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American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

JAN./FEB. 1980

Rockland County A.O.H., P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, N.Y. 10923

NEWS BITS..... JOHN J. FINUCANE

72% of the citizens of the Irish Republic want a unilateral British withdrawal from Northern Ireland—42% sympathize with the objectives of the IRA. These were the results of a survey conducted by Ireland's highly respected Economic and Social Research Institute (Ireland's general news service—10/79). Polls conducted in England since 1969 have consistently reflected the same results concerning a British withdrawal. It seems that the Ad Hoc Committee is more in tune with the citizens of Ireland and Britain... Two more Catholics murdered by British Protestant para-militaries (Republican News—10/6/79). Was any of the above reported by the American news media?

PM Jack Lynch strengthens border security by giving British military aircraft OK for overflights into the Irish Republic. This opens the door for massive British surveillance of Irish citizens and Irish military bases (Hibernia—10/11/79). Will Haughey allow this? ... A highly placed White House source told Hibernia's Washington correspondent that the suspension of arms and munitions to the RUC is most likely to be made permanently temporary (Hibernia 10/11/79). Is that permanent just until the election?

Since the death of Lord Mountbatten and 18 British soldiers at Warrenpoint, British citizens are more determined than ever to force a British withdrawal—disenchantment growing in the British army (Troops Out 10/79).

The White House says Carter has accepted an invitation to visit Ireland (Washington 11/79). Would Irish-Americans vote for Carter simply because he visited Ireland? ... BRITISH GOVERNMENT DENIES AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PERMISSION TO PROBE CONDITIONS IN H-BLOCK (Sunday Press 11/17/79). Because of negative worldwide publicity, Britain has changed the name of Long Kesh concentration camp to the Maze and Cage (prison cell) to Compound.

Congressman Biaggi, referring to Margaret Thatcher's willingness to talk to all sides in the pursuit of Rhodesian peace, stated, she is content only to deal with four political parties in the pursuit of peace in Ulster. Those peace talks that deliberately exclude important elements are destined to futility." (Washington 11/24/79) ... Ruairi O'Bradaigh, President of Sinn Fein, Ireland's oldest political party, who has been invited to speak at a number of American universities, again denied a visa to visit the US. A highly-placed US Government official termed the denial "ludicrous" (Irish People 11/17/79)... Thatcher to press for changes in the North. If Catholics and Protestants don't like the proposal she will impose a solution (Irish Echo 11/24/79).

Charles Haughey, the new PM of Ireland, as a first order of business has called for the reunification of Ireland and a British disengagement from our land (AP 12/7/79). Let's wait and see.

Margaret Thatcher's press secretary Bernard Ingham, when asked why Thatcher ignored Northern Ireland on her recent visit to the U.S. stated, "Why should she mention a little insurrection like that." (WNEW-TV 12/18/79). 2,000 dead and more than 20,000 seriously injured... Congressman Biaggi, referring to President Carter's reaffirming our government's position to PM Thatcher on arms sales to the RUC stated that Carter has restored morality and integrity to foreign policy (Washington 12/19/79). Morality and integrity will be fully restored only when Carter lives up to his promise of 1976, to speak out against human rights violations and support Irish unity.

OPINION BETTY KELLY

Former Prime Minister Jack Lynch recently stressed to Margaret Thatcher that only a form of devolved government in which Catholics and Protestants participate will be acceptable to the Irish Government and the North's Catholic minority. The new Prime Minister, Charles Haughey, said his first priority is the reunification of Ireland and a British declaration of intent to withdraw.

The Democratic Unionist Party, led by Ian Paisley, wants a return to majority rule. The Official Unionist Party will not consider negotiations where Irish unity is on the agenda. The Social Democratic Labor Party insist on powersharing and regards Irish unity as a fact of life in future negotiations.

The Provisional Sinn Fein would never again accept (Unionist) majority rule which controlled housing, jobs, etc., as a means of suppressing Catholics in the past. They want a totally free and united 32 county Ireland.

The recent British Government's **Working Paper** on proposals for a political settlement rejects Irish unity completely, thereby ruling out the essential ingredients for any meaningful negotiations. The lesson of 10 years of bloody strife and untold suffering in Northern Ireland has not penetrated their upper class minds.

What will it take to make the Protestants of Ulster realize that their only worth to Britain is the influence that comes from her hanging on to her last vestige of imperial pride? Surely, they must see how futile it is to rely on Britain's help to solve the problem she created, and to begin to think of a means of rescuing themselves from their plight.

HUMAN RIGHTS—WHAT ARE THEY? JAMES F. CLARKE
(Continued from previous newsletter)

St. Augustine, at the beginning of the early Middle Ages, borrowed stoic ideas and interrelated them with supernatural revelation. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) during the Golden Age of Scholasticism perfected the idea of natural law.

His political philosophy may be viewed against the background of two basic doctrines: First Doctrine—Man has two ends or aims: 1. Happiness in God, 2. Happiness in the goods of this earth. Here the state must create such social conditions that are positive to virtuous and successful living and in no way interfere with man's pursuit of his ultimate end. Second Doctrine: Law is the rule and measure of acts, directing them to their proper end: 1. External Law—God's divine wisdom; 2. Natural Law—Man's participation through reason, on a share of the eternal reason, to do good and avoid evil. men know it with greater or less difficulty according to the development of moral conscience; 3. Positive Law—the law of the State expressed by: A. Divine Law—Rules made known to man by God; B. Church Law—Rules made by human legislators in the church; C. Civil Law—Law made by State authority.

As for the origin of the State, St. Thomas holds that it is natural for man to be a social and political animal. Authority by the State is necessary and a trust. If it is used unjustly, the people who choose or elect their ruler also have the power to depose him.

The logical relationship between the natural law and the natural or human rights owed to man of the very fact that he is man: 1. There exists a natural law, which imposes obligations on man to tend to his last end and to conform his conduct to the norm of morality as the only means to this end. 2. But man cannot have such obligations unless he has a right to fulfill them, and a consequent right to prevent others from interfering with his fulfillment of them. 3. Therefore, there are rights which stem from the natural law, and these by definition, are natural or human rights.

(Excerpts from Lecture II: "Philosophical and Historical Perspectives II", by Dr. V. Custer, O.P., as appeared in the course titled, "Human Rights: Behind the Headlines", as copyrighted 1977 by St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, N.Y.)

CHANGE OF TUNE MARK BARRETT

The envoys of the Jack Lynch regime in the U.S. have changed their tune. Up until this autumn the line was indistinguishable from that of Her Majesty's Foreign Office, viz. that any support for a united Ireland only encourages the "terrorists" of the "Catholic" I.R.A. Now, Gerry Clery, Mike Kennedy and company tell us that their Government seeks "The unity and independence of Ireland as a democratic republic" by peaceful means.

Not only is this approach insincere (Dublin has taken no steps to implement this new "policy"), it comes ten years too late: the I.R.A. supported by the embittered minority in the Six Counties, have, with the Mountbatten and Warrenpoint ambushes, embarked on a quest for military victory, Vietnam and Algeria style. Jack Lynch and his representatives will have to answer to history for the failure to stand behind the Northern minority before they were driven by the British occupation into despair and permanently wedded to violence.

Speaking of tunes, the Brits have been trying hard to pin the "Marxist" tag on the I.R.A. (they were "Catholic" for 60 years, you know); all the while they have been knowingly harboring a confessed Soviet spy, Sir Anthony Blunt, in the royal household; class system, old boy.

A VIEW FROM SCOTLAND..... ROBERT P. LOUGHMAN

It must be made clear that the Northern Ireland problem does not derive from the existence of the million-strong Protestant enclave comprising the descendants of the "Plantation of Ulster". It derives from the fact that this enclave has been employed as an instrument of UK policy, and has been the privileged recipient of UK subsidies and British armed forces.

The problem of reconciling the Protestant majority with the Catholic minority, and the further problem if reconciling the Six Counties with the 26 Counties of the overwhelmingly Catholic Republic of Ireland would not exist but for the fact that it has not been necessary for Northern Protestants even to think of reconciliation with anyone. They could always rely on the support of the British Crown to keep the Catholic in subservience, and also to dispense "Ulster" from the necessity of having to come to terms with the Republic of Ireland's 26 counties. Had they not been able to look so conveniently towards Westminster, the "Ulster" Protestant would long since have come to terms with the reality of an overwhelmingly Catholic Ireland, in the same way as the Irish Catholic minority in Scotland has come to terms with the reality of a predominately Protestant Scotland.

The Policy of the UK today is to progressively de-Christianize the legislation of "Ulster"—even against the wishes of Ulster Protestants. Westminster realizes only too well that the secularization of "Ulster" is a most effective means of forcing the all too willing hands of Eire's politicians to likewise secularize the Republic of Ireland.

Today the essence of England's Final Solution for the Irish problem is the total secularization of all Ireland, i.e. the re-creation of Ireland in permissive England's own image, so that Ireland will at long last be John Bull's other island, body and soul. Then there will be no longer any need for the occupation of "Ulster" as England and Ireland will be as one.

Excerpts from the writings of Hamish Fraser, Editor, The Advance (Scotland)

NORTH JERSEY AMERICAN IRISH LEAGUE PEC..... MIKE DUCEY

Inspired by the work and dedication of the various branches of the PEC, a new AOH division was formed in New Jersey. This unit is Division 1, Passaic County. The division's first president, Ken Clinton, said he hopes it will be active in the pursuit of the goals of the PEC—an end to Human Rights violations and a united Ireland. The division has already conducted its first fund-raiser. Present was guest speaker Dr. David Lowry (PEC attorneys committee), Professor, Pace University of Law and formerly a Professor at Queens University, Belfast, and John Finucane, chairman and co-founder of the PEC. Dr. Lowry spoke of his first-hand experiences. He described Human Rights violations and the lack of justice in Northern Ireland's special one-judge, no jury courts. Most people in attendance were admittedly unaware of these conditions. Their eagerness to get involved was noticeable.

PROJECT UNION..... DAN MEEHAN

Project Union is a joint venture between the Emerald Society Fire Department New York and the various PECs which is designed to solicit support from unions. The unions are being asked to write to President Carter and Senator Kennedy urging that they include Northern Ireland in their campaign activities. To be specific, that they call for an end to Human Rights violations, a British declaration of intent to withdraw and a united Ireland. To date many unions have responded, including the Transit Workers Union, the Uniformed Firefighters Association, the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, Sheetmetal Workers, Tunnel Workers and the United Auto Workers of N. J. We will also be contacting Irish-American organizations asking that they do the same. For information please contact the P.E.C.

WE THANK YOU

The Political Education Committee wishes to thank our many readers who gave so generously in response to our financial appeal. We would like to remind those of you who still have not forwarded your contribution to please do so at this time. Without your financial and moral support we are nothing. Please make your checks payable to Political Education Committee and forward to the Political Education Committee, Ancient Order of Hibernians, 14 Hester Place, Garnerville, New York 10923.

H-BLOCK : (Swissvale, Penn.)—ED HORGAN

Prison officials at Long Kesh Prison are attempting to break the spirit of the prisoners taking part in the protest for political status through an inhuman program of brutality and starvation.

Brutal attacks against these naked prisoners are commonplace. To discourage the prisoners from taking their monthly ½ hour visit, they are requested to go through a degrading anal search—before and after the visit. They are forced to squat naked over a mirror while a metal probe is used to examine their back passage. This is usually accompanied by a beating.

The food served the prisoners is usually scant, foul and tasteless. The prisoners must check every meal for pieces of WIRE, GLASS or MAGGOTS placed in the food by loyalist orderlies.

Where continuous solitary confinement, regular beatings, and starvation are commonplace, sickness must follow. Presently, many of the prisoners who are on-the-blanket are ill—some seriously. Medical attention is being denied in an attempt to break the protest. The policy of withholding medical attention violates a very basic human right, not to mention British law and international agreements dealing with the care and treatment of prisoners.

YOUR HELP IS DESPERATELY NEEDED in this humanitarian appeal for the prisoners who are ill and being denied medical attention. Please write to President Carter, Senator Kennedy, your U.S. Senators and Congressmen. For further information write to the PEC.

(Ed. Note: In June, 1978, Amnesty International concluded that as much as 85% of all political prisoners in Northern Ireland were convicted by SPECIAL one-judge, no jury Diplock courts on confessions made under duress.)

Action Letter KEN CLINTON, (New Jersey)

New York State Lt. Governor Mario Cuomo is chairman of the N.Y.S. committee to re-elect President Carter. To date, Mr. Carter has refused to include the Irish question in his campaign activities. We are asking those of you living in New York State to write to Mr. Cuomo. Those of you living outside N.Y.S. please write to the chairman of your state's re-election committee.

The PEC has already contacted numerous A.O.H. divisions and other organizations requesting their participation in this project. Every letter counts.

Below, for your convenience, is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply rewrite as your letter.

Address _____

Honorable Mario Cuomo
Lt. Governor
Executive Chamber
Albany, N.Y. 12224

Dear Sir,

I am asking you, as chairman of the New York State committee to re-elect President Carter, to please advise Mr. Carter of just how important the Irish issue is to me. I expect President Carter to include the following in his campaign activities: calls for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from Northern Ireland; condemnation of British Human Rights violations in Northern Ireland; and publicly support the right of the people of all Ireland to determine their own destiny.

Sincerely,
signature

If you do not already receive the PEC Newsletter by mail and wish to have it sent to your home (free) please forward your name and address to the Political Education Committee, P.O. Box 16, Garnerville, New York 10923.