verbally harassed by members of Ian Paisley's Ulster Protestant Volunteers which was "dedicated to maintaining the Union 'as long as the United Kingdom maintains a Protestant Monarchy'" (Jeffery, *K. ed. Northern Ireland: The Divided Province*).

Serious violence dawned October 5, at the next planned civil rights march in Derry, Northern Ireland's second largest city, where Nationalists, the majority, were also plagued by a housing "shortage." The Nationalists are crammed into one of the three wards that comprises the city. Due to the ward system, in 1967 Derry had 14,429 Catholic voters and 8,781 from other religious backgrounds, yet 12 of the councillors were Unionist and only 8 were non-Unionist. Shortly before October 5, the march was banned by William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs, because its route went through traditionally Loyalist areas and because the Apprentice Boys parade was to be held that day, too. In reality, the parade was organized "at short notice as a counter-demonstration to the NICRA protest march" (Jeffery).

However, the march went on as scheduled and the RUC were on the offensive. 130 RUC men blocked off the marchers, preventing peaceful retreat and dispersal. Caught between two lines of RUC in a narrow street, the marchers were "subjected to baton charges and battered by the powerful jets of police water-cannon" (Jeffery). By the day's end, 36 marchers were arrested and 88 injured. The violence developed into full-scale riots in Derry's Nationalist Bogside area, lasting until the following day.

The violence shocked the mainly middle class supporters of the civil rights campaign who had "no previous experience of the brutality for which the RUC and its B-Special auxiliaries were noted in Ulster's working class Catholic districts" (Jeffery).

On October 9, 1000 students marched to the City Hall in Belfast and Paisley held a counter-demonstration nearby. The RUC rerouted the students who then were stopped by a few Paisleyite women blocking the road. So the students held a three-hour sit down and that night formed the People's Democracy, sharing much of the civil rights demands of NICRA. The People's Democracy held another march on October 16 and, on October 24, they took over the parliament buildings at Stormont, holding a sit-in for nine hours. When a march in Derry was planned for November 16, Craig banned all marches inside the city for the month. On the 16th, 15,000 people marched anyway but were stopped by a huge body of RUC men. The organizers of the march prevented confrontation. The huge turnout displayed the strength of the civil rights movement and for the next few days the

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government worried about the city "in revolt." They had no choice but to do, or at least appear to do, something.

This, on top of pressure from the Labor government in London, precipitated NI Prime Minister O'Neill's 5 Point program to meet civil rights demands. However, author Michael Farrell, who took part in the civil rights campaign, claims the program was "too little, too late. It was enough to outrage the Loyalists without satisfying the Civil Rights movement at all" (*Northern Ireland: The Orange State*). By this point, the civil rights campaign could not be satisfied with the Program's piecemeal, scattered reforms, such as a points system for housing distribution, that did not change the system that generated the need for reform. Instead, the campaign now focused on "One Man - One Vote"; in other words, who was to control the gerrymandered councils. If O'Neill granted this reform, the Unionist party would split. If he didn't grant it, the civil rights campaign would not be satisfied.

December saw no change, so on January 1, 1969 the People's Democracy began a march from Belfast to Derry, continuing until January 4th. All along, up to 80 RUC men followed, their conduct giving clear proof of RUC-Paisleyite collusion.

For example, violence erupted on January 4 as marchers neared Burntollet Bridge, over the River Faughan near Derry, where they were ambushed when "several hundred Loyalists hurled rocks and bottles and then charged, armed with clubs and iron bars," driving many marchers into the river and severely injuring others (Farrell). While the marchers were still a few miles outside of the village where the ambush occurred, the RUC warned them of the possibility of stone-throwing ahead, but did not detain the marchers at this time, after plaguing them with halts and hold ups throughout the four day march, Farrell continues: "The RUC knew an ambush had been prepared. Heaps of stones had been collected the night before and crowds of cudgel-wielding men had been gathering since early morning while RUC men stood among them laughing and chatting. During the ambush some of the RUC joined in and attacked the marchers too. After the attack they made no attempt to arrest any of the Loyalists. I remember going back to the bridge and finding RUC and ambushers sitting about relaxing. It later turned out that nearly a hundred of the ambush party were off-duty B Specials."

That night the people of the Derry's Catholic Bogside mounted barricades for defense from further violence "as members of the police engaged in what a later government-appointed inquiry described as 'assault and battery,' 'malicious damage to property,' and 'the use of provocative and political slogans'" (Jeffery). This government-appointed inquiry, known as the Cameron Commission, was set up by O'Neill in March of 1969 to investigate the causes of violence in Northern Ireland since October 5, 1968. It confirmed that the RUC and B-Specials had made several unprovoked incursions into Catholic areas and criticized the RUC for its misconduct, charging that they used the civil rights campaign to provoke violence. Overall the Report concluded that the violence resulted from "a growing Catholic sense of injustice set against Protestant fears that Catholic protest might lead to an end of Unionist domination in the province" (Jeffery). The Report also stated that Ian Paisley's followers, the UPV and the UCDC, made things worse by provoking hostility around the proposals of the civil rights campaigners.

**JOIN OR SUPPORT** The American Irish  
Political Education Committee (PEC)  
For Information Call 800 777-6807

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## **Sinn Fein Proposes Peace Talks**

On August 21, 1991 Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams MP wrote to the British and Irish governments; party political leaders in Ireland and Britain; Church leaders and others with a view to seeking open-ended discussions on the conflict in Northern Ireland and the development of a peace process capable of bringing about the political conditions necessary for an end to violence.

Mr. Adams said; The only real and permanent answer to the issue of political violence in Ireland is to be found in the resolution of the injustices which create and sustain it.

At the beginning of July the Brooke Talks process ended. Despite media hype and unsubstantiated claims of positive achievements it has been widely viewed as a failure.

Those who participated knew from the outset that the process was never going to form the basis for a permanent solution to the conflict. Despite their subsequent public positions they also know how little real progress they made in the inter-party sessions. People deserve better than that.

They are looking to their political leaders to grasp the political nettle and make real efforts to accommodate the differing political positions which exist in order to secure peace.

The central and most urgent issue facing us all must be how to resolve this crisis and bring the conflict to an end. This means creating the conditions of justice, equality and democ-

racy through which a real and lasting peace can be achieved. Sinn Fein is convinced that partition and Britain's continued presence are the core issues creating conflict and division. They are the political barriers to peace and political progress. It is impossible to successfully tackle the question of relationships between the people of these islands without tackling these issues also. This requires dialogue.

Sinn Fein is prepared to face up to that task and to discharge our responsibilities in a positive and honorable way. We believe that peace can be achieved. We are prepared to take political risks. We are prepared to give and take. We are committed to establishing a peace process.

To that end I have written this week to the two governments, political leaders in Ireland and Britain, Church leaders and leaders of the Irish and British Trade Union Movement. I will be assuring them of Sinn Fein's desire for peace and will be inviting them to engage in dialogue, to discuss all of the issues which create violence and the steps necessary to bring it to an end.

My invitation is made in the spirit of openness and a desire to see this tragedy brought to an end. Dialogue and a frank and full exchange of views is essential if there is to be any hope of constructive progress.

A real opportunity does exist to build a new future for the people of this island but it requires political courage, open-mindedness and flexibility on all sides.

This is the challenge facing us all. *PEC*

### **DON'T FORGET RETURN YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS?**

The Raffle will take place on October 26. Make checks payable to AIPEC, and mail to same at Fairgrounds Plaza, 18 Route 9 W, West Haverstraw, NY 10993.

### **California MacBride Bill**

Member Brian Blake, executive officer of the California MacBride Principles Committee, advises us that in late August the California State Legislature voted overwhelmingly in support of MacBride. The Senate voted 26 to 3 and the Assembly 60 to 10 in favor. The bill has gone to Republican Governor Pete Wilson for action. He now has until **October 15, 1991** to either sign the bill, veto it, or let it become law without his signature.

In 1989, his predecessor Republican Governor George Deukmejian, who retired, vetoed the bill in response to pressure from the State Department and the British government.

If the Governor has not taken any action by the time you receive this newsletter, immediately call his office at (916) 445-2864 requesting he sign bill # AB 1330. All members are asked to call as he plans to run for President of the United States.

A victory in California will be a great boost for the American MacBride Principles Campaign.

### **Attention Pennsylvania !!! October 22 - MacBride Lobby Day in Harrisburg**

State leaders of concerned organizations including the PEC, AOH, IAUC and Philadelphia Coalition for the MacBride Principles are asking all concerned citizens of Pennsylvania to travel to Harrisburg October 22 to lobby their representatives and senators for quick passage of the MacBride Principles. A rally at the Capitol will kick off the day.

We urge all PEC members in Pennsylvania to make a special effort to participate in this event-- a fine way to work through the American democratic process.

The MacBride Principles passed the Pennsylvania Senate late in 1990 as part of a major pension fund bill. A dispute between the House and Senate over a part of the bill not related to the MacBride Principles kept the bill from passing the House before the legislature adjourned. The Principles have been reintroduced, but have not yet been moved by the legislature; Pennsylvania activists plan to light a fire under their elected representatives. For more information, call: John Hatch (work) 717 774-7891 - (home) 717 249-4217, Dave O'Connor (412) 521-8116 or Jack Gavin (412) 961-0335.

### **WRITERS WANTED FOR NEWSLETTER**

Volunteer writers for our *American Irish Newsletter* are needed. If interested, contact John Finucane at (914) 947-2726, Tuesdays or Thursdays during business hours.



**Action Request # 1** by Andy Kelly, *Washington State*

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES  
UP-TO-DATE !!!**

We must continue our campaign against the pro-British bias of the media in reporting the news on Northern Ireland. In doing so we will take advantage of the topic of this issue's *From The North* by Des Wilson. His report deals with the British forces arresting and beating children with the intent of forcing confessions out of them for offenses they did not commit.

We will call upon the media with a specific issue that they should be investigating. Continued pressure from concerned Americans is necessary if we are to bring about change. We must continue to build a case against "bias and censorship".

All members are asked to write the sample letter below to both: Al Ortiz, Foreign News Editor, CBS, 524 W 57 Street, New York, NY 10019 and R. E. Turner, President, TBS, Inc., One CNN Center, Atlanta, GA 30348. Urge family, friends, etc. to do the same. Be courteous in your letter.

Dear Sir:

Reports from Northern Ireland indicate that British forces are arresting and beating large numbers of Catholic boys and girls who have nothing to do with the conflict. I ask that you investigate and report on this matter. Information is available by contacting Northern Ireland civil rights leader Rev Des Wilson at phone # 011 44 232 326722 or the American Irish Political Education Committee at (914) 947-2726.

Sincerely,

*Newsbits continued from page 1*

on the bank to change its hiring practices. The group's secretary, Oliver Kearney, outlined the campaign: "We will be asking people to refuse to accept, handle or distribute banknotes printed by the Northern Bank. Widespread refusal of Northern Bank banknotes will affect the bank's profitability and credibility...People will be asked to cancel and transfer deposit and mortgage accounts currently with the bank. This will affect the bank's long-term marketing strategy of developing 'family loyalties' over a period of years...Other tactics include: cancelling credit accounts which will damage the bank's international credit-worthiness and lobbying Catholic schools, parishes, businessmen and the international community to transfer banking custom from the Northern Bank. This form of dignified protest will appeal to young nationalists seeking non-violent methods of effecting social change."...Fr. Des Wilson commented, "In the coming months, Northern Bank notes will cease to be acceptable currency in many parts of Northern Ireland and the reputation of the bank will be severely damaged...If the Northern Bank wishes to meet the executive committee to discuss the issue of Catholic economic inequality, we shall be pleased to meet." (Irish Post, 8/17/91)

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