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## American Irish Newsletter - February 1995

American Ireland Education Foundation - PEC

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# AMERICAN IRISH NEWSLETTER

Political Education Committee of the American Ireland Education Foundation

Volume 20, Number 2

February 1995

## Republican Friends of Ireland

Important issues including Northern Ireland and the Irish peace process will remain at the top of the congressional agenda due to the appointment of Republican supporters of Irish issues.

The new International Relations Committee (formerly the Foreign Affairs Committee) includes two key supporters. Congressman **Benjamin Gilman** (R-NY), a long-time advocate of Irish freedom, is the new chairperson of this powerful committee. Congressman **Peter King** (R-NY), a newly-appointed member of the International Relations Committee, is another outspoken, long-time supporter of Irish freedom. King stated, "American policy towards Ireland must be made in Washington, not at 10 Downing Street as it was for far too long."

Other appointments to the new Congress that will benefit Ireland are: **Henry Hyde** (R-IL), chairperson of the Judiciary Committee; Alabama Republican **Sonny Callahan**, who will chair the Foreign Affairs Appropriations subcommittee, and the new chairperson of the Appropriations Committee, Rep. **Bob Livingston** (R-LA). These appointments give us great hope that issues of importance to concerned Americans will remain on top of the agenda in Washington.

As we go to press Rep. **Gilman** (R-NY) and Rep. **Thomas Manton** (D-NY) have reintroduced **MacBride Principles** legislation, HR 470 (Northern Ireland Fair Employment Practices Act. Members are urged to contact their Congressional Representatives requesting their support for the bill. Even better, meet with your Congressional Representative in his/her home district. You can contact the PEC for an statement of issues. Invite other concerned citizens to the meeting to help lobby the support of your Representative.

Turn To Action Request # 2 On Page Six

## Clinton Must Be More Assertive

There is mounting concern that President Clinton is backing down on his campaign promises, that he is paying too much attention to the State Department and the British government. As a matter of fact, there is concern that he is now siding with the British concerning such issues as allowing Sinn Fein to fundraise in the US and requiring the IRA to surrender its arms before it can be part of the peace process. He also has remained silent on the peace envoy, **which now is critical** as the British government continues to stall the peace process. President Clinton should take a cue from Senator Edward Kennedy, who, according to Washington *Irish Times* correspondent, **Conor O'Clery**, called on Britain to inject greater urgency into the peace process.

Former Congressman **Bruce Morrison** has urged the US Administration not to falter on its political support for the peace process. He asked President Clinton to push the British on the question of sovereignty and take steps to foster rational, conciliatory elements on the loyalist side. This is the political heart of the peace process and there is no point in mincing words about it. Morrison said that the US must side with Dublin on this.

Turn To Action Request #1 On Page Six

## Newsbits by Kathy Regan

*New Coalition [government in Dublin] will further lasting peace unionist says.* Mr. John Taylor, Ulster Unionist MP for Strangford, states, "People like Mr. Spring and Mr. Bruton understand the complexities of the Northern Ireland situation. To have them at the helm will help to bring a lasting peace to northern Ireland and improve relations between Northern Ireland and the Republic." *Belfast nationalists adopt a wait and see approach to the new coalition reads another headline.*

"There is caution, suspicion and even hostility among community workers toward the new 'rainbow coalition'." At least one believes it is a bad sign that unionist politicians are pleased that Mr. Bruton is in power. "Mr Bruton is definitely a unionist. He supports getting rid of Articles 2 and 3. If he wants to make progress on the North, he will have to recognize that the nationalist people up here are Irish." (*Irish Times, 12/17/94*)

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Robert MacBride, MP in the South African Parliament, said that the first step in resolving armed conflict was an acceptance by all sides that the status quo was unacceptable. He stated, "The first talks, two months after the ANC was unbanned, were 'talks about talks'... The ANC's position [to attempt to set preconditions such as an end to the armed struggle] was that all these issues can

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## OUR VIEW

*It's time for the PEC to again reach out to the north's Unionist community. Since 1989, PEC representatives on eight occasions met in Northern Ireland with community, religious and political representatives of the Unionist/Protestant community. Our purpose was to extend the hand of friendship to unionists and to make clear that the PEC is not their enemy -- that we do not seek in any way to harm Unionists.*

*Since the cease-fires, we have noticed a lessening of opposition in unionist circles to a united Ireland. Just recently, a 30-year-old journalist, a Northern Ireland Unionist, interviewed PEC leaders. He was taken aback by our lack of animosity towards Unionists -- the same lack of animosity held by the north's Nationalist/Republican leaders. He expected to find us wanting revenge against Unionists, if Ireland were reunited. He stated that he would support a united Ireland if it was in the best interest of the majority of Ireland's people.*

*When asked his views about a united Ireland, one prominent Loyalist we met in 1990 said that before there can be a united Ireland, there are important economic and political questions that must first be resolved. He did not rule out a united Ireland.*

*The PEC would never support a united Ireland if it would inflict upon unionists the same treatment Nationalists received under British/Unionist political domination. The PEC seeks a united Ireland in which all citizens are treated justly and as equals -- a permanent solution. That can only come through democracy and equality for all.*

*Soon we will begin sending letters to members of the north's Unionist community to continue our efforts to resolve the British-created differences between the two communities. Northern Ireland's Unionist and Nationalist communities have a lot in common and the sooner they start talking, the sooner they will get on with building a nation beneficial to them and their children.*



## Offensive Situations

by Paul Newman, *New York*

We have received many letters in response to our *Offensive Situations* column. There is great support out there for this type of action. There is also great anger. Many people are angry over the way the American Irish image is regularly degraded and the fact that the vast majority of American Irish do nothing to bring about change.

We have received letters and phone calls from non-members, proof that our members are reaching out to others. Some of them will tell us what to do, but they themselves will not get involved, nor will they join or support the PEC. Why?

### Political Education Committee (PEC) American Ireland Education Foundation, Inc.

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They are concerned as to "where the money is going." Truly these people are the victims of the negative stereotyping they want to see stopped. They are reluctant to trust the American Irish.

While we have had considerable success in the past, we could be much more successful in combatting the negative stereotyping of the American Irish image if we could get these people involved in our letter-writing campaigns. The greater the number of letters or calls received by the media, the more inclined they will be to end their anti-American Irish stereotyping.

If you appreciate this column and want to see it succeed, please tell your friends and neighbors to join the PEC. Remember, too, that the PEC is the only organization with an ongoing, national campaign against this negative stereotyping.

Send Offensive Situations to: Paul Newman,  
9 Deltic Road, New City, NY 10956

## From the North

by Rev. Des Wilson, *Director, Springhill Community, Belfast*

**Twenty years ago, members of loyalist groups in Northern Ireland often met with their fellow citizens, nationalist and republican, to talk about the shape of future government. These discussions were on topics as varied as democratically shared-government, education and the dissolving of political parties which had existed too long to be efficient or creative. The discussions were unwelcome to the British administration and were forced underground when propaganda and assassination threatened to eliminate them and those engaged in them.**

Some who watched the recent emergence of political groups based on loyalist paramilitaries pretended surprise that paramilitary groups were capable of rational thought, saying all this was a sudden phenomenon. But its roots go very far back indeed, to the time when people like Sammy Smyth (assassinated), John McKeague (assassinated) and others engaged in those discussions in the 1970s.

The people involved knew what they wanted: the dissolution of the old unionist establishment and the control clergy had over unionist and loyalist political life.

Early in the 1970s, they told Ian Paisley, the fundamentalist clergyman, that his day was over. Those who told him this were the paramilitary predecessors of the present Ulster Democratic Party (UDP) and Popular Unionist Party (PUP) who have now emerged from the paramilitaries. They were wrong in the 1970s, of course: Paisley's day was not over. His descent into futility was beginning, but by no means over.

The loyalist groups back then gave the same message as they are giving now. They want a new deal. Clerical control of politics must go. The old lazy exploitative unionist parties controlled by secret societies are no longer useful. In the seventies they gave the message with a great deal more force, saying that unless the old guard stepped aside, they would be made to do so. Nowadays the old guard is being told that it will be forced to step aside by the political and persuasive power of younger and more mature politicians for whom it is no longer enough to win votes by spitting at Catholics.

In the past, such political groups among the intensely loyal paramilitary political parties owe some of their

chances of success to campaigns run by Catholics during the past 20 years. The military, economic and political campaigns run by the republicans and the political campaigns run by the nationalists have weakened the unionist machine. But also, as fair employment becomes more and more unavoidable, (discrimination is becoming too expensive), the Orange Order declines in power. And as it declines, the whole unionist traditional election machine loses power accordingly. New unionist or loyalist parties will now have a better chance of actually winning seats than they had 20 years ago.

The emerging loyalist parties have some things in common with each other and the nationalist and republican parties. The greatest thing they have in common is a bitter distrust of the British government. As far back as the 1970s, the loyalists knew the British government could and, if necessary, would betray them. Even organizations as vicious as the Red Hand Commando (a British intelligence invention) admitted that eventually the British government would have to leave. They, unlike the establishment unionists, wanted to forge the best deal they could in rapidly changing circumstances. The establishment unionists simply refused to admit that anything was going to change -- change must be avoided at all costs and not even discussed.

This is still a distinguishing feature of

the presently emerging loyalist parties. They want the best possible deal in recognizably changing circumstances, while the establishment unionists cannot face even the possibility of change. The best the latter can offer to do is accept change forced upon them, but to do so with bad grace.

Whether the emerging loyalist parties will make any electoral impact is difficult to forecast. They will not, presumably, have the armed persuasiveness which enabled them to force loyalist support for Joe Hendron and the withdrawal of a loyalist candidate who wanted to campaign against him. They will, however, have the attraction of policies which look fresh but have been maturing for at least 20 years.

They also have the advantage of a swiftly declining Paisley, as some of his whose party members have deserted him. Paisley faces many problems: age, lack of creative policies, the decline of the British monarchy, and his failure to excite or incite the diminishing number of people who, in the past, believed they should shoot Catholics for God's sake.

Like the British army, judiciary and other institutions, Paisley's loyalty is not to the British government, parliament or the state, but to the Monarch, as long as the Monarch is Protestant. Now everything of this kind is in the melting pot, and for the first time in centuries in Britain people are talking open about Britain becoming a republic. It could even become a republic with a Catholic president or a figurehead monarch married to a Catholic.

Many of Paisley's strengths and assumptions are disappearing, leaving the way open for the new loyalist groups to attract his disillusioned followers as they leave him, which is already happening to a limited extent. Such defectors are unlikely to find solace in the unionist establishment parties which Paisley has abused for so long. What democratic people need to do now is show loyalists and unionists firmly and tolerantly what modern democracy means, the attractions it has, and how near it is to the shared ideals and hopes of those discussions in the 1970s.

## Newsbits *con't from page 1*

be attitudes during the talks. There can be no holier than thou attitudes at talks. Negotiations have to consist of give-and-take and compromise . . . The speedy release of prisoners was central to the success of the South African peace process and would signal to the community [in northern Ireland] that there were benefits from negotiations." The handing in of arms had to involve all formations and the ANC only did that two months ago. (*Andersonstown News, 12/3/94*)

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Large numbers of RUC men have seen the writing on the wall and are applying for jobs in Canada, the US, Australia and Hong Kong. The current level of 13,000 members could be reduced to the pre-Troubles level of 3,500 and morale is at an all time low as many men are bailing out before they are told to go. (*Andersonstown News, 12/31/94*)

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In the three months since the ceasefire, there have been no incidents of paramilitary activity in west Belfast. Yet, RUC and British army patrols still present a battle ready to face nationalists there. Land Rovers patrol and foot patrols with rifles at the ready are all over. Since troops no longer patrol Derry and west Tyrone, this is seen as particularly provocative to residents. It is obvious that the troops must be removed in time but community leaders insist that the RUC is not acceptable in nationalist areas and demand the complete disbandment of the force. (*Irish Times, 12/17/94*)

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Attempts to make the RUC more palatable to the nationalist community continue. The community was up in arms recently at the thought of their children singing Christmas carols at an RUC barracks. Children were scheduled to sing to the RUC and British army at Girdwood Barracks. Seamus Duffy, 15 years old, was killed just yards from Girdwood. Girdwood was also the site of the torture of nationalists who were subjected to beatings, starvation, having guns held to their head and the triggers pulled, being forced to run over glass in bare feet, etc. (*Andersonstown News 12/17/94*)

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A proposal to remove reference to the Queen from the juror's oath has also been raised. The oath is described as old fashioned and unwieldy by the government and this would simplify it. . . Unionists see it as part of the Northern Ireland sell out. (*Irish Times, 12/17/94*)

The December 18 Semtex bomb outside Fulton's furniture showroom in Fermanagh town is cause for us to seriously doubt Britain's commitment to the peace process. The bomb was clearly a British creation. Although Semtex is a popular material among IRA bombers, we know the British uncovered plenty of it recently. Semtex, therefore, is readily available to government authorities who might require a hoax bomb to underscore a political point.

## British Dirty Tricks Continue

by Sandy Carlson, *reporting from Belfast*

In addition, the bombers rang the RUC to advise them of the device's existence, but they did not use the recognized IRA code word. All this sounds silly, never mind suspicious. Imagine a trained guerilla ringing the RUC, who could trace the call instantly, to discuss a bomb. Imagine the same trained guerilla being so sure of the integrity of his word with the RUC that he did not use a recognized code word.

These significant details aside, we must keep in mind that the IRA said it did not do it. The same organization admitted killing Newry postal worker Frank Kerr in November. This admission could have caused Sinn Fein severe political damage, yet the IRA still claimed responsibility. Indeed, the IRA has a long-standing record for biting the bullet for their blunders, yet they deny the December 18th bomb.

To understand this British dirty trick, we must place it in context. The bomb came as the British repeated their demand that the IRA decommission or give up its arms. The bomb illustrates Britain's argument conveniently: If the IRA doesn't decommission or give up their arms, Ireland could face future IRA bombing campaigns. The argument is silly, of course, and the RUC has said as much. The IRA are masters of making bombs from whatever is handy, they do not depend on designer explosives. There will always be the possibility of renewed bombing campaigns. Besides, other countries not friendly with Britain might be willing to supply her opponents with weapons at some other time.

The decommissioning issue is an important psychological battle for Britain. If the IRA emasculates itself, this would be an important blow to republican supporters. At the same time it would remove the leverage which the threat of armed struggle gives to the Irish government, the SDLP and Sinn Fein. After all, without an IRA, there is little point to Britain's talking with these constitutional politicians. Also, if it can be seen that the SDLP and Dublin cannot wholly deliver the IRA, the argument for Britain's continued direct involvement in

Irish politics and subversion of democracy through repressive legislation remains very strong. The 1974 Dublin and Monaghan bombings, which turned Irish public opinion around to support the Offences Against the State Act, is a case in point.

The first comment of Michael Ancram, Britain's political development minister, following the discovery of the oddball bomb, was not the threat to human life after all, but a demand for the decommissioning of arms. "There can be no question of political representatives of paramilitary organizations entering into the peace negotiations process until their commitment to peaceful methods has been demonstrated," he said. Here we have the pot calling the kettle black. Clearly, the British aren't willing to talk with Sinn Fein, so they have to blacken their image.

All these things point clearly to the notion that the British government is not prepared to treat the Irish people like grown-ups with the right to direct their own lives. And what have they got to lose? Power. After all, the Downing Street Declaration explicitly outlines Britain's interest in controlling Ireland. The document says the British have no "selfish, strategic or economic interest" in Ireland. Thus their strategic and economic interest is not selfish. Their imperialism as they see it is benign, and they are planting bombs outside furniture shops for the Irish people's own good.

*(Editor's note: The Irish Government's Minister for Justice Ms. Nora Owen stated that she is certain that the IRA had no part to play in the Enniskillen bombing as she announced the intended release of nine IRA prisoners in the Republic.)*

1994 saw the Irish Republican Army giving Sinn Fein the opportunity to pursue the legitimate goal of Irish reunification and political independence by political rather than armed insurrectionary means which are those of the IRA. The idea was to test out reassurances which had been given by British government spokespersons that the Anglo-Irish problem was capable of being resolved by such political and constitutional methods. This Republican para-military ceasefire was achieved by the cooperation of the two anti-partitionist parties in Northern Ireland: the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), led by Mr. John Hume, MP/MEP, and Sinn Fein, led by Mr. Gerry Adams, former MP for West Belfast.

## ***Britain Stalls the Peace Process***

by Robert Heatley, *co-founder of the Campaign For Democracy, a predominantly Protestant organization based in Northern Ireland.*

This initiative was supported by Mr. Albert Reynolds, then Taoiseach of the greater part of Ireland. Despite the watering-down of Ireland's justifiable claims in the resultant Downing Street Joint Declaration and without accepting the British dilutions of Ireland's national rights, the IRA decided to give the peace process a chance of further development.

However, in the period since the commencement of the IRA's ceasefire on August 31, 1994, the statements and the actions of British government spokespersons have been unhelpful to a resolution of the problem. On one hand, they have been reassuring the Unionist section of north east Ireland's society, the native-based upholders of colonialist English rule, that the status quo constitutional position is "safe." On the other hand, they have been reassuring the rest of the Irish people that, provided their objective is pursued in a non-para-military fashion, Unionist-imposed anti-democratic barriers to its achievement will be removed. Meanwhile, they are engaged in reinforcing one such barrier, the Unionist veto on political and constitutional change. And there has been no progress on the Framework document. This behavior on the part of the British government is causing dismay and concern across a wide spectrum of Ireland's political establishments. Former Irish Prime Minister, Garret Fitzgerald of Fine Gael (the present conservative coalition governing party in the Republic), had this to say in reference to Britain's immediate response to the ceasefire: "The negative impact . . . of the continued militarization of security in conditions of peace has been aggravated by the insistence of the British

Ministry of Defense on rotating aggressive regiments to Northern Ireland at this delicate time."

With regard to political prisoners, Fitzgerald, who is not noted as a nationalist critic of the British, had this to say: "A blanket withholding of any early releases seems a most unwise approach to this whole problem. It is, moreover, impossible to reconcile with the commitment given in the closing stages of the 1985 Anglo-Irish negotiations . . . if a substantial and major reduction in violence was sustained over a period of months, this would be among the factors to be taken into account by the (British) Secretary of State in reviewing the release of prisoners . . . and particularly of those who were very young at the time or had served most of their sentences . . . And because the moment of decision about the maintenance of the cessation of violence may not be far away, the Government (Irish) now also needs to press most urgently — and to be seen to press — for the complete removal of armed soldiers from the streets of Northern Ireland." (*Ed. note: As we go to press, the British have announced a partial withdrawal in Belfast.*)

Mr. Trevor Sargent, TD (member of the Irish parliament), of the environmentalist Green Party has described the British government's lack of a positive response to short-term demands for progress towards demilitarization and the democratization of north east Ireland's society as ". . . now the single greatest danger to the peace process."

British governments have (mis)governed partitioned Ulster for 75 years now. Never, in the whole of that

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time, have they found it possible to reconcile their presence/governance with democracy. That is because of the intrinsic nature of the problem: how is it possible to govern a colony democratically when the whole purpose of the colonial government is to maintain the political status quo? It is therefore not surprising that they find it difficult to implement even basic civil libertarian reforms. However, far from facing up to the logic of the problem and the invidiousness of their position, the British government, in its inter-governmental negotiations with the Irish government, appears to remain atrophied in its characteristic pro-colonial posture vis-a-vis Ireland. It is pressurizing the Irish negotiators to accede to the perpetuation of British rule in the north east by demanding that they "act as persuaders" for getting electors in the Republic (who do not comprise the whole of the Irish nation) to approve changes in the Irish Constitution. This would be tantamount to re-writing the Democratic Constitution to the better liking of England.

Meanwhile they refuse to "value the objective of a reunited Ireland" (undoing their own disastrous handiwork which is the root cause of the problem), and to undertake to act as persuaders for it in respect of native-based Unionism in the north east which has no real autonomy of its own. Unless there is a complete about-turn in British public stances, involving the immediate implementation of democratic reforms in the north and a commitment to cease interfering in the internal affairs of Ireland, it seems certain that Anglo-Irish antagonisms (for which there is now no real need) will be prolonged with their consequent threat to the continuation of the present peace process. Irish democracy needs the full support of Americans, Democrat and Republican, legislators or electors, in the critical period ahead.

### **Help Make The English-Irish Peace Process Work!**

#### **CONTACT:**

PEC-American Ireland Education Foundation,  
54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980  
or call 1 800 777-6807

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## ***Ireland Needs Senator Dole's Support***

The new US Senate Majority Leader, Robert Dole, a candidate for US President in 1996, is one of the most powerful people in our government. He can make or break the English-Irish peace process! He can support our Government's current Irish peace policy, which is responsible in large part for the current cease-fire and peace process now underway in Ireland. Or he can adopt the blindly pro-British policy of his predecessors. Such a policy would guarantee a collapse of the cease-fire and peace process. The US is the single most important influence in the English-Irish conflict.

***YOU CAN HELP*** influence Senator Dole to come on board as a supporter and promoter of our government's Irish peace policy.

***PLEASE CALL OR WRITE HIM TODAY USING THE MESSAGE BELOW.*** Your personal communication will represent the views of 1,000 people. ***MAKE COPIES OF THIS LEAFLET AND DISTRIBUTE THEM*** to family, friends, business associates, etc. If you don't have time to call or write him, simply sign and address the form letter below and mail it to him.

His address and phone number are: Honorable Robert Dole, Majority Leader, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510 -- 1 (202) 224-6521.

***If you would like information*** about our national network of letter writers/phone-call makers who seek an end to British colonial presence in Ireland, please contact: PEC-American Ireland Education Foundaton, 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980 -- TOLL FREE phone number 1 800 777-6807.

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**Cut Here**  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Honorable Robert Dole  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Dole:

I respectfully request that you support and promote our government's Irish peace policy and oppose the return by our government leaders to a pro-British policy.

Sincerely yours,  
  
\_\_\_\_\_

## *Ireland During the Great Hunger 1845-1849*

by Frank Morris, Jr., *Pennsylvania*

In 1841, the population of Ireland was officially recorded to be 8,175,124; experts at the time said it was more likely nine million. At either figure, it was the most densely populated country in Europe. Ireland was scarcely touched by the Reformation; its population was Roman Catholic. It was a land under British military occupation, with a garrison of troops greater than on the entire subcontinent of India.

With little coal, iron or other natural resources, Ireland was not an industrialized country in the 1840s. Its economy was heavily agricultural, its land for the most part owned by absentee British landlords and worked by Irish peasant farmers. These peasants rented

small plots from the landlord and, with a few days work and a small amount of manure, could create a stock of potatoes upon which a family could exist for 12 months. More than 130,000 family plots were less than an acre in size in 1841.

The potato blight of 1845, now known to have been caused by a fungus, wiped out the subsistence crop and left the people facing starvation. Other crops had bountiful harvests but were exported to England under the protection of British troops. During the years of the Great Hunger more than enough food was exported from Ireland to have fed the starving peasants many times over.

Abandoned by the British

government for the sake of English commercial interests, the Irish had two choices: starvation or emigration. Two million starved and two million fled, mostly to America. The so-called "Potato Famine" was a watershed event for both nations.

August 20th, 1995 will be an important date for the Irish worldwide, marking the beginning of the 150th anniversary of "The Great Hunger" of 1845-1849. On that day 150 years ago, Dr. David Moore first observed the potato blight at Dublin's Botanical Gardens. A week later, a total failure of the potato crop was reported from County Fermanagh. On September 13, 1845, Dr. John Lindley noted with foreboding the widespread blight throughout Ireland.

Within five years, the face of Ireland would be tragically altered, its people scarred and decimated. Within 30 years, Ireland's population would be almost halved through starvation and emigration.

These facts are taken from *A Glimmer of Light*, an overview of Great Hunger commemorative events compiled by CONCERN Worldwide under the direction of Mr. Don Mullan. The book describes planned commemorative events, their dates and locations, providing addresses of sponsoring organizations and individuals to contact. Moreover, it lists events in Ireland, Canada, the U.S., Britain, Australia, New Zealand, etc. When this booklet is available, we will advise how you can purchase it.

It is significant that CONCERN Worldwide, an organization currently engaged in famine relief in Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire and Tanzania, should undertake this book project. Indeed, as the book's editors point out, CONCERN Worldwide is committed "to this unique historical moment and in our best tradition of all that is good in Irish people, to create on their behalf, a life-giving memorial to our famine dead."

### *The Great Hunger Commemoration Begins*

In addition to the activities planned worldwide during the 150th Commemorative Years (1995-1999), several Great Hunger projects are already operational. The Famine Museum at Strokestown, which was opened in May 1994 by President Mary Robinson, tells the story of the Strokestown estate, whose landlord, Major Denis Mahon, was assassinated, having attempted to clear two-thirds of his destitute tenants through eviction and assisted-emigration to North America. The event attracted international attention. For more details contact: Luke Dodd, Famine Museum, Strokestown Park House, Strokestown, County Roscommon, Ireland.

In 1991, South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu opened the Louisburgh Famine Centre in County Mayo in the Church of Ireland's former St. Catherine's Church—the first such facility dedicated to the memory of those who perished.

At the transfer of the deed, the Anglican Minister, Reverend Jack Heaslip, stated: "It is curiously suitable that a [Famine exhibit] should be in a former Church of Ireland church. For many, the Church of Ireland has been associated with the Ascendancy and, therefore, with those who are blamed most for the atrocities of the Famine . . . As an Anglican, I apologize to my Roman Catholic neighbors for the wrongs done to their forefathers by the cruelty of bad landlords. I believe in the forgiveness of Anglicans by Roman Catholics lies in the real beginning of reconciliation and healing of much of the hurts that can still be felt generations after the Famine itself." (Quoted from "A Glimmer of Light," published in 1994 by CONCERN-Worldwide, Dublin.)

When fully developed, the Louisburgh site will become a focal point for visitors because within a 10-mile radius one can find deserted villages and hamlets, acres of potato ridges and mass Famine graves. For information contact: John Joe Kilcoyne, Famine Centre, St. Catherine's, Louisburgh, County Mayo, Ireland.

*Information on other 150th Commemorative Sites and Events will be listed in future issues.*

#### **FOR INFORMATION**

on Great Hunger related books and videos, and monuments to be erected in the US, contact PEC-AIEF, 54 South Liberty Dr., Stony Point, NY 10980 or call 1 800 777-6807.



### Action Requests

Write the letters below (or call), preferably in your own words, or as is. Be courteous. Have friends, organizations, business associates, etc., write.

#### 1. President Bill Clinton

The White House  
Washington, DC 20500  
Phone #: 1 202 456-1111

**Request:** Please appoint the peace envoy to Ireland. The envoy will serve well to end Britain's stalling of the peace process. Please urge the British to discuss the issue of sovereignty.

#### 2. Hon. (Your Congressman)

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone #: 1 202 225-3121

**Request:** Please urge President Clinton to appoint a peace envoy to Northern Ireland and support HR 470 introduced by Congressmen Ben Gilman, chairman of the International Relations Committee, and Tom Manton.

#### 3. Tim Russert

Meet The Press  
4001 Nebraska Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20016

**Request:** Please use your influence to urge the British to stop stalling the peace process in Ireland and to negotiate in good faith.

### New Book Published January 15, 1995

## DON'T MENTION THE WAR Northern Ireland, Propaganda and the Media

"This is the propaganda war. It attracts much less attention than its shooting counterpart, but is arguably the more crucial part of the conflict--the battle for hearts and minds."

- David Miller

In the disturbing new book, *Don't Mention the War*, author David Miller exposes the propaganda that did much to distort media reporting of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Miller charges that both the Royal Ulster Constabulary and the British army gave false information to journalists in order to protect security forces from due process of law and to legitimize unlawful killings by the state. The book emerged from wide-ranging research, with Miller given unprecedented access to senior officials, as well as key representatives for all major political groups in Northern Ireland. He offers a ground-breaking portrayal of the success of media managers in manipulating public perception. **Paperback, 368 pp.....\$17.95**

**TO ORDER:** Send check for 17.95 + \$2 Postage and Handling (50 cents each for extra copies) payable to: AIEF, 54 South Liberty Drive, Stony Point, NY 10980.

## Get Ready For St. Patrick's Day

Soon you will be attending some St. Patrick's Day festivities: parades, concerts, dances, festivals, etc. This is a perfect opportunity for you to get the word out to people concerned about the English-Irish peace process.

We urge you to make copies of the R&Ds in this issue and past issues for distribution. Get permission to set up an information table. It is important that you distribute the R&Ds "Ireland Needs Senator Dole's Support" in this newsletter, and "Ireland Needs Speaker Gingrich's Support" from the January 1995 newsletter.

If you would like us to send you past issues of the newsletter, brochures about the Great Hunger, postcards addressed to President Clinton, Senator Dole and/or Speaker Gingrich, drop us a line or give us a call at 1 800 777-6807.

### To Join Or Renew Your Membership PEC-AIEF

- New Membership OR  Membership Renewal \$25
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Members receive the monthly *American Irish Newsletter*.

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Name of your Congressman/woman \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to PEC-AIEF and mail to 54 South Liberty Drive, Suite 401, Stony Point, NY 10980. For information call 1 800 777-6807.

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