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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

The Newsletter of the Action Irish

Vol. 8, No. 3

JUNE/JULY, 1983

HISTORIC IRISH UNITY CONFERENCE SET FOR JULY

(see Unity Conference Page 2)

**WRITE YOUR UAP ACTION LETTERS NOW!
REMEMBER! AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT AND BIG BUSINESS YOUR PERSONAL LETTER REPRESENTS THE VIEWS OF ONE THOUSAND AMERICANS.**

NEWS BITS

By Andy Prior

Four men, Andrew Duggan, Gabriel Megahy, and Eamon and Colum Meehan were convicted in N.Y.C. of plotting to smuggle arms, explosives and surface to air missiles to the Provisional IRA in N.I. One of the jurors, Brian Pecher said that "putting feelings aside" (jurors sympathy for the defendants) was a key issue in the deliberations (N.Y. Times 5/14/83).

"Britain will be out of Ireland within the decade — the sacrifice of the ten dead hunger strikers will be seen as a turning point in history," predicted Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone to an audience of 3,000, who marched through London in memory of Bobby Sands on May 7th. Mr. Livingstone also said that British withdrawal from Ireland would be supported by a two-thirds majority if a referendum were held in Britain now. (Irish Post 5/14/83) ... "Is it common practice for the RUC to harrass the parents of IRA men they have recently shot dead? Early one Saturday morning, the local police raided the house of Mr. Jim Burns, demanding to speak to his son Sean and producing a warrant for the payment of a hundred pound fine with the alternative of 28 days in jail. 21 year old Sean Burns was one of three unarmed IRA men shot dead in disputed circumstances at an RUC roadblock last November." (Fortnight 2/83).

"Of the 5,555 people arrested in Britain under the (Prevention
(Continued on Page 4)

PEC IRISH HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The National PEC and the Emerald Society, Fire Department, City of New York, will sponsor their second annual Irish Heritage Festival on Fathers Day, June 19, 1983. This year's festival will again take place at the Dominican Center in Sparkill, NY (Rockland County). There will be indoor and outdoor activities (RAIN OR SHINE).

Nine bands and two bagpipe bands will perform, including the Emerald Society Fire Department Bagpipe Band. There will be numerous cultural and historical events and two stage productions presented by the highly-acclaimed Rockland Irish Arts Forum. **Hon. Sean Patrick Walsh will give a presentation on Irish history.**

Admission only \$4.00 per adult (accompanying children under 15 FREE). Senior citizens \$3.00 each.

For full details call (914) 947-2998 or (914) 634-6424 or write: PEC Festival, P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, NY 10923. ENJOY A WONDERFUL DAY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY AND AT THE SAME TIME SUPPORT THE PEC.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL

WE URGE ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE ALREADY RECEIVED YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION/UAP MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REQUEST BY MAIL TO PLEASE MAINTAIN YOUR MEMBERSHIP. YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THE CONTINUED SUCCESS AND GROWTH OF THE PECs EDUCATION/ACTION PROGRAMS — IN THE REUNIFICATION OF IRELAND.

PLEASE RENEW TODAY! Send your check or money order for \$8.00 to the National PEC, P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923, Attn: Renewal. Please make checks payable to: National PEC and indicate on the face of your check: "Renewal".

YOUR PROMPT ATTENTION WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.

THE POWER OF THE PEN

Congratulations are in order for **Martin Cunningham**, St. Paul, Minn. Mr. Cunningham took offense to a news clip which appeared on KMSP-TV (Channel 9, St. Paul) and protested to the St. Paul Human Rights Department who in turn protested to the management of KMSP-TV. KMSP-TV sent a letter of apology to the Human Rights Department. Stu Swartz, representing the station, said he personally apologizes for the episode and noted that the reporter is no longer with the station.

The offensive film clip which came out of the station's coverage of St. Paul's St. Patrick's Day events showed a costumed parade participant who was asked by a KMSP-TV interviewer if he was Irish. The man told the interviewer he was "a bit of the Scotch, but my horse is part Irish". He then patted the rear of the horse saying, "This is the part that's Irish". The apology appeared on page one of the **St. Paul Dispatch**.

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of this information from **Leah Curtin**, Hibernian Insurance Fund, St. Paul, Minn.

ANOTHER VICTORY FOR IRISH UNITY

In the April/May edition of the PEC National Newsletter, we announced the ratification of the PEC initiated Bill #1840, in the Massachusetts State Legislature. This bill terminates the investment of public pension funds in firms contributing to the oppression in Northern Ireland. *We are proud to announce* that Bill #1840 was signed into law by Governor Michael Dukakis on April 4, 1983. We wish to congratulate Kevin Murphy, PEC Region 7 Director, for his outstanding efforts laying the ground work for this Bill. We also thank the many PEC supporters who participated in the PEC telephone call campaign urging the Governor to sign the legislation.

NICKY KELLY

By Andy Prior

By the time you read this article the subject of it may no longer be alive. Nicky Kelly, presently in Portlaoise Prison, Ireland, has vowed to remain on hunger strike, begun May 1st, until his death or his release.

While he lies in prison, with only water for nourishment, two other men, Osgur Breathnach and Brian McNally, who were arrested and convicted with him for the same crime are free to walk the streets of Dublin with impunity.

Nicky Kelly's troubles began after March 1976 when a Dublin mail train was robbed and a large amount of money was taken. Eventually three men arrested and charged with the robbery and after the longest court hearings in Irish legal history, they were given twelve year sentences. The only evidence against them were statements made in custody after a long detention.

Throughout the trial they claimed that the statements had been beaten out of them. Doctor's reports testified to swelling, bruises and other injuries sustained by Kelly and his co-defendants. And yet the judge accepted the statements as true and admissible, and convicted the three of them.

Towards the conclusion of the trial Kelly, suffering from severe stress symptoms, jumped bail and went to the United States. His co-defendants went to prison. But not for long. They were released by the Appeals Court which accepted that those statements had been extracted from them following prolonged beatings. Meanwhile the Provisional IRA issued a statement accepting responsibility for the robbery, but Kelly is a member of the quite unrelated Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Following the release of the other defendants, Nicky Kelly returned to Ireland and surrendered to the authorities. That was more than two years ago. He has since been in Portlaoise Jail. Although the case against him was exactly the same as the others, Kelly had lost his appeal on a technicality.

He has exhausted all of the legal avenues to win his release. Last October the Irish Supreme Court rejected his first appeal.

The human rights group Amnesty International has long been concerned about the case, sending observers to the trial and to the appeal. Since Kelly lost the Irish Government appeal last October, Amnesty wrote to the Irish Government in November and again to the new Government in December. It is still waiting for a reply. Justice Minister Noonan, who alone has the power to release Nicky Kelly, has unofficially rejected as impertinent Amnesty International's plea.

The Release Nicky Kelly Committee on May 6th issued a press statement after visiting Mr. Kelly in prison: "He said his life was in the hands of Mr. Noonan, Minister for Justice, and that he would make no deals — he would either come out of prison a free man or in a coffin."

Those concerned about Nicky Kelly's plight are urged to write to Mr. Noonan care of Embassy of Ireland, 2234 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008.

THE SOUTHERN VOICE

If you would like to receive free the *Southern Voice*, an informative newsletter regarding the war in Ireland, please write: Georgia Fleming, 114 Rosewood Drive, Enterprise, Ala. 36330. The goal of the *Southern Voice* is to make the South a more effective voice in the cause of Irish freedom.

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P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923

Editor..... John J. Finucane

UNITY CONFERENCE

by John J. Finucane

On the weekend of July 15-17, 1983 a historic conference will take place in Chicago, Illinois. Its purpose is to establish national unity amongst Irish-American organizations from across the United States in working for the just cause of a United Ireland.

This will be the first time in the history of the U.S. that Irish-American organizations have come together seeking unity. The success of this conference will be the "straw that broke the camel's back".

The conference will also serve as a work forum whereby representatives from all interested organizations will participate in establishing unity projects. One such project that will be suggested is a call for a nation-wide display of Irish-American support for the cause of a United Ireland. It will be suggested that Sunday, September 25, 1983 be declared IRISH SOLIDARITY DAY. All concerned organizations, coalitions, etc., will be asked to conduct an Irish Solidarity event in their state, city, town, etc. An event can have 15 or 15 thousand participants. What is important is that Irish Solidarity events take place. September 25th has been picked because Irish Solidarity Rallies are already scheduled for this date in New York City and Connecticut. We urge you to start making preliminary arrangements.

The Chairman will be James Delaney. Mr. Delaney, a successful businessman from San Antonio, Texas, is an active member of the PEC, a National Director in the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, and a member of the Board of Directors, American-Irish Cultural Institute of St. Paul, Minnesota.

We urge you to make sure that your organization is represented at the conference. Representatives should forward (A.S.A.P.) their names, address, tele. #, and credentials (pro-United Ireland activities involved in, active in what organization, title or office held, if any), to John J. Finucane, National PEC, PO Box 16, Garnerville, NY 10923. We are looking for workers — people who will get things done.

Interest in this conference is outstanding among many organizations. All the major activist organizations have indicated their interest in participating.

IRISH WHO MADE AMERICA GREAT

By Michael McCabe

Of all the Texas Irish, a hallowed name is Leander McNelly, greatest of the Texas Ranger Captains. McNelly was born in Brooke County, Virginia (now West Virginia) in 1844, the youngest son of immigrants from County Down. His parents died when he was a boy, and he grew up in poverty. When he was fifteen, he migrated with his older brother's family to Texas. Not quite seventeen when the Civil War began, he enlisted in the Confederate Army where he saw four years of service, and was several times decorated for gallantry under fire. After the war, he joined the Texas State Police, later known as the Rangers, and in 1874 was appointed a captain. He actively hunted down those who use violence against the freed blacks.

In the spring of 1875, he took up the task of stopping the cattle rustling along the Mexican border. He accomplished this in less than a year, by invading Mexico and attacking Las Cuevas, the heavily fortified headquarters of the cattle thieves. At the age of 31, he contracted tuberculosis, but he continued his work for another year, until he was too ill for further duty, and was dropped by the Rangers. Despite an outcry from the press and the public, McNelly received no pension or medical care. A year later, on September 4, 1877, McNelly died at his home in Burton, Texas. So it was that Lee McNelly, the quiet one, the exemplar of all Irish law-and-order men, gained a deserved fame and became one of the Irish who made America great.

FROM THE EDITOR

A British withdrawal and the reunification of Ireland will come when the leadership of the U.S. Government brings pressure to bear on the British government. Sufficient pressure by our government's leaders will come only when it is the **expressed** will of the American public, of which some 44 million claim Irish heritage. This change in U.S. foreign policy will happen only when a sizeable segment of the Irish-American community is united in political action (unity of action) and working through the democratic process. This is something which the vast majority of Irish-Americans so far have been reluctant to do.

This unity of action is much closer than many of us believe. It is happening right now within a segment of our community the vast majority of whom were never before involved. We can attest to this by the increase of mail being received, since **March**, at our headquarters.

Before this unity can take place, strong and determined leadership must emerge from **within** the Irish-American community. The potential for this leadership and dedication exists. A number of people have already proven that they possess the necessary qualifications. This leadership should emerge from the Irish Unity Conference which will take place in Chicago, Ill. this July. Concerned organizations or at least all the activist organizations should join forces to fight for a United Ireland. To do this we must first put aside all our petty differences and jealousies. Priority must be given to a United Ireland. When the leadership emerges, we must give it our total support and loyalty.

Only when this unification is complete and the leadership is chosen will the Irish-American "unity of action" bring about the reunification of Ireland. The sleeping Giant will have been awakened.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS INTO THE WORLD OF THE ACTION IRISH! GIVE THEM A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF THE PEC NATIONAL NEWSLETTER. Please use Newsletter Subscription form below.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

Join the action and information flow. Subscribe to the bi-monthly Political Education Committee National Newsletter. Send your name and address and a check for \$8.00 to: National PEC, PO Box 16, Garnerville, NY 10923.

YES, please enroll me the following name person for a one year subscription of the bi-monthly PEC National Newsletter. Enclosed, please find my check for \$_____ Date _____

Signature _____

Name (print) _____

Address _____

Recommended Reading

STATE TERRORISM: The British Use of Plastic Bullets in Northern Ireland

By Professor David Lowry

The PEC has just published an authoritative and highly-informative 50 page booklet by Professor David Lowry, *STATE TERRORISM: The British Use of Plastic Bullets in Northern Ireland*. This well-written publication is an in-depth study of the plastic and rubber bullets, their purpose, and their victims.

It is an excellent educational instrument that helps explain the oppressive nature of British rule in Ireland. It should prove very helpful in generating support for passage of the Congressional House Resolutions condemning the British use of Plastic Bullets in Northern Ireland.

TO ORDER: individual copies are \$2.00 each which includes postage. Bulk orders (10 or more), \$.95 each plus \$1.30 postage for first unit of 10. Each additional unit of 10, add \$1.00 for postage. Make checks payable to National PEC.

THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR

To many of us, the greatest war time honor that can be bestowed on a fellow-American is the Congressional Medal of Honor. The CMH is a mark of distinction in that one gives his all for America, and in most cases, his life. There have been many foreign-born recipients of the CMH. The nation whose sons dominate this greatest of honors and display of loyalty is the tiny island of Ireland with 257. Ireland's closest second is Germany with 126. Source: Medal of Honor Recipients, 1863-1978. Prepared by: The Committee of Veterans' Affairs, U.S. Senate. The above information was provided by **Francis J. Raymond**, North Providence, R.I.

(Ed. Note: Ireland's sons have always excelled in America's struggles for freedom. Many an authority has said that it was the Irish in America who won the American Revolution. Perhaps, it is the Irish in America that has kept America a free nation. Maybe it is time for America to reciprocate by helping Ireland achieve its freedom.)

OPINION POLL

All participants in the Northern Ireland Opinion Poll are asked to immediately start returning their completed questionnaires. If you have not yet initiated your survey, please do so at this time. The information provided through this poll is very important to the educational operations of the PEC. It is most important that this poll be carried out. We are very grateful for your valuable assistance. Please return to: Barbara & Howard Allen Rte. 32, Box 4475, Saugerties, NY 12477.

EDUCATE A FRIEND

If you would like to educate someone on the truth about the troubles in Ireland, forward their name and we will send the the PEC Information Package. **PLEASE USE COUPON BELOW** Mail to: National PEC, PO Box 16, Garnerville, NY 10923.

Please send free PEC Information Package to:

Name _____
(print)

Address _____

MICHAEL O'ROURKE

Michael O'Rourke has been incarcerated at the New York Correctional Facility in New York City since October, 1979 while awaiting deportation orders. Despite his marriage to a U.S. citizen and application for political asylum, O'Rourke is in the process of being deported for overstaying his visa. Four bond applications have been denied by the Board of Immigration Appeals, who consider O'Rourke to be a "poor bail risk". This is an heinous case of miscarriage of justice and many people are working very hard to have justice for Michael O'Rourke.

WRITE TO YOUR LOCAL NEWS MEDIA

News Editor/National

Name of Newspaper, Radio/TV Station?

Street Address Your Town, Your State, Zip

Dear Sir or Madam:

I understand that Michael O'Rourke, the Irish-born husband of a U.S. citizen has been detained in jail in New York City since October, 1979 while awaiting an order of deportation from the Immigration Service. He is being deported on the grounds of overstaying his visa.

It concerns me that such a minor offense would merit such harsh action, particularly when marriage to a U.S. citizen is concerned. I would appreciate your looking into this matter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

NEWS BITS (Continued from Page 1)

of Terrorism) Act up to the end of last year fewer than one in ten was changed with any offense, while over the same period in the North charges were brought against almost one in every two of the 2,278 people detained," according to an analysis prepared by the Irish Information Partnership based in Britain. "Although total arrests under the act in Britain have declined sharply, the rate of arrests of totally innocent people shows no trend of decline." It adds "The conclusion must be either the police in Britain are less competent in effecting arrests under the Act than in N.I.; or more disturbingly, the Act is being used to intimidate in Britain." The analysis continues to say "there may be a greater readiness to charge suspects in N.I. due to the existence of the "Diplock" court system — a thesis which might be supported by the declining acquittal ratio in such courts. (Irish Post 5/14/83).

RUC informer, Christopher Black has given some interesting testimony during a recent trial. Mr. Black explained that while a member of the Provo's he was sent to commandeer a car for an IRA operation. He was told to go to a house, demand the keys to the family car and hold the family until the operation was over. Soon after, Black reported that the man inside the house refused to open the door. He was told to return and shout to the man "Irish Republican Army". This did the job. The man of the house opened the door and said apologetically, "I'm sorry about that, but you never know who is at the door these days." (Fortnight 2/83).

Three members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, the political wing of the INLA, claimed that they were told by RUC detectives at Castlereagh holding center that they would be killed by SAS type RUC squads. (Fortnight 3/83).

The Belfast City Council has decided to stop advertising in the republican minded newspaper, the Andersonstown News. The motion was proposed by the DUP's (Paisley's party) "Shankill Road Scotsman", George Seawright, who said they should cease all advertising in such a "republican rag". The "pompous young" Official Unionist Jeremy Burchill suggested that while he agreed with the motion, it might be more politically wiser to refuse advertising because it was "financially disadvantageous". Seawright responded: "That's the difference between me and Councillor Burchill, I'm a bigot and honest about it. He's just a devious wee bigot." He changed the wording to read "fenian rag". (Fortnight 3/83).

UAP ACTION LETTER

By A. R. Doyle

As you know, the PEC attempts to influence our own leaders by democratic means to support the end of British rule and reunification of Ireland. We do not really expect the support of the present British Government in this effort, but we would expect to have the cooperation of the Irish Government, of whatever party, in view of the Irish Constitution's claim to sovereignty over the whole of Ireland. While we do not wish to be at cross purposes with the Irish Government, we are dismayed by the present policies of that government which seems, unfortunately, to be following the British propaganda line of solely equating Irish-American aspirations for reunification with "terrorism". This posture greatly damages our efforts to influence our own government. The latest example of this is the total mis-reading of Irish-American opinion by the Irish Government with respect to the New York St. Patrick's Day Parade as reflected in a recent newspaper interview of Foreign Minister Peter Barry.

Please write or type your own letter along the lines suggested below. If for any reason this is not possible, simply rewrite our letter as shown below on your own stationery. Encourage your organization(s), family, friends, and relatives to write. **MAKE COPIES OF THIS UAP ACTION LETTER FOR DISTRIBUTION.**

Address & Date

Honorable Peter Barry
Embassy of Ireland
2234 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mr. Barry:

As a supporter of the American Irish National Political Education Committee's democratic efforts to influence U.S. policy to move to end the immoral and illegal British colonial regime in Northern Ireland, I call upon you to cease undermining those efforts by attacks on Irish-Americans who do not agree with every aspect of current Irish Government policy as in your recent interviews. Honest differences of opinion among those who support your own Constitutional claim to reunification of Ireland cannot be equated with support of violence as you did in misreading the extent and motive for the support of Michael Flannery as Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York. You should be seeking to cooperate with Irish Americans, not alienating them.

Sincerely,

MOTHERS MARCH FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

On Saturday, June 11, 1983 the Long Island Coalition will sponsor a Mothers March For Peace and Justice in Northern Ireland. Only women and children will march in this parade which will assemble at 12 noon at 34th Street and First Avenue in New York City. The marchers will proceed to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza for a brief rally. Men folk are requested to turn out to cheer the marchers on and to participate in the rally.

All are urged to attend this most important event which is being co-sponsored by the National PEC and Irish Northern Aid. For further information call: 516-766-8245.