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American Irish Newsletter - March 1990

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

AMERICAN Irish Political Education Committee

Volume 15, Number 3

March 1990

NEWS BITS by Kathy Regan

[The eighties] seem to contain the rise and fall of Mrs. Thatcher. In the early years, she established a reputation for strong convictions and political courage and she seemed to stand for high standards and honesty in public life. The SAS killings in Gibraltar and the lying statements put out by government spokesmen changed everything. Taken with the Stalker affair, it confirmed the extent to which our policies and legal system had been corrupted by her determination to defend the indefensible division of Ireland. It also revealed the too-close alliance between Margaret Thatcher and the Murdoch press which stooped to new depths to cover up the Gibraltar killings. So, she ends the decade with her image tarnished. The curious thing is how many people refuse to acknowledge that anything has changed (Observer, 12/17/89).....**Belfast City Council** voted to ax funding for the Falls Women's Center (in a Catholic neighborhood) while it voted to continue funding for the Shankill Women's Group (in a Protestant neighborhood) (Irish News, 1/13/90)

A new **Fair Employment Commission** will replace the Fair Employment Agency to enforce new anti-discrimination legislation in recruitment, training and promotion. The Chairman is Bob Cooper who was chairman of the Fair Employment Agency (Irish News, 1/2/90). New legislation administered by the same person will probably have the same result. Little will be done to end discrimination against Catholics.....**Neither BBC nor RTE** will play the Guildford Four song by Cul A'Dun, a five-member band from Donegal, in what amounts to an unofficial ban. A spokesman for the group sees an immediate association with the IRA as the reason. "It's time to dissociate the Guildford Four from the IRA because they had nothing to do with it in the first place" (Irish World, 12/15/89).....**RTE** has never made a documentary about major civil rights issues in Northern Ireland such as plastic bullets, strip-searches, or shoot-to-kill, yet they send a documentary team to Poland to make a program about civil rights there (Irish Post, 1/13/90).

The Irish National Congress was launched at a conference in Dublin on January 22, 1990. The purpose of the Congress, based in Ireland, is to put pressure on the British to withdraw from the north. The Congress is independent of all political parties and hopes to attract people from all walks of Irish life. It is an umbrella group designed to form effective opposition to the Irish government's policies in relation to a number of Northern Ireland related issues. Mr. Kevin Boland hopes the Congress can unite all strands of opposition (PEC).....**[England's] Derbyshire County Councillor David Bookbinder** stated on behalf of the Brimingham Six, "Time and again we have called for the release of Nelson Mandela. Can we ignore this issue in our own system?" Sean Stafford said "[the councillors] had

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STATE DEPARTMENT MEETS WITH COUNCIL OF PRESIDENTS

On January 25 the Council of Presidents of Major Irish American Organizations (COP) met with the US Department of State (STATE) to discuss issues regarding Northern Ireland. John Finucane, National President of the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) and Bob Linnon, National President of the Irish American Unity Conference represented COP. They met with Secretary Robert Kimmitt, Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Special Assistant Eric Edleman and Desk Officer for Ireland Kenneth Longmyer.

This is the highest level meeting yet to take place between a President's administration and Americans who support Ireland's reunification. The meeting was also an acknowledgment by the State Department of the legitimacy of many of our organizations including the PEC, and our work through peaceful means to reunite Ireland.

Linnon and Finucane informed STATE of the positions of the COP on Ireland's reunification, the MacBride Principles, the International Fund for Ireland, Joe Doherty, visa denial and immigration. They also questioned the State Department regarding its attitude toward American groups seeking the peaceful reunification of Ireland and why the official position of the STATE always seems to favor the British Government.

Finucane reminded the Secretary "that many Americans object to the State Department's support for British policies in Northern Ireland" and urged "that our Government lighten up on its opposition to the MacBride Principles and accept the decisions of our Courts in the case of Joe Doherty."

Regarding the MacBride Principles, it is the position of the STATE that they discourage investment in Northern Ireland. Linnon stated that "a lack of foreign investment is no reason for the ratio of unemployed Catholics to Protestants to be so high. A more equitable mix could be achieved just through ordinary attrition." Regarding visa denial, Linnon continued, "we consider it to be a breach of our first amendment rights and it allows the American public to hear only one side of the causes of the conflict in Northern Ireland." Kimmitt then stated "the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Department of Consular Affairs also make decisions on visa application. As far as STATE is concerned decisions are made on facts alone." Examples of the abuses were also cited and Kimmitt said that he would look into it.

Both Linnon and Finucane agreed the talks were open, frank and productive, and the first step in an ongoing dialogue. The next meeting is tentatively set for October 1990.

(The PEC congratulates all letter writers. This meeting was in response to our February/March 1989 Action Request to President Bush requesting this meeting.)

MACBRIDE PRINCIPLES UPDATE

MAINE - Although Maine already has adopted MacBride investment legislation, some legislators are not satisfied and are introducing divestment legislation on their own initiative. Rep. Cashman has introduced legislation calling for divestment from those American firms in Northern Ireland not adopting the MacBride Principles. The PEC has urged that they call for contract compliance rather than divestment....**MISSOURI** - We are informed by Phil Chaney, PEC Missouri State Director, that hearings on the MacBride Principles legislation took place on January 22. Committee members did not vote at that time. Almost 200 supporters turned out. The bill introduced by Rep. Matt O'Neill, has 13 co-sponsors. The importance of Missouri, according to Rep. O'Neill, is that Missouri is, in a political sense, the gateway to the South. Witnesses on behalf of the bill included Phil Chaney (PEC), Fr. James O'Sullivan (AOH) and a state AFL-CIO representative.... **COLORADO** - State Director Terry Deem

Reilly informs us that the Colorado MacBride Principles movement for state legislation has officially begun. Hearings were conducted by the House State Affairs Committee on February 1. Generally legislation that the House leadership wants killed is assigned to this committee which is chaired by Richard F. Mutzebaugh, 11814 South Cochise Circle, Conifer, Co 80433, who will retire this year. The committee voted 5 against (all Republicans) and 5 for (4 Democrats & 1 Republican). Being a split vote chairman Mutzebaugh, a Republican, cast the killing vote. The House bill introduced by Representative Pat Killian had 18 sponsors. Terry Deem Reilly, Kevin Mulligan, New Hampshire PEC State Director and former legislator, and PEC member Tom Burke were among those who addressed the Committee. The MacBride Committee began organizing for next year with a successful fundraiser on February 2. We congratulate Terry and all the Committee members and legislators, for a job well done....**STUDENT ACTIVITIES** - Sandy Carlson, PEC Student Activities Director advises us that there are now 20 colleges and universities participating in the MacBride Principles Campaign. For information write to Sandy Carlson at the PEC, Malloy Building, Stony Point, NY 10980.

The American Irish PEC

founded 1975

National President.....John J. Finucane
Vice-President.....Albert Doyle
Treasurer.....Margaret Ferris
Recording Secretary.....Kathy Regan
Financial Secretary.....Tom Sheridan

American Irish Newsletter

EditorJohn J. Finucane

Assistant Editors Sandy Carlson.....Albert Doyle.....Kathy Regan

National Headquarters: Malloy Building
Stony Point, N.Y. 10980, (914) 947-2726

WESTERN REGIONAL DIRECTOR: Dr. Roger Mc Grath, 1311 Rancho Lane, Thousand Oaks, CALIFORNIA 91362-(805) 497-6407.

STATE DIRECTORS: Jack O'Brien, 11109 Belton Street, Upper Marlboro, MARYLAND 20772-(301)336-5167; Leah Curtin, Hibernian Life, 790 Cleveland Avenue, Suite 221, St. Paul, MINNESOTA 55116-(612)690-3888; Kathy Regan, 3045 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NEW YORK 10468-(212) 365-0213; Kevin Mulligan, 21 Miami Street, Nashua, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03060-(603) 883-4447; Shannon Eaton, 271 Deering Avenue, Portland, MAINE 04102 - (207) 772-1496; Frank O'Day, 21 Pierce Lane, Madison, CONNECTICUT 06443-(203)245-4739; Kevin P. Murphy, 29 Zolla Circle, Revere, MASSACHUSETTS 02151-(617)284-0723; Bob West, 683 Walnut Road, Wauconda, ILLINOIS 60084-(708)526-6520; Terry Deem Reilly, 1123 Clarkson, Denver, COLORADO 80218-(303)837B-9443; Joe O'Neill 1376 21st Avenue, San Francisco, CALIFORNIA 94122-(415)681-8734; Kevin Murphy, 9685 Sunny Isle Cir., Boca Raton, FLORIDA 33428-(305)488-1526; Ned A. Delaney, 10940 W. 100 N., Kokomo, INDIANA 46901-(317)566-3824; Larry Doyle, 46 B 2007 Betz Road, Bellevue, NEBRASKA 68005-(402)292-5291, Phil Chaney, 663 West 70th Street, Kansas City, MISSOURI 64113 - (816) 363-6523; Kathy Whitford, 1270 St. Charles, Lakewood, OHIO 44107 - (216) 529-0670. Marilyn Arnod, 601 W 17th #2, Houston, TEXAS 77008 - (713) 869-8159; John Hatch, 302 North Bedford Street, Carlisle, PENNSYLVANIA 17014 - (717)249-4217

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

LABOR LIASON: Kevin Garvey, IUOE Local 891, 560 West 169 Street New York, NEW YORK 10032-(212)281-7172.

NATIONAL ORGANIZER: Pete Foley, 3177 Villa Avenue #3H, Bronx, NEW YORK 10468-(212)933-7196

STUDENT ORGANIZER: Sandy Carlson, 20 Court Street, New Haven CONNECTICUT, 06510-(203)789-0070

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Do corporations in Northern Ireland have to supply their own security?

This is a question that has been raised time and again by both the British government and American corporations doing business in Northern Ireland in opposing the MacBride Principles Campaign.

The British government claims that "It is impossible to expect the companies to provide for security of its workers while going to and from the job". The MacBride Principles clearly state that a company is not expected to provide all in-transit security, in the same way that an American company is not expected to provide in-transit security for its employees. That is the responsibility of the local police force. The same holds true for Northern Ireland. Protection for employees traveling to and from work lies with the security forces.

In effect, what the British government is saying is that it is not capable of guaranteeing the safety of its citizens in Northern Ireland.

In 1989 Britain spent 730 million Pounds sterling to provide security for its citizenry. Yet, by their own admission, they claim it is impossible to protect the people while they are going to or coming from the workplace!

The 730 Million -Pound -Sterling -Question is then , Why are they there in the first place?

What is the purpose of the British army , its SAS, its "shoot-to-kill policy, the RUC and the UDR, if they cannot protect the people of Northern Ireland? What is the purpose of spending 730 million Pounds annually on "security"?

Maybe it's time for Britain to admit that what to Britain is a "security force" to the rest of the world it is an army of occupation.

(by Kevin Mulligan - PEC State Director for New Hampshire. As a former New Hampshire state legislator he introduced MacBride legislation in 1988 which became law in 1989.)

FROM THE NORTH

by Fr. Des Wilson, *Director Conway Mill, Belfast*

There is a lot of money in the south of Ireland. Profits there are higher than ever. Enterprises in Dublin's new Dockland will offer financial services in the hope that Ireland will become another Switzerland. Reading the newspapers and magazines, one can identify the leading Irish multi-millionaires, some of whose enterprises began in little corners of inner-city Dublin or as tiny rural pubs. If you are in the right game, Ireland is a good place to be.

The pattern of Irish wealth follows the worst examples in the world, where the tired old slogan "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer" fully applies. Having deplored that pattern elsewhere in the world, we in Ireland could not have done better in emulating it if we had tried hard enough. But we did not try hard enough to keep the Irish economy within our own control.

Many years ago, the Dublin government did make some effort, ensuring, for example, that insurance companies, banks, etc., had to invest part of their profits in Ireland. Government campaigns urged Irish people to buy Irish goods. But Ireland still exported too much capital out of the country and depended on international and multinational companies to bring it in in exchange for jobs -- many of which paid poorly and none of which were secure.

Some Irish companies have become international: Aer Lingus, Roadstone, Smurfit, and ESB are examples. The number of jobs they produced for Ireland is substantial and shows what can be done by Irish people when they take their own potential seriously enough.

Nearly 50 percent of foodstuffs are imported, for some reason beyond ordinary comprehension. Multinational companies siphon off profits at a rate not of millions but of billions per year. Industries are gladly accepted from abroad which pollute the waters, land, and livestock which should be the basis of the cleanest and most efficient agriculture in Europe. For many years, the quick buck led to under developed agriculture and fisheries along with greater and greater dependence on companies which are here today and gone in a few years. Problems of the Third World in a country which has the potential of becoming one of the most prosperous small countries in Europe. Why?

Inefficient and cowering government is one reason. Overwhelming dependence upon Britain for so many generations is another. The south of Ireland realized that it could do business quite happily with continental Europe and Russia, that it was midway between an immensely rich Europe and an immensely rich North, Central, and South America. Yet, it always sought British validation and approval for its politics, its economics, its culture, and its economic policies. That, fortunately, is tending to change with the passing of time, and with the discovery that money can be made all over the world, not only in Britain, and can be made through methods and connections which are not British only. The pro-British lobby in Ireland is fighting a rearguard action to ensure that British interest in Ireland will still come first, that part of the territory will be physically controlled by the British government and the other part will be controlled economically. Money will be made in Ireland in the

ACTION REQUEST #2**OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS**

by Kevin P. Murphy, *PEC Massachusetts State Director*

PEC members have informed us of the following offensive situations.

ABC's January 6 episode of its revived *Kojak* is about a New York City Police Inspector and how he dealt with a group of "Irish terrorist reaking havoc in the Big Apple". *Kojak* and a group of detectives are sent in to investigate a rash of murders, art heists, weapons thefts and bombings being done by a group of "Irishmen". In the story a police officer is killed and several stores are robbed by the "Irish thugs". The program depicted New York's American Irish community as drunken, bigoted and crime oriented. Letters can be sent to: President, ABC, 47 W 66 St., New York, NY 10023.

MTV (Music Television) features a game show called *Remote Control* that frequently slur the American Irish. American Irish comedian Colin Quinn is a regular on this show. MC Ken Ober frequently uses anti-Irish stereotypes in talking to Quinn. Most of these slurs refer to the Irish as dim-witted or drunken. Letters can be sent to: Mr. Tom Freston, President, MTV, 1775 Broadway, New York, NY 10019.

The US Department of Commerce publication *Business America* recently published an article about the upcoming Single European Market in 1992. The cover included a map of the European nations included in the Market. Ireland was excluded from the map. Letters can be sent to: Secretary Robert Mosbacher, Department of Commerce, Washington, DC 20230.

We have received a number of complaints from members concerning the *Irish Voice* column Enquiring Photographer of January 27. The question asked of young Irish in New York was, "Do the Irish drink to much?" Two of the answers were "The Irish don't drink to much, compared to fish" and "I don't know, who's round is it". The *Irish Voice* knows better than to perpetuate negative stereotypes about the American Irish.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!!!

TO LOBBY in Washington, DC and/or their home districts, **TO SELL** journal ads for the PEC's 15th Anniversary Testimonial and **TO SELL** raffle tickets to help support our efforts to promote the most important MacBride Principles Campaign. Your help in raising funds is vital to our efforts.

For information contact the PEC at our address or call (914) 947-2726. Please give us your help!

next few years. Who, then, will benefit?

Unless there are substantial changes in the political and economic structures of the country, the money will be made by the few while low pay or emigration will be the fate of most of the rest. An end to deliberate British impoverishment of the northeast can create an entirely new situation: that is, provided it is followed by a serious and intellectually sound effort to make government in the south efficient and just and not subservient to foreign interests.

And for that, there is a long way to go.

FOREIGN AGENTS AND THE MACBRIDE CAMPAIGN

by Tom O'Flaherty
PEC National MacBride Principles Consultant

Over the past 4 years the American MacBride Principle Campaign has been consistently opposed by a group of well-paid foreign agents. Their duties have included testifying before state legislative committees, lobbying state legislators and state government officials, and special interest groups. This effort is a well-financed operation deriving from a pool of an estimated 15 million pounds and supported by the British Information Service, the Department of Economic Development and the Northern Ireland Office.

This article is the product of ongoing research that was begun in mid-1988 by Joe O'Neill, PEC California State Director and finalized by Tom O'Flaherty, PEC National MacBride Principles Consultant. It resulted from the questions and concerns regarding the motivation of these people from Northern Ireland and their lack of compliance by these people with the State and Federal lobbying laws.

Federal and state governments have strict regulations governing the activities of lobbyists that require them to file disclosures of monies received, monies spent and services performed by them on behalf of their clients.

At the federal level these disclosures are mandated by the **Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938 as Amended** and administered by the Foreign Agents Registration Unit of the Criminal Division of the US Department of Justice. Although the Act addresses the issue of representation at the Congressional level, a number of legal opinions concur that application at the state level is mandated; "any other activity...or in any other way influence any agency or official of the government of the United States or any section of the public within the United States with reference to formulating, adopting or changing the domestic or foreign policies of the US. This Act was enacted into law on June 8, 1938. It was later revised in June of 1942 and was further amended in July of 1966: "One of the major purposes of the 1966 amendment was to change the focus of the Act so as to place primary emphasis on protection of the integrity of the decision making process of our government and on the public's right to identification of the sources of foreign political propaganda."

It was this desire to protect the integrity of our legislative process and to bring these foreign agents out of the shadows that motivated Joe O'Neill and others to force compliance and seek enforcement by the Justice Department. If these foreign agents had nothing to hide why hadn't they registered and why have they not registered yet? Registration under the law doesn't place any limitation on the activities of these foreign agents and, "It may be assumed that persons who are legitimately engaged as agents of foreign principals have nothing to fear from public disclosure of their activities."

The lack of compliance is not based on ignorance of the laws as examination of forms on record with the Foreign Agents Registration Unit (registration # 4091 OMB 1105 - 0012, 0013, 0014) disclose that in a letter dated February 2, 1988, Ann

Kanter...Vice Consul, British Consulate-General in Boston, informed their lobbyists in Maine, Doyle & Nelson: "As well as registering as a lobbyist in Maine you will also have to register with the Department of Justice under the Foreign Agents Registration Act." The lack of compliance by foreign agents from Northern Ireland and Britain appears then to be a deliberate effort to cover up the amount of money spent in the US and the embarrassment that any disclosures would cause them at home.

The concern about disclosure and compliance is not only the interest of a few individuals or groups like the American Irish PEC. The Illinois Senate passed on June 30, 1989 a resolution submitted by Senator Jeremiah Joyce that called for a full accounting of monies expended by the British government to oppose the MacBride Principles in the US. This was in response to the opposition of HB 1374 in Illinois that was passed overwhelmingly in late 1988. "Whereas, it has been disclosed that these lobbyists are not registered in accordance to US law as agents of a foreign government, and, in Illinois, British paid lobbyists were: John Cushnahan; James Joseph Eccles; Hazel Morrissey; Bob Cooper; Fiona Cassidy; Robert Devlin and Seán McConville".

The Illinois State Senate's motivation to shed light on the activities of these and other foreign agents is stated in the resolution, "Whereas, when a foreign power is spending millions of dollars to achieve a political objective, and antithetical to US principles, surely Americans are entitled to know about it so that they can make informed judgements about the issues and interests involved..."

What is the United States government's interest in this issue? Are they trying to enforce the Act?

The Registration Unit, Internal Security Section, Criminal Division, United States Department of Justice is a small (approximately 16 people) part of a massive agency that is responsible for everything from drug interdiction to organized crime. The Unit was not aware of the extent of the violations until they were contacted by American MacBride proponents. There is a willingness on the part of the Unit to enforce the Act as is evident in conversations and communications with, both Joseph E. Clarkson, Chief of the Unit and Frederick J. Close, Jr, an attorney for the Unit. This writer has talked to attorney Close on several occasions and found him to be forthright and sincere in his pursuit to enforce the mandates of the Act. It is obvious that they never realized the extent of the violations and there has been an exchange of information over the last few months that will enhance the effort to force compliance.

It is interesting to note that a common theme presented by these foreign agents is "that the American MacBride Campaign is supported in part by Irish Northern Aid, the registered US agents of the IRA". This response is the result of an action, **Attorney General v. The Irish People, Inc., 684 F.2nd 928 (DC Cir 1982)**. These foreign agents have no qualms about the use of the phrase "registered agents" when it applies to others but avoid the light of scrutiny of their own failure to register as they slip into the shadows of innuendo and deception. Forcing British foreign agents to register would give the American public a better understanding of the effort and monies ex-

USE THE TELEPHONE HOTLINE -- (914) 429-7849



NBC STEPS UP ATTACKS ON AMERICAN IRISH

We have received a response to our recent Offensive Situations Action Request concerning the offensive episodes of *Hunter*, *Golden Girls* and *Mancuso: The FBI*, aired by NBC. NBC, which is owned by General Electric (GE), simply repeated the offensive episodes of *Hunter* and *Golden Girls* on Saturday, January 20. Has NBC stepped up its efforts to denigrate the American Irish image?

The *Hunter* episode suggested that Irish nationalists and American Irish are both involved in violent acts even murder in America. The *Golden Girls* episode takes a swipe at the American Irish for their supposed drunkenness. In it a character decides to become a circus clown. When he puts the red nose on, the character (played by Bea Arthur), states that he is Irish. On the same show another character, talking about when she immigrated to America, stated, "We all were happy and everyone was drinking, on second thought only the Irish were drinking."

Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents. NBC has a history of degrading the American Irish. In NBC productions, characters with Irish surnames are often depicted as criminals, violence-prone, drunken fools, cops on the take, supporters of terrorism, rapists, and even child molesters.

Of all the offensive programs aimed at the American Irish, perhaps NBC's most offensive production was *Silent Witness* which was aired in 1985. *Silent Witness* was about a rape by three men of a young woman in a bar. In the film the three rapists were depicted as American Irish as was the victim who was an alcoholic, was American Irish. Soon afterwards she died from alcoholism. The producer went out of his way to make it very clear that these characters were American Irish.

The American Irish Political Education Committee took it on itself to investigate this matter and found that at the time two similar real-life situations had occurred. But no American Irish whatsoever were involved in either case.

This repetition of the programs was no accident. TV schedules had listed different programs for January 20.

One viewer who called NBC programming to protest these degradations, was told that these offensive programs are

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PEC

15th Anniversary
Testimonial Dinner Dance
Bishop's of Tappan
September 29, 1990

produced because viewers want to see them. How can the programmers at NBC have the gall to say that large numbers of Americans are telling NBC that they want to see productions that present the American Irish and Irish nationals in a false and negative light!

NBC's response is a challenge to all Americans of Irish heritage. Shall we let them walk all over us? The answer, of course, is a resounding No! This means that we will have to commit ourselves to a long campaign against GE and NBC.

Course of Action: The first step is for each one of us to write to NBC's parent company, General Electric which was also an advertising sponsor of the January 20 showing of *Hunter*. Use the letter below as a guide or simply copy it. Write Mr. John F. Welch, Chairman of the Board, General Electric, Fairfield, CT 06431.

Dear Mr. Welch:

The recent repeat airing of *Hunter* and *Golden Girls* on 1/20 and the 12/1/89 *Mancuso* were degrading to the image of the American Irish and my family and me. *Hunter* and *Mancuso* imply that the Irish-born and American Irish are committing violent acts including murder and robbery in America to support the IRA. *Golden Girls* takes an offensive attitude at the Irish concerning alcohol.

Since you are the owner of NBC and a sponsor of the *Hunter* episode, I urge you direct NBC to discontinue any further productions that depict the Irish and American Irish in a negative manner and to end the association of Irish with alcohol. There is no reason why you cannot comply with this reasonable request. If you fail to cooperate, my family and I intend to boycott NBC and GE products and its advertisers.

We are prepared to make this sacrifice and to cooperate with any other protest actions requested by the American Irish Political Education Committee.

I look forward to your response on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

We will continue our actions against GE & NBC for as long as necessary. These actions will include letter writing to the sponsors of the offending programs and necessary, even boycotts. Sponsors of *Hunter* are Tylenol, Country Crock by Shedd Spread, Toyota, Alka-Selzer, Alpo (dog food), Prudential, Unisom, Acura Auto, Delta Airlines, Quaker Oats, Pedia Care and Midas.

BRITISH DEMOCRACY IS NOT ALL THAT DEMOCRATIC

It is widely believed that the British system of government is the best and most democratic in the world. It is not!

The British monarch, unelected, has enormous powers. As head of the armed forces, she also has power to dismiss governments. She has a privy council, appointed by herself, whose members are under oath not to reveal what is discussed at its meetings, not even to government or parliament. It is a secret government, unheard of in democracies.

The British have no written constitution, there are no constitutional courts. Citizens cannot test or defend their basic rights in court because Britain has no written Bill of Rights. There is a convention, described by commentators as a gentlemen's agreement, that a British monarch will not abuse his or her powers. This is all that stands between the citizen--or the elected government--and a coup d'etat by a monarch supported by the nobility, the army, and the state church, if these were so minded. Rights can be granted and removed by Parliament. Remember Thomas Jefferson, who said, "...a bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth..."; and, in a letter to James Madison, "I have a right to nothing which another has a right to take away."

No other country in the European community has a similar archaic arrangement. After the second world war, most European countries had to reconstruct their institutions of government. They tried to construct modern democracies from the ruins. One of the few countries which did not have to do this was Britain: Britain therefore still preserves forms of government which served it well in the past but are now an anachronism.

Alone among European democracies, Britain has a state church whose bishops are appointed by the monarch; it has an upper house of unelected rich landowners who, together with the monarch, have a final say in what the laws shall be. The monarch appoints bishops, judges, the controllers of the BBC, heads of the armed forces, and members of the privy council with its oath-bound secrecy.

Other European countries, including Ireland when free to do so, created something nearer to modern democracy in the 1920s and again in 1937. The Irish created constitutions from which a state church was completely excluded. They also created a system of constitution which could be changed by popular vote. Several articles of the Irish constitution have been changed since the original documents were written. Now people are talking in Ireland of rewriting the constitution because it is not democratic enough for them. In Britain, the situation is different. There is no constitution to change.

In 1968, Britain's two principal political parties, the Conservatives and Labor, tried to reform the House of Lords. They failed and have not attempted it again. The influence of the monarchy, the nobility, the army and state church was too great to allow even the combined influence of the two main elected political parties to bring about such a change.

For the British it is traditionally acceptable that the monarch should have such great powers. A convention exists that he or she will not abuse them. But as recently as last year voices were raised in alarm at the dangers of this situation.

REPRODUCE & DISTRIBUTE

The powers of the monarch, wide and great, were being used not only by the monarch but also by the Thatcher government. The danger signals went up--an ambitious government, spurred for example by the thought of a possible Labour victory in the next election, could manage a coup d'etat without much difficulty. The monarch could of course do it with the help of Lords, army and state church without breaking a single law. If the Thatcher government was already usurping some monarchical powers, what could stop it taking them all?

The danger signals, although heeded, were useless. There is no possibility whatever of the British making any substantial changes in their institutions of government.

So it remains that Britain's institutions of government are the most archaic and undemocratic in Europe. There is a double irony in this.

For one thing, Irish people need not respond when British functionaries chide them about democracy. The reply is that when the British state creates a democracy for itself, then possibly it may lecture others on how to do it. For another, the people of the United States tend to say that their own civil liberties are derived from the British constitution--when in fact they were created only through opposition to the British.

For Irish people there is the further irony that while they abolished religious discrimination in their constitutions in the 1920s and in 1937, discrimination is alive and well in the British system. The monarch must be a Protestant. No Catholic, Jew or Muslim, however talented, can ever be monarch. A duke who was 17th in line for the British throne was deprived of his right of succession because he married a Roman Catholic. The Lord Chancellor cannot be a Catholic. This sheds some light on the treatment given to prisoners like the Birmingham Six and also the kind of remarks made recently by Lord Hailsham, who was once Lord Chancellor. He said the Irish were "incapable of thought"! Bad practices clearly have to be defended by bad manners.

Strangely, this system, monarch with immense powers, house of rich landlords with immense influence, council with oath-bound secrecy, state appointed heads of army, church, BBC, and the judicial bench, all this has been portrayed world wide as the greatest democracy on earth. In fact, the British system is the most anachronistic and undemocratic in the European community and would not be accepted by modern democrats anywhere.

by Fr. Desmond Wilson of Belfast -- (The author is a leading Northern Ireland civil rights advocate who has written extensively on the subject.)

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founded in 1975**

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pendent in opposition to our American legislation as there are vast differences in the amounts claimed by both sides. The British government has stated that, "From June 1985 until March 1989 the overall costs of employing lobbyists and of assistance to individuals to give evidence was 375,579 pounds".

Meanwhile the Belfast based *Sunday News* has claimed that "Britain is spending a secret 15 million Pounds a year in the United States to prop up the Anglo-Irish Agreement and combat the MacBride Principles."

What is known from filings by American firms lobbying on behalf of the British is that the average payout to American lobbyists is \$5000 US a month plus expenses. Doyle & Nelson in Maine received \$12,670.11; Kimball & Sherman in Vermont, \$5000 a month; DeCamp Legal Service in Nebraska, \$4000.

California, whose legislature passed the MacBride bill but whose Governor George Deukmejian vetoed it, is a very interesting case. The British government lobbyist Donald Carlton Burns in forms filed May 27, 1988 stated that he "assisted the British government in opposing IRA sponsored legislation". In another form dated May 29, 1987 he said, "Whatever services I perform are pro bono. No fees or expenses are to be paid to me whatsoever." The British government quickly discouraged this pro bono effort because Mr. Burns subsequently received 15 payments totalling \$11000.

In my state of New Hampshire where MacBride legislation was overwhelmingly passed, the British government waged an all out effort to squash the campaign in a conservative, Republican State. James Eccles and Carrickfergus Alliance Councilor Sean Neeson each were paid \$1750 for their appearance and \$3000 for air travel. Ann Kanter, Vice Consul, British Consulate General in Boston, Massachusetts had Sean Neeson register as a lobbyist only after being publicly confronted by Kevin Mulligan, PEC New Hampshire State Director, and myself in the lobby outside the Senate hearing. Kanter said, "Oh all right, he'll register. I suppose the State of New Hampshire needs the fifty bucks!" She failed, however, to register Dominic Allen who had also just testified and lobbied against the bill. The Secretary of State's office is pursuing the registration of Mr. Allen. Mr. Richard Hampe, the lobbyist from the British government, was paid \$9770 for a losing effort and if you add the \$1750 paid to John Cushnahan and payments made to Hazel Morrissey, Rory Gallway, Dan McGuinness and Dominic Allen based on their standard payments, you come up with a total of \$41,940 in New Hampshire, and they lost.

Of the lobby firms that registered, O'Connor & Hannen in Minnesota received the largest payment to an American lobbying group in the anti-MacBride effort. They also were the most politically controversial group as well. It was learned from forms on file that they also represented the American Party of President Christiani in El Salvador. After the recent killings of Catholic clergy in El Salvador, the City of Minneapolis, Minnesota cancelled the contract with O'Connor & Hannen and three of O'Connor & Hannen's staff attorneys resigned in protest.

The more you look into the few filings on record, the more you see the web of intrigue that envelops these shadow people. As we press for additional registration we will get a better picture and shed light on the activities of these foreign agents.

BE A LETTER WRITER!!!!

In 1990 there will be a great deal of activity at the state and federal levels on behalf of the MacBride Principles effort. The Foreign Agents Registration Unit is being supplied with a list of hearing dates and names of all foreign agents and in 1990 these foreign agents will be under great pressure to register and disclose the large sums the British government is paying them.

(The author Tom O'Flaherty JNR is a practising Buddhist, a pacifist and an American Irish civil rights activist. He is the National MacBride Principles Consultant for the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC) and grand-nephew of Irish author Liam O'Flaherty. Mr. O'Flaherty travels to Northern Ireland several times a year.)

News Bits continued from page 1

been told the Birmingham Six were beaten, psychologically tortured and underwent mock executions in order to force them to sign confessions. We are told that not by the IRA, but the police men and women whose consciences would not let them stay silent (Irish Post, 12/23/89).

Christy Moore [popular Irish entertainer] on the Birmingham Six, "I think the [Irish] government could make a lot more noise. I think there should be more of a sense of outrage than there is (Irish News, 1/13/90)

The controversial 72 year-old Bishop Cahal Daly of Belfast has come under fire from Northern Ireland's Catholic community. During his recent trip to the US he was quoted by the *Boston Globe* as opposing the adoption in the United States of measures [MacBride Principles] to reduce job discrimination against Catholics. In an effort to clarify the situation, a representation of community leaders in Belfast, has requested, without success, a meeting with Bishop Daly.

BOOKS AND VIDEOS, ETC.
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ACTION REQUEST #1

In the December 1989 issue of the Newsletter we asked all members to write to Mr. Bruce Christensen, President of Public Broadcasting Service. The requested letter concerned PBS's news networks (MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour and Frontline) pro-British bias and censorship in their reporting of the struggle for freedom and equality in Northern Ireland. Mr. Christensen's response indicated that he passed on our letters to the news networks and suggested that we also contact them. We urge you to do exactly that. As we stated previously, we intend to follow-up on our Action Requests. This is what is necessary so that they know we are serious.

COURSE OF ACTION: Write or call both individuals below. It is preferred that you write the letters in your own words using our letter below as a guide. If that is not practicle, simply rewrite our letter as is. Have your friends, relatives, organizations, etc. do the same. Suggest in your letter that they contact the American Irish Political Education Committee (give address and phone#) for accurate information.

ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS: Editor, MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour, 3620 South 27th St., Arlington, Va. 22206 (Phone# 703 998-2844) and Editor, Frontline, c\o WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, Ma. 02134 (Phone# 617 783-3500).

Sample Letter

Dear Editor:

----- Detach Here -----

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Membership includes a one-year subscription to our monthly Newsletter. Your membership supports all our activities.

NEW APPOINTMENT

We are happy to announce the appointment of Andy Kelly as PEC State Director for the State of Washington. Andy is interested in organizing a MacBride Principles Campaign for Washington. All members in Washington are urged to contact him at 424 W 17th Avenue, Spokane, Wa 99303 -- (509) 747-7431.

ST. PATRICK'S MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Soon you will receive a PEC membership kit through the mail. You are asked to give it to someone you feel might want to join the PEC. Please make a special effort to recruit a least one new member.

I am very concerned with your news network's pro-British bias and even censorship when reporting on the struggle for freedom in Northern Ireland. You do not cover the causes of violence, British colonialism and oppression; nor do you report on the work of non-violent American organizations working to end British rule in Ireland through the democratic process.

Sincerely,

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