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## American Irish Newsletter - December 1988 - January 1989

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# THE AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Action Irish

Vol. 13, No. 6

American Irish Political Education Committee

December, 1988/January, 1989

## Extradition: An Irish Crisis

by Rev. Des Wilson, PEC Belfast Correspondent

The Dublin Government has provided the British government with the easiest extradition procedures in Europe. It will extradite its own citizens not only to Britain, but even to that part of its own country which is illegally occupied by the British government. Observers say that the British government must either have offered some monumental bribe to the Fianna Fail administration or have some dreadful secret which it threatens to reveal if it does not get what it wants.

The present subservience of the Dublin government is fully approved by political interests represented by the extreme right in the Progressive Democrats as well as by church interests in general. The extradition of Robert Russell, however, illustrated the irrationality of what is happening.

Robert Russell was convicted in the first place in the "north" on extremely flimsy evidence. Then, following the principal that those who are unjustly imprisoned have a human right to escape, he did so. When he was caught in the "south" of Ireland he could, under present legislation, have been charged with offences said to have been committed north of the border. The Irish government chose not to do this, so that when Robert Russell left prison in the south he would still have charges to face in the north.

It was cruel and cynical, but understandable given the political climate in Ireland at the moment: given the choice between bringing all charges at once in the south and enabling Robert Russell to step out of an Irish prison a free man, the authorities chose to impose only some charges, thus leaving other charges which the British could impose in their turn. When he was released he was certain to be extradited.

If anything could have clarified the position of the Dublin government it was this. There are still people who believe that this government is imposing extradition because it feels, reluctantly, that it has no alternative. This is not so, and the case of Robert Russell proves that it is not so. The government could have saved itself having to extradite — and could have done this completely within existing legislation agreed with the British — but it chose not to. When faced with an alternative to extradition in this case the Dublin government deliberately contrived a situation which extradition was inevitable.

The crises about extradition also exposed some aspects of the Fianna Fail party. Grassroots opinion was almost entirely against it. Yet this opposition was entirely overcome by a simple decision by party headquarters that there should be extradition whether grassroots opinion was against it or not. The whole organization caved in without a struggle. Faint attempts to create a rival party failed; faint attempts to create a small revolt within the party failed. Conscience, not for the first time, gave way to convenience. Even those founder members who threatened to resign from the party seemed not to have any moral authority any more. Fianna Fail was now getting the pay-off from having recruited so many members without idealism and with great ambition. It seemed that the civil war was being fought again and almost everybody was on the British side, not only through conviction but through desire for the quick profit.

The agonizing of prisoners, and of families and neighbors of the extradited, would seem to be in the minds of these politicians as negligible as the agonizing of the deportees when in the forties Vichy gladly betrayed its own people.

## News Bits

by Kathy Regan

Referring to the recent British decisions to deny prisoners the right to remain silent and to censor Sinn Fein from the broadcast media, Bernadette McAliskey said, "The British government has now simultaneously removed both our right to speak out and our right to remain silent" (AIN-PEC, 10/22/88) ... Although censorship of Sinn Fein from the airwaves was only now formally introduced, it was essentially in place earlier. "An appearance by Gerry Adams on Channel 4 on the 'After Dark' discussion program was cancelled after two MPs protested his appearance and a professor scheduled to appear with him refused to do so." (Irish Press, 9/9/88) ... "It would be wrong to view Mrs. Thatcher's action in forbidding Sinn Fein access to the airwaves purely as an attempt to muzzle the IRA ... this is one more example of the prime minister's effort to use the argument of national security to control freedom of expression in Britain. Other examples include the raid of the BBC's offices by Scotland Yard resulting in the removal of documents relating to a controversial TV series and its long and costly effort to halt publication in Britain of the book *Spycatcher*." (Philadelphia Inquirer, 10/21/88).

"Six years after the FEA (Fair Employment Agency) investigated Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) and recommended changes to ensure fair play, Protestants still outnumber Catholics by a 3 to 1 margin among new recruits to Coolkeeragh workforce ... For one example, in three departments with 39 positions, there are no Catholics ... 'The frustrating thing is that sometimes the NIE can get the Secretary of State to sign a Section 42 certificate, which stops the FEA investigating in the interest of national security.'" (Sunday World, 9/18/88).

"The Crown Prosecution Service is considering an action against Donna Foote, a Newsweek journalist. A recent issue of the magazine carries two-

pages on an interview with a senior IRA officer ... Last month, Margaret Thatcher said that she would expect any journalist who interviewed IRA members to be prosecuted. Such an action might be possible under the terms of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 1984." (Irish Independent, 9/17/88). How does Mrs. Thatcher think that she has the right to censor an American journalist working on an American publication? ... Much as the Unionists like to consider themselves British citizens, there is a definite difference of opinion as to whether the British consider that to be the case. A visitor to Derry exchanged some punts for pounds. Upon examining the notes, the visitor noticed that they were issued, not by the government as would be expected, but by the bank. The visitor later learned that this currency was good only in the six counties, not in England. Northern Ireland currency must be exchanged for English pounds, as it has no value in England. Can this type of two-tiered system really stand for equality or is it a case of 'equal but separate?' (AIN-PEC, 10/88) ... The political way has been tried in the north but elected representatives are not given the opportunity to make the system work. When councillors attempt to speak at a session, Unionist representatives either walk out on them or shout them down so that their opinions cannot be heard. B. McAliskey (AIN-PEC, 10/22/88) ... As much as Margaret Thatcher might like to forget about it, Northern Ireland will not go away. Increased activity by the IRA plus world-wide attention given to a shoot-to-kill policy via the Stalker report and the Gibraltar inquest appear to be making her nervous. In addition to censorship and denial of other civil rights, she "has approved increased funding for the security forces in the north. Sums of from £10,000 to £100,000 will be offered to informants" ... "The sort of payments being talked about could be up to £500,000." ... "A man detained under the Emergency Powers Act claimed that he was offered

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

December 1988 and January 1989

Members whose memberships expire in December or January will receive a renewal form with this newsletter. If the numbers 8812 (December) or 8901 (January) appear on the bottom line of your address label, you are due to renew. You will be credited according to the month of expiration. Please renew promptly and save us the cost of a 2nd notice.

THIS WILL BE THE LAST NEWSLETTER ISSUE FOR MEMBERS WITH RENEWAL DATES PRIOR TO NOVEMBER (8811) WHO HAVE NOT YET RENEWED. PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

## MacBride Principles: 1988 In Review

1988 has been an outstanding year for the MacBride Principles campaign. Five more states have adopted the Principles: Maine; Florida; Minnesota; Michigan and Illinois. This makes a total of 10 states, the others being; New York; Massachusetts; New Jersey; Connecticut and Rhode Island. Legislation has been adopted in the municipalities of Rochester, NY; Pittsburgh, Penn; New Haven, Conn; St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn; Carbondale, Penn; Minersville, Ohio; Springfield and Northampton, Massachusetts.

Recent religious support includes the Episcopal Church of America; the Diocese of St. Paul, Minn.; Florida Catholic Conference, and the Diocese of New Hampshire. The Principles are also being discussed within the Knights of Columbus which has billions of dollars in investments. Shareholder resolutions where proposed in 17 of the companies involved — a record! Shareholder support for the MacBride resolutions averaged 7.7%, far more than what is normally received for most stockholder initiatives opposed by management.

LET'S DO EVEN BETTER IN 1988 —  
INTRODUCE MACBRIDE

## Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church of America, American Branch of the Anglican Communion, in convention in July, 1988 over-

£40,000 for information." (Sunday Press, 8/28/88)

"It is claimed that soldiers began taunting and jeering a group and one of the group was kicked to the ground ... One of the soldiers was kicking an elderly man, about 70 ... Mr. Conway went over to try to help him and two soldiers turned on him. When he got up after being kicked on the ground, another raised the nozzle of his plastic-bullet gun ... He was standing only an arm's length away ... He took aim at Mr. Conway's chest and fired." (Irish News, 9/2/88). There was no riot at the time and no attempt was made to follow guidelines for using plastic bullets, as they were fired directly at a human being, not at the ground ... Everyone remembers Mr. Gorbachev's, "And what about your Irish?" comment when Mrs. Thatcher tried to bring up the issue of civil rights in Afghanistan. Well, "the campaign to free the Birmingham Six has been brought to the Soviet Union in a new bid to embarrass the British government. Paddy McKenny said that the protest was brought to Moscow as part of a major international campaign ... Some Muscovites promised to write an appeal to Mr. Gorbachev." (Irish Post, 10/22/88).

whelmingly adopted the MacBride Principles. The resolution, drafted by Rev. Phillip Jacobs of Framingham, Massachusetts, was introduced by delegate Rev. Mason Wilson of Framingham, Massachusetts. The PEC worked with Fr. Jacobs on this successful effort and supplied the convention delegates with hundreds of PEC MacBride Principles brochures. The Episcopal Church is to be commended for its leadership role in promoting fair employment in north Ireland.

## Indiana Campaign

INDIANAPOLIS — At a press conference in the State Capitol on October 18, Ned Delaney, Indiana state director, American Irish PEC, and Representative Brad Bayliff (R-Kokomo), officially kicked-off a MacBride Principles campaign in the state of Indiana. Also participating in the press conference were Oliver Kearney, executive director of the Northern Ireland Fair Employment Trust and John Finucane, national president of the American Irish PEC. Contract compliance legislation similar to that adopted in Rochester, New York, drafted by Rep. Bayliff, will be introduced in early 1989.

The press conference was well attended by the press and concerned citizens including Mike Coogan, national president of Ancient Order of Hibernians. News coverage was extensive including a front page story in Indiana's leading newspaper the *Indianapolis Star*.

According to Delaney, a sizeable broad-based MacBride coalition has already been formed and continues to grow due to the news coverage. Delaney said, "We have received many phone calls statewide from people interested in helping. We are very encouraged by the response from the non-Irish community." Coalition members include business people, organizations, college staff and students and concerned individuals.

The MacBride Principles Campaign is the greatest opportunity we ever had to educate the American public. Every time the Principles are proposed they are discussed and the true nature of British colonialism and oppression in Ireland is exposed. The public, particularly influential lawmakers and corporate heads become informed. This is why it is so critical that we continuously promote them, even though our state may have already adopted them. All endorsements of the Principles are transformed into pressure on our federal representatives to support the national legislation. We must push for endorsements from town councils, community groups, etc.

## PEC Telephone Hotline

On November 20, the PEC placed into operation a Telephone Hotline. You can now call the Hotline number (914) 429-7849 anytime of the day to see if any action is requested. The message will be updated every Monday morning or sooner if necessary. Have pen and paper ready when you call. The message will be repeated. If there is no message, your call will not be answered. PLEASE TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS SERVICE. IT IS DESIGNED TO SHORTEN OUR RESPONSE TIME TO ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE.

## From The Editor

American foreign policy supports British colonialism in Northern Ireland, simply because our government will not offend our British "ally." Therefore, American foreign policy regarding Northern Ireland is determined by the British government. So you have two powerful governments telling a weak Irish government what to do with regard to Northern Ireland. Is it any wonder the Irish government, lacking in strong leadership, will comply with the demands of the British? Such actions are to say the least undemocratic.

To hide the deceit, the governments concerned, through manipulation of and in some cases with the cooperation of, religious and political leaders and the media, project the war in Northern Ireland as a "terrorist" situation. Destroy the IRA and peace and justice will prevail. This will not be the case. Colonialism not only survives but even thrives on division and discrimination.

Before there can be peace and justice in Ireland, the cause of the war — British colonialism — and its inherent injustices, must first be publicly aired. If the truth is known, world opinion will quickly turn against British government state terrorism. Such is the case with apartheid in South Africa.

As Americans we must change American foreign policy so that it supports Ireland's reunification. This we can do by educating the public and by soliciting their support. This process has already been started through the MacBride Principles campaign. Informed Americans will never support British colonialism and oppression in Ireland.

You can start now by contacting your senators and congressman and insisting that they support and sponsor MacBride legislation when it is reintroduced in Congress at the start of 1989 session. Further, you can push to enact legislation in your own community.

## The Bad Odor Of British Justice

by Albert Doyle

Most Americans have a favorable view of the British criminal justice system. Brought up with vague notions of Magna Carta we tend to think of the system as fundamentally fair and very much like our own rights-protecting system. *Nothing could be further from the truth* — particularly where Irish defendants are concerned. As a result of traditional anti-Irish prejudice in British society, how combined with anti-terrorists hysteria fanned by the present Tory government, the already rights-poor system has produced a series of decisions and changes in rules which — in the view of eminent British civil rights lawyers such as Gareth Peirce — make it virtually impossible for an Irish person to obtain a fair trial in the British system. The latest example is the conviction and 25 year sentences for three young Irish people found near the estate of Tom King, the Northern Ireland Secretary. Without evidence of any sort that they intended to harm Mr. King, they were convicted of conspiracy to murder him! Many other examples can be cited, including the case of the six people jailed for life for the Birmingham pub bombings later admitted to have been done by others, and other similar cases.

Britain has no written Constitution such as ours, and no Bill of Rights. Rights are what Parliament wishes to give — or take away. For this reason the system is loaded against all defendants. Although Mrs. Thatcher is fond of saying that Northern Ireland is as British as Finchley, she still finds it necessary to have "special" legal rules there, including the just enacted presumption of guilt for defendants who remain silent or refuse to testify. Needless to say, such a rule would be unconstitutional in our country.

Perhaps the real flavor of the system can be seen in the little things that happen; the overly elaborate security trappings surrounding the trial of Irish political defendants in the heart of London and other cities (hovering helicopters, glassed-in cages for the accused) which create a poisoned atmosphere prejudicial to the defense; the security forces blowing up the car of an entirely innocent Englishman illegally parked outside the court where an Irish trial was underway because of anti-I.R.A. paranoia; refusing to reveal to counsel of the families of the victims of the Gibraltar shooting the identities of routine (non-military) government witnesses, thus making defense preparation unfairly difficult; the detention of thousands of Irish people under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, without any charges ever being made; routine vicious newspaper coverage of Irish defendants, never protested by the same government which became furious over press hints that the SAS might have a shoot-to-kill policy and which tries to suppress books it doesn't like. It all weighs heavily against one side in the legal dispute.

Another difference is the lack of effective appeal procedures in the system. Unlike our country, it is difficult to obtain an appeal — and very rare that decisions are reversed. We recall the comment of the appellate judge in the Birmingham Six case to the effect that he could not credit the unquestioned evidence that the defendants had been beaten in custody since to do so would undermine confidence in "the system" and would imply a wrong decision — a thought apparently too terrible to contemplate!

One final thought: this is the system to which the Irish government extradites its own people!

### PEC State Director Appointed For Colorado

We are happy to announce the appointment of Terry Deem Reilly as PEC State Director for the State of Colorado. Terry urges that all members residing in Colorado contact her. She needs your help in promoting the goals of the PEC and the MacBride Principles campaign currently underway in Colorado: Terry Deem Reilly, 1123 Clarkson, Denver, CO 80218 — (303) 837-9443 (eve.)

### The New Irish

by Pete Foley

At the last minute in the last congressional session an immigration bill was passed which will help some of the thousands of Irish wanting to become legal immigrants in the U.S. There are two parts to this bill. One, extends the Donnelly Visas which was a lottery from 36 countries which were adversely affected by the present U.S. immigration policy. Of those 10,000 visas, over 4,000 went to the Irish. The new bill will grant 20,000 more of these visas in the next 2 years. These visas will only be granted to people who applied to the last lottery (there are over 1.5 million applications).

The second part of the bill called the Berman Visas will allocate 20,000 visas over 1990-91. These visas will be for countries that had less than 5,000 legal immigrants to the U.S. last year. People in Northern Ireland will not be eligible as the U.S. government sees them as part of the U.K. There will be 140 countries eligible (including Ireland) for this new visa lottery. These bills barely begin to address the problems of 150,000 undocumented Irish in the U.S. but it is a help and much more work will have to be done in the next session of congress. The Irish government lobbied hard for this bill and other immigration bills as it takes the pressure off of them for their mishandling of their economy. It's too bad they can't put a fraction of that effort into securing justice for the rest of the people that share the island called Ireland.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

The PEC will soon begin publishing the Newsletter on a monthly basis rather than bi-monthly (every two months). This advance is necessary because of the increased activity concerning Northern Ireland.

**TO ALL OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS**

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**

## Offensive Situations

by Kevin P. Murphy, PEC Massachusetts

Comedian Jackie Mason recently apologized to our community after PEC letters poured in from various sections of the US protesting Mr. Mason's slur against the American Irish. In Mr. Mason's Broadway show he described discrimination against various ethnic groups in New York. When he described the American Irish he stated, "the Irish were discriminated against, but were to drunk to realize it." Here are some excerpts from a letter sent to PEC member Timothy McGillicuddy by Mr. Mason's personal secretary Katie Micheli, "We are sorry that you took offense at Jackie's remark about Irish people. . . . The remark about the Irish people has now been removed from the show. Jackie extends his apologies to you and thanks you for writing."

World famous singer Roger Whitaker also acknowledged our recent protest. Mr. Whitaker earlier this year while at a St. Louis concert told some "Irish jokes". The letter from his US agent stated that Mr. Whitaker "loves Irish people and Ireland". He went on to say that his jokes were meant to be humorous and show the good humor of the Irish.

Here are two examples of world famous entertainers apologizing for offending Americans of Irish heritage. Their responses prove that when we take the time and interest to express our views and defend our honor, we will be effective.

A Connecticut member sent in an example of offensive stereotyping from the US Postal Service. In a recent issue of the Westchester Postal Press, the official newsletter of the Westchester, New York Postal District, it was reported that postal workers in Glenbrook, Connecticut had a blood donor drive in which postal workers donated blood to the Red Cross. The newsletter stated, "If they had taken blood the morning after St. Paddy's it would have been 80%. An obvious slur alluding to postal workers of Irish heritage. Such cheap shots are not necessary nor are they appreciated.

**WE URGE ALL MEMBERS TO WRITE** to Mr. Anthony Frank, Postmaster General, USPS Headquarters, Washington, DC 20260-9998. Include in your let-

ter, in your own words, the italicized text in the above paragraph. Tell him you do not appreciate such slurs and ask that he advise the Postal Service to discontinue such practices. Please mention that you were informed of this matter by the American Irish PEC.

**OFFENSIVE SITUATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: Kevin P. Murphy, PO Box 8895, J F Kennedy Station, Boston, Ma 02114.**

**PEC OFFICE HOURS 10 AM - 2 PM E.S.T. (Monday thru Friday)**

**Phone Number (914) 947-2726**

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**New Memberships \$20 — Membership Renewal \$10**

Enclosed, find my check for  \$20 New Membership  \$10 Membership Renewal — in the American Irish Political Education Committee (PEC). I understand that with my membership I will receive a one-year subscription of the AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER.

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### THE AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

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# The Civil Liberties Of Citizen Kane by Bernard Fox, PEC Northern Ireland Correspondent

Thirty-eight year old Paul Kane was born in the Nationalist Ardoyne area of Belfast. He is a British citizen by domicile and an Irish citizen by birth. The governments of Britain and the Irish Republic both claim responsibility for protecting the Human Rights and Civil Liberties of Paul Kane — citizen of Ireland, subject of Britain.

Paul Kane was jailed in the Maze (Long Kesh) prison in Northern Ireland on information provided by the notorious paid informer (Supergrass) Christopher Black whose evidence against Kane and 37 other victims was later totally discredited.

Kane escaped from prison with a large number of Republican prisoners in September 1983. He was subsequently recaptured and charged with escaping from prison. In the meantime the charges on which he had originally been jailed were dropped.

Kane was released on bail — an innocent man who had escaped from prison — to await charges of escaping from prison. He jumped bail and fled south to the Irish Republic in 1986, and lived quietly in hiding.

On November 23, 1987 Kane was found in Granard, Co. Longford with another escaped Republican, Dermot Finucane, during the vast military operation mounted in the Irish Republic at the behest of the British government to find non-existent guns. Kane was arrested under the Republic's Special Laws — the 'Offences Against the State Act.'

After being held without charge for 48 hours, Kane was released. He had committed no offenses against the Irish State. In the meantime, the R.U.C. in the six counties had been contacted by the Gardai (Police), and indicated that they were "interested" in Kane, and would consider instituting extradition proceedings.

Upon his release Kane was closely followed by two detectives along a street in Granard. Kane encountered a B.B.C. reporter who agreed to give him a ride to Cavan.

The detectives jumped into an unmarked car occupied by two other Gardai. They followed the B.B.C. car to Cavan, where Kane left the reporter and found his way to a solicitor's office. Gardai immedi-

ately took up positions on the stairways leading to the office.

Meanwhile a Gardai superintendent in Mullingar was informed by telephone by the R.U.C. that they were preparing an extradition warrant for Kane. The superintendent immediately made arrangements to travel to Cavan and contact a Justice to obtain a Provisional warrant for Kane's arrest. There was no suggestion at any stage that Kane was guilty of any form of offence in the Irish Republic.

Kane was still in the solicitor's office which was by now surrounded by ten uniformed and plain-clothes gardai, some of whom were armed. The Gardai superintendent entered the solicitor's office and asked Kane to come outside and speak with him. Kane did so, and was then identified as a man who escaped from Long Kesh in 1983, by a British prison warder and an R.U.C. man who had traveled to Cavan for that purpose.

Kane then left the solicitor's office accompanied by a local Republican, Brian McKeon, and drove to McKeon's house, a mile outside Cavan. Their car was followed to the house by a large force of Gardai.

About 6 p.m., Kane who had been closely followed by Gardai since his release at 2 p.m., left the house with McKeon and walked back into Cavan. They were followed by more than a dozen Gardai, some walking beside them on the roadway. Others followed within a few feet in Gardai cars equipped with searchlights. Some of the Gardai were carrying sub-machine guns on visible display. Kane had committed no offence, and was not subject to arrest proceedings in the Irish Republic.

Kane and McKeon walked back to McKeon's house, still followed at close quarters by the Gardai force, who then surrounded the house. The Gardai had now been informed that the R.U.C. were in the process of providing an extradition warrant for Kane, and were therefore continuing with making arrangements to have a provisional warrant sworn and issued in order that Kane could be arrested.

Two Sinn Fein members, Gerry Adams (Kane's Member of Parliament in the

British House of Commons) and Danny Morrison arrived at McKeon's house. Shortly afterwards they left the house, accompanied by Kane and McKeon and a number of other people, and attempted to leave the area in two cars.

Furious activity ensued, with the Gardai attempting to stop the car in which Kane was traveling, and a high-speed chase followed, with Gardai cars jockeying for position with the two civilian cars, and attempting to force them off the road. The chase ended when a Gardai car blocked the road in front of the car carrying Kane, who leaped from the car and jumped through a hedge.

A Guard dived through the hedge behind him and landed on top of Kane seven feet below, where a struggle ensued. Kane was arrested by the Guard. He was charged with assault, breach of the peace by assault, and damages to property (a Guard's watch). This final charge meant that he could be charged under the Republic's Special Laws — the Offences against the State Act.

He was brought before a Justice later that night, and remanded in custody on these charges. The Gardai opposed bail, but did not attempt to serve the provisional extradition warrant which had been sworn out.

The following day Kane was brought before the Justice again, granted bail and released. The R.U.C. extradition warrant had not arrived, so the Gardai re-arrested Kane on foot of the provisional warrant which they themselves had obtained.

Kane's lawyers went to the Republic's High Court to submit that Kane had been illegally arrested; that the Gardai had placed Kane under a form of "moving detention" quite illegally, in order that he would be available when an R.U.C. warrant arrived.

Judgement was given on December 21 when the Irish High Court ruled that Kane had been free to "go where he wished at any time", and that the Gardai surveillance bore no relationship whatever to the anticipated arrival of an extradition warrant from the R.U.C. Kane is now remanded in custody in the Irish Republic awaiting hearing on the extradition warrant.

He will unquestionably be extradited to

the six counties to face charges of "Escaping from Lawful Custody".

The perversion of the justice system of the Irish Republic under pressure of the Anglo-Irish treaty, has now developed to such a degree that virtually all legal safeguards for the citizen have been abandoned. Recently one Irish citizen was sentenced to five years in jail for possessing "incriminating documents" — copies of a Republican poster which had been on public display and sale in Ireland for over twelve months; while another was sentenced for membership in the I.R.A. with the only evidence being the sworn testimony of a Gardai officer that he "believed the defendant to be a member of the I.R.A."

## Action Letter

by Albert Doyle

On October 27th three young Irish people were convicted in a British Court of conspiracy to murder British Northern Ireland Secretary, Tom King. They were sentenced to twenty-five years imprisonment. Impartial observers considered the verdict incredible as there was no evidence of any intent to commit any crime. For years, as each new case comes down illustrating the "special" treatment of Irish people in the British criminal justice system, the Irish Government of the day expresses its "concern", announces that it is "reviewing its position", etc. — then goes right ahead and enters into yet another agreement with the British, such as the recent U.K.-Ireland Extradition treaty. This proposed letter to the Irish Ambassador is aimed at letting him know that we think the time has come to show the British that their actions are not always going to be accepted. Please write a letter, in your words, along the lines of the suggested letter. These letters do count and must be considered by the recipient. WRITE NOW!

(Your address and date)

Honorable Padraic MacKernan  
Embassy of Ireland  
2234 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

As an American and a member of the American Irish PEC concerned about Ireland and her people, I am appalled at the recent verdict of conspiracy to murder against three young Irish people in Winchester, England. It seems to me that the time has come for your government to deliver a message Mrs. Thatcher that you will no longer tolerate the unfair treatment of Irish citizens in British courts. Since it is apparent that Irish defendants will not be treated fairly in British courts, I suggest that Ireland should repudiate the recent extradition treaty with Britain and join in the appeal of the Winchester decision. This would serve to focus world attention on this little-known abuse.

Sincerely,

## An American Reports From The North

by Sammy —

(This is the pseudonym of a PEC member, who is currently traveling Northern Ireland. From time to time Sammy will be providing us with information.)

Two young German men working as volunteers at Mourne Grange Village, a community for the mentally handicapped, were harassed by both the RUC and the British Army recently when they returned from a late evening cycle. The youths riding along the Newry Road created a threatening image for the armed British youths in uniform. Convinced they discovered an IRA unit riding down the well-lit main road, the police called for

assistance in ambushing the young men as they returned to their political beds.

The unsuspecting youths turned into a tree-protected driveway before the police and army had expected them to. The young men returned to their respective quarters and prepared for sleep, unaware that their houses, which also sheltered mentally handicapped adults, were surrounded by two lorryloads of heavily armed soldiers.

The police entered the houses and demanded that the youths explain why they were out riding their bicycles at such a late hour. (There exists no curfew in this small County Down town.) The police insinuated that perhaps the young men

were homosexual, for certainly heterosexual men do not cycle together late in the evening. After these pleasantries, the police demanded that the young men produce their passports.

Satisfied that the young social service volunteers were guilty of nothing more than taking advantage of the only free time they were allowed, the soldiers and police (who made no apology for their inane vigilantism) withdrew before any of the other residents could be alarmed. There they left two young Germans who understand very little English to discern for themselves what it is to live with keepers of the peace.



Pictured from left to right, on the occasion of the American Irish PECs Annual Testimonial Dinner Dance, are honored guests John J. Sweeney, International President of the 850,000 members Service Employees International Union; Mary Pike and Steve Somerstein, attorneys for Joe Doherty, and Agnes Mallon, Testimonial chairperson.

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