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American Irish Newsletter - March - April 1980

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Recommended Citation

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC, "American Irish Newsletter - March - April 1980" (1980).
American Irish Newsletter. 183.
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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

MARCH — APRIL, 1980

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

SUPPORT OUR HOSTAGES IN IRAN

NEWS BITS

Prime Minister Haughey urges Britian to withdraw from north . . . In a speech described as tough and conciliatory at the same time, Irish PM Charles J. Haughey urged Britian to begin the process of withdrawing from Northern Ireland. (Irish News Media 2/16/80). Now, will President Carter speak out?

Professional Sinn Fein, Ireland's oldest legal political party, should be seen and heard on Ireland's TV and Radio (RTE). That is the almost unanimous feeling of the Kerry Council (the equivalent of our county governments) Irish World-12/29/79. . . Fianna Fail renews RTE ban on Sinn Fein. The ban initiated in 1972 has been regularly renewed since (Irish People-2/2/80). At whose request are members of Sinn Fein not granted visas to enter the U.S.?

Two British soldiers killed by their own men in ambush (1/2/80). Why were the soldiers not challenged? Were their orders to shoot on sight? Would they have shot children?

16 year old Doreen McGuinness shot dead by British soldiers (Irish Echo-1/12/80) . . . British para-militaries attack Catholic home killing 26 year old son and wounding father (Irish People-1/12/80) . . . Loyalist mob beats Alex Reid to death because he was Catholic (Republican News-1/12/80). Who protects the predominantly Catholic nationalist?

IRA premature bomb blast kills 3 on train. Members of Britain's House of Commons call for the death penalty as it is the will of the British majority (London Times-1/19/80). Why did House members fail to speak out when the above 3 nationalists were murdered—Mr Paisley, the British army has been on the offensive killing many innocent civilians—Mr. Churchill, why not mention the British majority wants British troops out of Ireland! Thomas McMahan serving life for the murder of Lord Mountbatten acquitted at the Special Criminal Court in Dublin of a charge of being a member of the IRA (London Times—1/23/80). Who fed the information that the IRA admitted responsibility for the killing? Is McMahan guilty of killing Mountbatten?

If an agreement is reached, Northern Ireland could again enjoy regional self-government, as it did before the violence forced the suspension of its parliament in 1972. And the province's likely leader would be Mr. Paisley. The catch is that Mr. Paisley will not countenance any talk of uniting Ireland (NY Times-1/24/80). Who enjoyed regional self-government. Only one solution: a united Ireland, its future determined by the people of *all* Ireland.

A damning and, for the British Government, highly embarrassing *indictment* of the H-Block system and the Northern Ireland Office's policy of criminalization has come from a prison welfare officer working in Long Kesh. Colin Crawford, who has worked as a welfare officer in the prison since 1974, has just completed a 3 year long study of Long Kesh (Hibernia-1/24/80).

CHRISTMAS IN H-BLOCK

A CHARA - Christmas is now past and like everyone else we must count the cost of it all. On the Saturday before Christmas it was clear that Christmas was to be no different from any other day for us. John Nixon and Tommy McGinn were both hit by warders while returning from their visits, and Ian Miller was grabbed by the neck by a warder, who had to be forcibly restrained by other warders, for the trivial 'offense' of refusing to give a prison number. Two other H-5 'Blanketmen' Francis Wilson and Dan Daly, were both sent to the punishment block on the same day. When they returned from the block, late on Christmas Eve, we learned of fresh assaults in the infamous P Block, where these POWs, along with four or five others from H-4 and H-5 were punched and kicked, especially around their private parts by the festive H-Block warders:

TOM KELLY

Between Christmas Eve and St. Stephen's Day (12/26) an almost constant stream of verbal abuse and harassment was our 'Christmas gift' from the prison administration. The cell lights were on for just over an hour on Christmas Day. The rest of the time, like last Christmas, was spent in darkness. The warders continually beat on the grills and doors to prevent us from having any conversation or sing-song, and insulting remarks accompanied every meal. Once again our Christmas cards were limited to five per man, with the results that many cards from our families never reached us. The heating pipes were turned down over Christmas despite all the 'festive' activities on the part of the prison regime, our protest continued.

Sadly, the spirit of Christmas was noticeably absent for the fourth successive year in the H-Blocks of Long Kesh for the Republican POWs on the blanket. (The above letter, written by the PRO of H-Blocks 3, 4 and 5, was smuggled out of the H-Block at Long Kesh).

Mr. Tom Hartley, a member of the prisoner of war department of Provisional Sinn Fein, speaking at the party convention on January 20, 1980, stated that any day now, they would be bringing men out of the H-Blocks and they will be **dead** or **destroyed** for life.

Mr. Hartley said there was a young man in the Blocks who had three nervous breakdowns, and he asked what he was going to come out like? Another man had lost 3 toes and had received no medical attention. Still another had no leg, because his artificial leg was broken during a disturbance.

Something will have to be done and soon for these young men, many of whom are teenagers. Why doesn't President Carter and the Irish Government speak out?

SO YOU SAY YOUR IRISH (for all the family)

CHARLES MCCARTHY

In the Young Irish disorders in Ireland in 1848 the following nine men were captured, tried, and convicted of treason against Her Majesty the Queen, and sentenced to death: John Mitchell, Morris Lyene, Pat Donahue, Thomas McGee, Charles Duffy, Thomas Meagher, Richard O'Gorman, Terrence McManus and Michael Ireland.

Before passing sentence, the judge asked if there was anything they wished to say. Meagher, speaking for all, "My Lord, this is our first offence but not our last. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise, on our word as gentlemen, to try to do better the next time. And next time sure we won't be fools enough to get caught,"

Thereupon the indignant judge sentenced them all to be hanged by the neck until dead and drawn and quartered. Passionate protest from all the world forced Queen Victoria to commute the sentence to transportation for life to far off wild Australia.

In 1874, word reached the astounded Queen Victoria that Sir Charles Duffy who had been elected Prime Minister of Australia was the same Charles Duffy who had been transported 25 years before. On the Queen's demand, the records of the rest of the transported men were revealed and this is what was uncovered: Thomas Francis Meagher, Governor of Montana, Terrence McManus, Brigadier General, United States Army, Patrick Donohue, Brigadier General, United States Army, Richard O'Gorman, Governor General of Newfoundland, Morris Lyene, Attorney General of Australia, in which office Michael Ireland succeeded him. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Member of Parliament, Montreal, Minister of Agriculture and President of Council Dominion of Canada. John Mitchell, prominent New York politician. This man was the father of John Purroy Mitchell, Mayor of New York at the outbreak of World War 1. "O, Ireland must we leave you, Driven by a tyrant hand, Must we seek a mother's blessing, In a strange and distant land?"

There is a saying that "History repeats itself". Today Ireland is once again faced with the same conditions. The British Information Service, with the cooperation of our news service, leads us to believe that the imprisoned men are common criminals. The same thing was said about the men imprisoned, tried and condemned in 1848.

Many of Ireland's finest sons and daughters—among them priests, lawyers, school teachers, college graduates and outstanding leaders are imprisoned today. Because of their love of country, these men fought for Ireland's God-given right to peace, freedom and the pursuit of happiness in a United Ireland. (Article from the August, 1979 newsletter of the Fire Department Emerald Society, N.Y.C.)

IRISH UNITY

JOHN J. FINUCANE

In some public schools our children are being taught the following: characteristics of the Irish in America—drunkards and bad tempers; and Irish contributions to America—hard liquor and potatoes. Annually, millions of dollars are made by the greeting card industry during the month of March (St. Patrick's Day), depicting our race as drunkards and fools. Does this negative stereotyping serve a purpose?

In the 19th century the British Government, through its news media, started debasing the Irish image by depicting our forefathers as apes and sub-humans. Is it the British influence in our government that keeps this negative alive? Do they fear us because of our great numbers—that we might become united? **Think about it** Let us know your views and ideas by writing to the PEC at the above address.

THINK IRISH UNITY

TALK IRISH UNITY

LIVE IRISH UNITY

NEW JERSEY PEC REACHES OUT

MIKE DUCEY

At the January meeting of the Passaic County A.O.H., the formation of a PEC was unanimously approved by the membership which will be chaired by Bob Walsh. It will be reaching out in other areas of N.J. through the different organizations to educate the public by conducting open forums, setting up information tables and by adding names to the mailing list. If you live in New Jersey and wish to help in anyway, please write to: Mike Ducey, Political Education Committee, 13 Post Brook Rd., West Milford, N.J. 07480 or call: 201-697-1496. The members of the PEC would be glad to meet with members of your organization and discuss the committee's operations. A letter has been sent to Bishop Rodemir of Paterson Diocese requesting that masses be offered in all churches one Sunday a month for hostages held in British jails in Ireland, for peace and justice and an end to the violence.

HUMAN RIGHTS—WHAT ARE THEY

JAMES F. CLARKE

(Continued from previous newsletter) The Renaissance developed newer thoughts and concepts which came into conflict with old principles. Humanism represented two opposing views of man and his nature: the Christian version - the synthesis between God and man, nature and grace - and a pagan concept of man divorced from his supernatural origin and destiny, totally immersed in a worldly concern for involvement and progress.

Machiavelli (1469-1527) in "The Prince", influences modern philosophical thought, by breaking away from the whole scholastic tradition, divorced politics from religion and morality. To him, the state is the only absolute, and the supreme obligation of the ruler is to maintain the power and safety of the country. Justice, as a guide for governing, is to be replaced by utility - the utility of the state. There is no room in Machiavelli's system for inalienable rights. He has absolved the state from every tie to objective morality and released it from any restraint of higher law. He is father to the modern theory of the absolute state.

The Protestant Reformation had effects on political thought and practice as it has reference to human rights: 1. Human nature is totally depraved, so it demeaned man's reason and free will. 2. A certain sense of independence from authority by appealing from an established order, the Roman Catholic Church, to a higher law. Also, belief in the private interpretation of the scriptures. 3. The identification of civil authority with God's will for the masses upheld the absolute right of magistrates and princes to rule above and outside any law. 4. Toleration in the sense of religious freedom was unthought of - except for their own sect. 5. The identification of a certain religion with a particular political unit promoted strong nationalistic states.

(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 in 1978 by St. Thomas Aquinas College, Sparkill, N.Y.)

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.

PEACE CONFERENCES

DAN MEEHAN

A Member of the PEC's legal committee, just returned from Northern Ireland, has been informed that the conferences now taking place in N. Ireland are designed not to bring about justice but to **defuse** American concern and potential involvement. Britain is extremely fearful that the Irish question may become a major election issue. Both Ian Paisley (DUP) and John Hume (SDLP) are using the conferences for personal gain.

We must keep up the pressure on Carter and the other Presidential hopefuls. (See Action Letter).

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

RAY O'CONNOR (Pompano Beach, Fla.)

On two seperate occasions the Irish Government could have had the North...on both occasions pro-Sinn Fein sentiment was running high...was Sinn Fein banned from RTE (TV and Radio) because of their popularity as the nationalist party?...Senator Kennedy has not said a word about Northern Ireland since he announced his candidacy for the Presidency...speaking of silence, what happened to Tip O'Neill, Senator Moynihan and Governor Carey?...will there be a big surprise for St. Patrick's Day?

ACTION LETTER

In keeping with our program of shaping the opinions of the Presidential candidates, we now call upon you to write to **both** Ronald Reagan and George Bush. These two gentlemen appear to be the front runners for the Republican Party. Below, for your convenience, is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply **rewrite** on your own personal stationary. After mailing your letters, please pass on this action letter to your family and friends so that they too can write.

Addresses to be used:

Ronald Reagan
1828 L Street, NW -201
Washington, D.C. 20036

George Bush
732 N Washington Street
Alexandria, Va 22314

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Dear Mr.

As you are a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, I call upon you to immediately include in your campaign activities public statements on the following: President Carter's silence on the oppression in Northern Ireland; condemnation of British human rights violations in Northern Ireland; call for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from Ireland; and supporting the right of all the people of Ireland to self-determination.

Sincerely,
signature

PLEASE DO YOUR SHARE!

Mark your calendar! PEC will sponsor a fund raising dance on June 7, 1980. Full details in future issues.