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POLITICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

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

August 1979

For the benefit of our many new readers, the PEC wishes to repeat its objectives in reference to Northern Ireland. The same objectives that we have been pursuing since 1975.

The PEC has been emphasising, through its education program, proven Human Rights violations in Northern Ireland committed by Britain:

We realize that Human Rights violations is only one facet of Ireland's British created problem. The cause of this problem is British presence on Irish soil. The solution: a British declaration of intent to withdraw completely (economically, militarily, politically, etc.) from Ireland and the right to self-determination for *all* the Irish people—a united 32 county Ireland.

NEWS BITS JOHN J. FINUCANE

DOES THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT BRITISH VIOLENCE IN NORTHERN IRELAND? ... 6/1/79-Daily News (Jimmy Breslin)—U.S. State Department OK's sales of 3,000 .357 magnum handguns and 500 .223 auto-rifles to the RUC for use in the Catholic ghettos, US Public law prohibits military aid to any nation guilty of human rights violations ... is Britain no longer a nation? ... 6/4/79—Congressman Tip O'Neill accuses the Carter Administration of supplying weapons to the Protestant populace ... 6/6/79—NY Post—British ambassador Peter Jay criticized O'Neill for his comments about the sale of guns to "security" forces (dehumanizers) ... O'Neill informed ambassador Jay that he will continue to speakout against actions he felt were wrong for Northern Ireland ... 6/1/79—Congressman Ham Fish "at a time we the United States should be promoting peace and justice in Northern Ireland, I find it appalling that our country is assuming the role of arms merchant in this highly volatile political situation." ... **FLASH ... FLASH ... FLASH** ... WASHINGTON—An indefinite suspension of all licenses for the sale and export of U.S. arms to Northern Ireland has been instituted by the Department of State pending a full review of their present policy according to U.S. Representative Mario Biaggi, Chairman of the 130 member Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs. Biaggi said the decision was announced by State Department Counselor Matthew Nimetz during a closed hearing of the House of Foreign Affairs Committee to which Ad Hoc Committee members Mario Biaggi, Ben Gilman, Lester Wolff, Leo Zeferetti, and Hamilton Fish were invited. This success is due to the efforts of the Ad Hoc Committee and the many individuals who found the time to write a letter of protest ... 8/3/79-(Washington, D.C. Reuter)—The Carter administration decision to suspend arms sales to police in Northern Ireland was taken in order to head off Congressional pressures for a complete ban ... one Administration official stated, "the decision was due 95% to domestic political pressures". (Ed. Note: This is the result of action by the American-Irish community and their supporters. Were you one of them?) "The administration buckled under pressure. They caved in for the reason that if they didn't, there would have been a much stronger resolution by Congress," one official said. Arrayed against the administration was a powerful force of influential Congressmen. Some officials predicted that the review would end quietly in a few months when the Congressional pressures died down, and that sales would then be resumed ... **KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THIS ISSUE** ... 8/6/79—Governor Carey's peace forum denied by Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary of State Humphery Atkins. This supposed peace conference was to be between the Dublin and London governments. Who would speak for the Nationalist minority which has been suppressed since Ireland was illegally partitioned? We do not want peace at any price—we want peace with justice!

OPINION BETTY KELLY

One of the basic elements of democracy is the right to freedom of expression, something which the western powers never grow tired of proudly boasting of to their counterparts in the East. Freedom of speech is recognized as a fundamental prerequisite for peace in any country and is complementary to Democracy.

Within the framework of this democratic right there are two basic issues at stake. First, the right of an individual party or organization to air their views and state freely their side of an argument and secondly, the elementary and essential right to the public to hear both sides.

With this in mind why then are political representatives and leaders of the Irish Nationalist Party Sinn Fein being denied this basic right? Not only in England and in Ireland, but also in the U.S. the most democratic of democracies. These leaders are being denied visitor visas to come here as invited guests of several organizations to put forth their views. Yet, members of the most deadliest Unionist para-military groups, such as the UDA, can come and go as they please. Why?

It is fear of Sinn Fein and of the truth of their argument and thus the penetration of the wall of silence, which Britain has so efficaciously placed around itself that ensures this despotic approach.

Are the Irish people doomed to forever accomodate the British Government and its puppets who impose their will by force and tyranny?

North Jersey American Irish League PEC KEN CLINTON

This PEC is currently engaged in contacting the national headquarters of the Knights of Columbus for permission to ask the K of C to become involved in the fight for Human Rights and Freedom in Northern Ireland. If permission is granted the PEC in turn will ask the local council to lead the way.

The K of C is a very powerful and influential "Catholic" organization. The Knights already support a Human Rights group known to us as "Right to Life of the Unborn". The PEC feels that the time is right for the Knights to speakout on Human rights violations in Northern Ireland as these violations primarily affect Catholics. Our message will be that Irish Human Rights is not an Irish problem but a Catholic problem.

HUMAN RIGHTS—WHAT ARE THEY? JAMES F. CLARKE

Since President Carter's campaign for the presidency, the term "Human Rights" has been mentioned virtually every day in the media. As people living in a free society, there is a good chance that we take our human rights for granted.

Senator Moynihan has stated the importance of human rights, "Human Rights is a weapon in the struggle for the survival of the nation . . . the greatest single weapon we have left for the defense of liberty".

To understand human rights, it is important to go beyond merely listing specific human rights, but to go to the philosophic bases from which these rights have risen and developed. Even though we are concerned with rights, freedom, law and the role of the state, we must think first of what it is to be a human being and our interaction with others.

The first thought expressed of understanding man's nature in an orderly, meaningful universe was expressed by the Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. They discovered through reason, a natural order in the physical world and a moral order in human nature. They provided the western world with its ideal of civilized living in a just society. They distinguished between the natural law—the unwritten law, which man comes to know through rigid reasoning and the positive law of the state. The two sets of

laws cannot contradict each other, even though positive law (State law) may change from place to place and from time to time, is to be based on natural law, itself unchangeable. If the laws of the state depart from the rules of nature, such laws are unreasonable and unjust and therefore not binding on the citizens.

Aristotle realized that man is also a social animal who must live society. The state is a creation of nature, not the product of a social contract. Aristotle's state is based on justice: 1. universal justice, that is, internal, moral righteousness; 2. particular justice directed at social order and the general welfare and 3. distributive justice, the principle of giving each man his due. To be continued. (*Excerpts from Lecture I: Philosophical and Historical Perspectives I*", 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.).

WASHINGTON DC DEMONSTRATION DAN MEEHAN

On July 1, 1500 concerned Americans, from many different parts of the US, marched in front of the White House calling for a united Ireland and an end to Human Rights violations in Ireland.

This demonstration was the largest to date. Most notable was the number of different organizations marching together in this show of solidarity behind our common cause. **TOGETHER WE STAND DIVIDED WE FALL!**

SO YOU SAY YOUR IRISH (con'd.) COPYRIGHT 79 CHRISTINA BERRY

The Normans did not gain a foothold in Ireland because of a papal bull. Religion was the "cover" for Henry's greed. Henry II wanted Ireland, and he would have invaded Ireland, with or without papal sanction with real or imagined pretext. As it happened, Henry II was invited into Ireland by an Irishman. Diarmud MacCurrogh, a disgruntled and deposed Irish king, who sought aid to regain his throne. MacCurrogh undoubtedly did not realize the full implications of his invitation. According to his code, all obligations should have ended with his death. Unfortunately they did not.

The Norman conquest of 1066 not only provided England with a new ruling class but also introduced feudalism, the social and political system prevalent on the continent at that time. This gave the conquerors of England the dual advantage of the appearance of being super-sophisticates and the reality of having an efficiently functioning government with a strong central ruler, a dynastic and hereditary king.

PEC PETITION CAMPAIGN PROGRESS VINCENT MAHON

Many thousands of petitions and letters have been forwarded to President Carter by concerned Americans, the various PEC's and the Emerald Society, Fire Department, N.Y. It might be noted that the Emerald Society distributed over 4,000 petitions. It is the opinion of the PEC that this very effective campaign played its part in the decision of the State Department to suspend arms sales to Northern Ireland. If you have not yet forwarded your petition to President Carter please do so as soon as possible.

PEC EDUCATION PROGRAM JIM TRAINOR

In order that we keep our elected officials fully appraised of the situation in Northern Ireland, the PEC has again written to all members of the US Senate and Congress. We asked them to speak out against gun sales to Britain (RUC) and to support House Concurrent Res. 122 which calls upon Britain "to embark upon a new initiative for Ireland that ends all violations of Human Rights and promotes self-determination".

BRITISH BIGOTRY PAISLEY STYLE..... BETTY KELLY

One hears much about the denial of civil and religious liberty in Communist regimes. But, isn't it ironic and shameful that Ian Paisley, as leader of militant Free Presbyterians in Northern Ireland seen fit to attack Pope John Paul II on his forthcoming visit to Ireland and in so doing has indicated for all the world to see the depths of his bigotry and hatred. Paisley is indeed one of the major proponents of sectarianism as created by the British government.

Action Letter..... John J. Finucane

This issue's OPINION deals with U.S. visa policy in reference to Irish Nationalists. On May 14, 1979, 21 year old Kieran Nugent of Belfast, N.I. The pioneer of the "blanket protest", was arrested in New York City while enroute to a press conference. He was arrested by agents of the Immigration Department.

In May, 1979, young Nugent, a member of the I.R.A., was released from Britain's Long Kesh concentration camp where he served 3½ years "on the blanket" in the infamous "hell-hole" H-Block, because he refused to accept criminal status. (Ed. note: Today there are over 400 young Irish men and women [average age 20] "on the blanket"). Upon release young Kieran vowed to continue the campaign for political status for Irish prisoners of war. He applied for a visitors visa to the U.S. so that he could tell their story. The request was denied. The only alternative left was illegal entry. The consequences—H-Block—of which he was fully aware.

Over and over, we have heard Britain's views of the Irish Nationalists—of H-Block—of political status. We have not heard the Irish Nationalist's view. Why? In the words of Kieran Nugent, "It is a conspiracy between the British, Irish and American governments to deny the American people the truth". We say, "let the people decide what is the truth".

We forced a suspension of arms sales to Northern Ireland, why not a revision of U.S. visa policy. We urge you to write to Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Below, for your convenience, is a sample letter that you may use as a guide or simply rewrite as your letter.

Address _____

Date _____

Honorable Cyrus Vance
Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Vance,

I respectfully request that the State Department revise its visa policy in order that Irish Nationalists and prominent members of Ireland's Sinn Fein party be permitted entry into the United States.

As an American citizen I am guaranteed the right to hear all sides of the Irish Question.

Sincerely,

signature