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## Irish-America and the Ulster Conflict, 1968-1995

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

IRISH-AMERICA AND THE ULSTER CONFLICT, 1968-1985

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF  
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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## Chapter 6

### From the Formation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs to the Atkins Initiative, 1977-1979.

The increasing success of constitutional nationalists put a severe strain on the activities of republican groups in America. Noraid leaders today accept that the St. Patrick's Day statement by the Four Horsemen was a set-back to their efforts to win Irish-American support. The Irish National Caucus was similarly alarmed by the Carter statement. It showed that constitutional nationalists had the power to influence the President. Compared to this significant breakthrough, the small successes of the I.N.C. on Capitol Hill seemed singularly unimpressive. Republican groups, therefore, began exploring new methods by which they could make their influence more effective.

Father Sean McManus and I.N.C. officials felt that the best way to counteract the Four Horsemen was to establish a formal group of supporters in Congress. Noraid leaders backed this plan because they hoped such an association would be more effective in raising Irish human rights issues in Washington. They believed a tightly organized group of Congressmen could influence the government to issue American visas for top

I.R.A. personnel and to convene formal Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The initial moves towards establishing this new congressional group were taken by the leaders of the I.N.C. and the Ancient Order of Hibernians. A joint delegation from these two organizations approached Congressmen who had worked for the republican cause and gauged their enthusiasm for the proposed initiative. Jack Keane, the outgoing President of the A.O.H. and also a chairman of the I.N.C., played a key role in this process. He contacted Mario Biaggi and asked him to establish the new group. Biaggi responded enthusiastically and on September 27, 1977, he announced the formation of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee for Irish Affairs.

The American republican groups immediately hailed the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee as a major breakthrough. Irish-American newspapers reported on the group's activities, printing full lists of members as new congressmen joined. The Irish People, in particular, praised the new group as "the Congressional voice of the suffering people in British-occupied Ireland" and asked Irish-Americans to urge their political representatives to join:

Let us each call our Congressman and ask him to join the Irish Congressional Committee. Tell him of the suffering and horror of British occupation. Ring him again and again. Make an appointment to talk to him personally. Remind him that it is the same army which burned the Capitol and the city of Washington - the same army which is torturing the noble people of Ireland. . . Hurry up! Tomorrow may be too late. Who knows how many Irish children

will die tonight at the hands of these British murderers.<sup>2</sup>

Mario Biaggi became chairman of the new Congressional Committee. He had many personal characteristics which attracted support from Irish republicans in America. During his 23-year service with the New York Police Department, Biaggi was highly decorated. He developed a strongly conservative attitude to law and order, epitomized by a career in which he shot fifteen people and killed two. The Congressman maintained that it was during his police service that he developed an interest in Ireland. He recalls that one of his colleagues, an Irish-American cop named Pat McMahon, had passed on an encyclopedic knowledge of Irish history. The two would discuss Irish affairs while on their "beat" together. It was this background that pushed Biaggi to make statements in Congress on the Ulster problem and to strongly criticize British policy over internment and the Bloody Sunday killings. He soon forged strong links with the Irish-American republican organizations.

From his first associations with the Ulster conflict, Biaggi's critics accused him of merely playing for the Irish-American vote. The Italian-American Congressman was always angered by this suggestion and continually stated that his interest lay in the desire to see human rights in Northern Ireland. He asked:

Why does nobody ever question why Ted Kennedy is in this? Last time I looked, he was Irish, Catholic, white, but he's involved with

blacks, Jews and Puerto Ricans. My constituency is only 6% Irish but I say, human rights for all human beings.<sup>3</sup>

Biaggi emphasized that his constituency was mainly Italian-American and that he was continually re-elected with large majorities. He said that this proved he was concerned with Ulster not merely as a ploy to win Irish-American votes. The Congressman's opponents could, however, point out that he had aspirations towards a seat in the Senate. In 1973 Biaggi also ran for Mayor of New York. Irish-American votes could greatly help these ambitions.<sup>4</sup>

Whatever the motivations behind Biaggi's involvement in the Ulster conflict, he did prove very successful in recruiting congressmen to the Ad Hoc Committee. There were seventy members by the end of October 1977. Membership increased steadily to a peak of one-hundred and thirty by 1979. Constitutional nationalists have always claimed that these numbers were misleading and that the Ad Hoc Committee was basically a "paper organization" -- many congressmen who joined took no active part in its activities, it met infrequently, and achieved very little. Critics of the group, such as Garret FitzGerald, further claimed that new Congressmen were "joiners" and signed up as members partly to oblige a colleague and partly to create an impression of involvement in a wide variety of issues.<sup>5</sup>

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee encompassed the entire ideological spectrum of American politics. However, the

majority were democratic representatives from eastern constituencies, particularly New York. The core of the Committee consisted of Mario Biaggi, Hamilton Fish (R., N.Y.), Benjamin Rosenthal (D., N.Y.), Lester Wolff (D.N.Y.), Benjamin Gilman (R., N.Y.) Norman Lent (R., N.Y.) and Joshua Eilberg (D., PA). The fact that none of this activist core were Irish-American invited constitutional nationalist accusations that the Ad Hoc Committee was merely a vehicle for Italian and Jewish Congressmen to win some Irish votes.<sup>6</sup>

Prominent members of the Ad Hoc Committee began sponsoring bills on Northern Ireland and publicizing alleged violations of human rights. Mario Biaggi, in response to President Carter's promise of financial aid in the event of a political solution, introduced a bill granting economic assistance to Ulster. The proposed legislation stipulated, however, that U.S. assistance should only be granted after a British withdrawal. Most of these bills received very little backing and usually "died" after the initial attempts to lobby support.

Ad Hoc committee members had more success in working for individuals accused of republican activities in Northern Ireland. Joshua Eilberg began supporting Pearse Kerr, a 17-year old Philadelphian who had moved to Belfast in 1972. Kerr was arrested by the R.U.C. in August 1977 and charged with membership of the junior I.R.A. and possession of a firearm. American republican groups claimed the youth was tortured in

Castlereagh interrogation center and forced to sign a confession to these charges.<sup>7</sup>

Joshua Eilberg, with the support of the Ad Hoc Committee members in Congress, began pressing the British Embassy in Washington for an explanation of why Kerr was being held without bail. He accused the British of inflicting "inhuman treatment" and demanded Kerr's immediate release.

Eventually British authorities dropped the charges against Kerr. He was freed on November 23, 1977. Eilberg and the Ad Hoc Committee immediately claimed it was their influence which secured the victory, while British officials maintained they lacked sufficient evidence for a successful conviction. The Ad Hoc Committee exploited the issue, achieving a publicity coup when they organized a large welcome home ceremony for Pearse Kerr in Philadelphia. A pipe band and hundreds of republicans greeted Kerr as he got off the airplane and he was formally received by Mayor Frank Rizzo.<sup>8</sup>

The Ad Hoc Committee also worked on the case of Damian Eastwood, a Californian lecturing at the Ulster Polytechnic in Jordanstown. On December 21, 1977, Eastwood and an accomplice, Linda Quigley, were arrested after a police patrol found a bomb in their automobile. Eastwood cooperated with the R.U.C. and told them that two gunmen were holding his wife and children hostage and forced him to drive the bomb to the Culloden Hotel in Hollywood. When police arrived at Eastwood's

house there was no trace of the gunmen but his wife corroborated the story.

Eastwood was held in Crumlin Road Jail before his trial and immediately the Ad Hoc Committee began publicizing his case in Washington. Mario Biaggi joined with congressmen from California and charged the F.B.I. of complicity in Eastwood's detention. They accused the bureau of supplying the R.U.C. with files on Eastwood and of carrying out wide scale harassment of Irish-Americans in California.<sup>9</sup>

In September 1978, Damian Eastwood was tried before Lord Chief Justice Sir Robert Lowry in Belfast. Lowry concluded that the prosecution could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Eastwood had not acted under duress. All charges against the defendant were dropped. The Ad Hoc Committee claimed, as in the Kerr case, that their activities in Washington had forced the British to accept standard legal procedures and adhere to the rule of law.<sup>10</sup>

In conjunction with work on behalf of U.S. citizens arrested in Ulster, the Ad Hoc Committee also increased efforts to win American visas for Irish republicans. In August 1978, Joshua Eilberg and Hamilton Fish traveled to Britain and Ireland to investigate the issue. During their week-long visit, they met with United States Consular officials in London and Belfast. The two Congressmen also interviewed a delegation of leading republicans who had been refused entry into America.

When they returned to Washington, Fish and Eilberg compiled an official report and presented it to the Committee on the Judiciary. They concluded that the State Department was acting "unfairly and unjustifiably in denying or revoking visas" and that officials "dealt with applicants in an unsympathetic and high-handed manner." The two Congressmen also urged the State Department to reevaluate all the cases in which it had denied visas to republicans.<sup>11</sup>

While they were in Ireland, Fish and Eilberg held a series of press conferences for the purpose of attacking what they saw as the denial of human rights in Ulster. Upon their return to the United States, they delivered a much publicized letter to President Jimmy Carter which stated:

The Northern Ireland (Emergency Powers) Act of 1973 and its various subsequent amendments enacted by the British parliament have greatly eroded the basic common law principle of due process. The people of Northern Ireland are being subjected to warrantless searches and arrests, prolonged detention without charges, harsh interrogation methods, and non-jury trials in which a single judge sits alone imposing long-term sentences. Frankly, Mr. President, we were appalled at these conditions and by the armed camp atmosphere we encountered.<sup>12</sup>

Although the Carter administration ignored Fish and Eilberg's report, the two politicians did create a substantial amount of publicity for the human rights and visa issues. Their criticisms of the British government and State Department were given extensive media coverage that embarrassed officials in London and Washington.

The Irish National Caucus encouraged and financed similar "fact finding" trips by American politicians to Ireland. Caucus leaders also conducted similar "investigative" trips themselves. In 1979, a Caucus delegation led by Father Sean McManus, Fred Burns O'Brien, and Rita Mullen toured Northern Ireland. During the visit, McManus infuriated unionist politicians and the Northern Ireland Office by his accusations that the R.U.C. was being used as a training force for loyalist paramilitaries.<sup>13</sup>

While in Ireland, McManus held extensive discussions with Sean McBride, a founder of Amnesty International and a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize as well as the Lenin Peace Prize. McBride agreed to become chairman of a new group called the Irish National Caucus of America Liaison (I.N.C.A.L.), which would be based in Dublin. The I.N.C.A.L.'s function was to provide information on Ulster to the Caucus and Ad Hoc Committee. It would also publicize the activities of American republican groups to the Irish public.

Prominent members of the I.N.C.A.L. included former Irish cabinet minister Kevin Boland, and Michael Mullen, General Secretary of the Irish Transport and General Worker's Union. Neil Blaney T.D. was also associated with the group and in December 1979 conducted a tour of America to promote the Caucus and Ad Hoc Committee.

The formation of the I.N.C.A.L. and the support given by these prominent Irish politicians gave added publicity and

prestige to republicans working in Washington. It increased the I.N.C.'s ability to receive information on Ireland and created a trans-Atlantic link through which alleged British human rights violations could be exposed.

Undoubtedly, the most ambitious and optimistic initiative taken by the Ad Hoc Committee and the I.N.C. was the attempt to form a "peace forum" for Northern Ireland. In October 1978, a delegation composed of Caucus officials and leaders of Irish-American societies met with Mario Biaggi. They suggested he could mastermind a peace forum on Ulster by calling on all the participants to come together and discuss their differences. The concept of this peace forum originated from Father Sean McManus and Fred Burns O'Brien. They envisioned Biaggi performing the role of "honest broker" between unionist and nationalist representatives.

Biaggi was convinced the scheme could be successful. He agreed to lead the initiative and began exploring ways to bring Ulster's contending factions together. The congressman insisted that his motivation for taking on the role of mediator came from a humanitarian desire to try any scheme which might achieve peace in Northern Ireland. Some of Biaggi's critics, however, contend he was swept up by the idea of emulating President Carter's recent success at the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel. They alleged his primary motivation was the prestige and political recognition a successful peace mission in Ulster could bring.<sup>14</sup>

One of the main sources of hope that a peace forum could succeed was the growing politicization of Ulster loyalist groups, particularly the Ulster Defence Association. In the mid-1970s, loyalists began supporting the establishment of an independent Ulster. They envisaged an important role for the United States in this new political formula. Consequently, their traditional attitudes towards American involvement in the Ulster conflict changed radically.

In the early 1970s, Ulster loyalist groups had condemned American politicians and Irish-American groups who were active in supporting the nationalist cause. Both the Ulster Volunteer Force and U.D.A.'s newspapers attacked Irish-Americans as anti-Protestant bigots who were financing a war of genocide against them. They reserved particularly scorn for Senator Edward Kennedy and Paul O'Dwyer who were generally characterized as carrying a deep malicious hatred for Ulster loyalists.

These verbal criticisms sometimes carried over into physical threats. When Congressman Lester Wolff visited Northern Ireland in 1972 he reported that a group of loyalists told him they would kill Ted Kennedy if he ever came to Belfast.<sup>15</sup> The U.V.F. also held news conferences at which they produced lists of Noraid members and warned the individuals concerned that they were legitimate targets for assassination.<sup>16</sup>

Partly as an attempt to counteract Irish-American republican groups, loyalist organizations began establishing a support network across the Atlantic. They naturally concentrated on Canada where significant numbers of Ulster Protestants had emigrated in the 1950s and 1960s. In Toronto and nearby Hamilton, there were a number of Orange Lodges and social groups composed of Ulster exiles. The area became the center of the loyalist network in North America. A group called the Canadian Ulster Loyalist Association formed in 1971 and began raising funds for the families of U.V.F. prisoners.<sup>17</sup> A Canadian branch of the U.D.A. also emerged and by 1975 had sent \$30,000 to the groups headquarters in Belfast.

The U.V.F. and U.D.A. also organized gun-running networks based in Canada. The first evidence of this came in 1975 when British agents intercepted a cache of rifles and explosives on board a freighter which had sailed out of Nova Scotia. A leading official in the Canadian U.D.A. was later jailed for masterminding the scheme which was intended to provide his comrades in Belfast with continuous supplies of modern weapons.<sup>18</sup>

Although Ulster loyalists concentrated on building their overseas support network in Canada, they did establish a chain of contacts in the United States. In 1972, the U.D.A. command issued a statement alleging that American loyalists who had fought in Vietnam were in Belfast training volunteers in

guerilla warfare.<sup>19</sup> This sparked of a series of exaggerated rumors that reached a peak when some Irish-American groups claimed members of the U.D.A. had undergone training by the Ku Klux Klan and survivalist groups in the Southern United States.<sup>20</sup>

The most industrious loyalist supporter in the U.S. was Harold Alexander. He was born in Belfast in 1930, but emigrated to Philadelphia and became an American citizen in 1969. In 1976, he founded an organization called the Alexander International Development Consultants aimed at promoting the loyalist cause in America. The group registered under the F.A.R.A. as the U.S. arm of the U.D.A.. Alexander also listed over ten other loyalist and unionist groups as his associates.<sup>21</sup>

Alexander and his wife were the only registered members of the group, yet from 1976 onwards they conducted a wide range of activities in support of Ulster loyalism. He appeared on television and radio to oppose Noraid spokesmen and made contacts with politicians and government officials in Washington. Alexander also arranged American tours for prominent loyalists and made frequent visits to Northern Ireland to meet with U.D.A. and U.V.F. commanders.<sup>22</sup> The most important function he performed was publicizing the loyalist ideal of an independent Ulster.

The concept of Ulster independence had its origins in the mid-1970s when the U.D.A. formed a "think tank" to formulate

political policy. The group called itself the New Ulster Political Research Group (N.U.P.R.G.) and gradually proposed that Ulster should be an independent state. One of the major problems of independence was how the new state could survive economically. In an attempt to solve this problem, members of the N.U.P.R.G. went to Libya in 1974 in order to secure the promise of financial aid from Colonel Ghaddafi.

This attempt to get Libyan financial assistance failed and, from 1975 onwards, the N.U.P.R.G. increasingly concentrated on the possibility of American aid. As the group developed the practical means for independence they emphasized an important role for the United States. The loyalists suggested that the political institutions of an independent Ulster should be modeled on America, with a President, a Bill of Rights, and a Congressional style committee system drawn from an elected legislature. Some even suggested that the United States could provide external defense and that the administration of justice could be supervised by a Supreme Court Judge. The N.U.P.R.G. felt that this provision would instill confidence in the legal system from both communities.<sup>23</sup>

From the key role proposed for the United States in their political scheme, the N.U.P.R.G. began to dilute their traditional aversion to the Irish-American dimension. Some felt that if contacts were made with Irish-American groups, such as the Irish National Caucus, they could win support in

Congress for Ulster independence. Fortunately for the loyalist plan, the I.N.C. were concurrently contemplating the peace forum at which all sides in the Ulster conflict could come together to discuss their differences. The Caucus was thus receptive to the possibility of talks with the loyalists.

After initial contacts were made, a group from the Ulster Independence Association, led by George Allport, met with Fred Burns O'Brien in Washington. The loyalists were enthusiastic about O'Brien's suggestion of a peace forum and both agreed it could be used to explore the conditions under which independence would be acceptable to nationalists. Later in the spring of 1978, Andy Tyrrie, leader of the U.D.A., publicly supported the idea of a peace forum. In a complete reversal of earlier attitudes, he suggested Edward Kennedy would be a good mediator, because;

We believe that Senator Kennedy is the one man who would be acceptable to both communities. He is a Catholic, but the Protestant community believes in his integrity and credibility.<sup>24</sup>

Ted Kennedy declined the offer to mediate and said that negotiations were better left to the conflicting parties themselves. The cross-Atlantic contacts continued, however, and when Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg were on their tour of Ireland in August 1978, they met leaders of the N.U.P.R.G. in Belfast. At this meeting U.D.A. commanders Andy Tyrrie and John McMichael, along with Glen Barr, told the congressmen that they were tired of being manipulated by unionist politicians such as Ian Paisley. They outlined their proposal

for Ulster independence and said they were ready to sever the link with Britain.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout these discussions, Glen Barr, the N.U.P.R.G.'s most articulate spokesman, adopted a conciliatory tone. He attacked sectarian violence and continually emphasized that Catholic rights would be guaranteed in an independent state. He also told the Congressmen his organization would welcome the opportunity to participate in a peace forum organized from America.<sup>26</sup>

Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg were greatly impressed by the loyalist delegation and concluded that their proposal was "a most significant change and the best possibility of progress there has been for some time." The two politicians met with Mario Biaggi in Washington and convinced him that the N.U.P.R.G.s attitude;

demonstrated clearly that the loyalist paramilitaries were disenchanted by continued British domination and were actually seeking a political solution by negotiation with the republican groups, independent of Britain.<sup>27</sup>

Encouraged by these reports, Biaggi decided to travel to Ireland and test support for a peace mission. In November 1978, he and congressman Ben Gilman met with over twenty-five different groups. They were encouraged by the enthusiasm of the loyalist paramilitaries and received qualified support from Sinn Fein. When Biaggi returned to the United States he announced that the peace forum would convene in Washington on May 14, 1979.

Irish-American republican groups were divided in their attitude to the loyalist political program. Most of the leading figures in Noraid refused to accept negotiations with people they regarded as bigots and sectarian murderers. Others, principally members of the I.N.C., were very enthusiastic and wanted to explore the possibility of an independent Ulster. They were especially attracted by the loyalist willingness to cut their ties with Britain. Consequently, support grew for a loyalist tour of America so that the N.U.P.R.G. could discuss their political views and give impetus to Biaggi's peace forum.

In December 1978, the Minnesota Irish National Caucus invited the N.U.P.R.G. to come to the United States. The group accepted, and on January 18, 1979, a loyalist delegation embarked on a two-week tour. The most prominent members of the group again included Glen Barr, Andy Tyrie, as well as Tommy Little and Harry Chicken. Harold Alexander organized their itinerary which consisted of a series of public lectures, discussions with political groups, and media appearances.<sup>28</sup>

The tour was one of the most unusual events of the current troubles. The loyalists, noted for their traditional militancy and association with sectarian killings, impressed nearly everyone they met with their willingness to accommodate the aspirations of the nationalist community. The group held discussions about the status of Catholics in an independent Ulster with Archbishop Roche, Vice Chairman of the American

... of Catholic Bishops, and Monsignor Kelly, head of the Catholic International Conference Center. Afterwards both clergymen praised the N.U.P.R.G. for their progressive political ideals. They were similarly acclaimed after discussions with Senator George McGovern and the Chief Clerk of Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most unexpected supporters of the loyalist tour was Paul O'Dwyer. He and Liam Murphy of the A.O.H. hosted the N.U.P.R.G. delegation in New York and they all became instant friends over shots of Bushmill's whiskey.<sup>21</sup> O'Dwyer was so impressed by the loyalists that he provided them with free legal service to draft a constitution for an independent Ulster. The loyalist group published this constitution in a pamphlet entitled, Beyond the Religious Divide. It contained numerous provisions to safeguard minority rights and was widely praised by political analysts as a sincere and thoughtful attempt to break the logjam of Ulster politics.<sup>22</sup>

The success of the loyalist tour, however, did not help the rising problems faced by the peace forum. Mario Biaggi had hoped to fund the forum with cash contributions from U.S. corporations and peace foundations. This money never materialized and Biaggi could not afford to bring the various Ulster groups to Washington. The peace initiative was also scuttled by the refusal of all constitutional parties to participate. British and Irish government officials plus the nationalist and unionist constitutional parties flatly refused

to get involved in discussions with "terrorists." Biaggi was therefore forced to postpone the initial meeting date of the peace conference.

In the summer of 1979, Biaggi tried to get the American government involved, hoping that this would give the peace conference more legitimacy and thus attract the main unionist and nationalist parties. On August 7, he met with Jimmy Carter and tried to persuade him to take over the position of mediator. Carter flatly refused to get involved, realizing that such a move would contradict the wishes of both the British and Irish governments.

Following Carter's negative reaction, Biaggi, in a last desperate attempt to save the peace initiative, decided to go to Northern Ireland and bring the conflicting groups together. He arrived in Belfast with a group of I.N.C. officials and immediately sent out invitations for all political factions to attend a conference in the Europa Hotel. The N.U.P.R.G. were the only loyalist group to attend, and continued to believe the meeting might further plans for Ulster independence.<sup>32</sup> Although republicans were extremely skeptical of the initiative, Sinn Fein agreed to participate and sent Gerry Adams, Daithi O'Connail, and Ruairi O'Bradaigh as representatives.

When the two delegations arrived at the Europa Hotel, they occupied separate conference rooms. Mario Biaggi attempted "shuttle diplomacy" between the groups and tried to

persuade them to call a ceasefire. Jack Holland contended that Biaggi was no Henry Kissinger. Despite four hours of moving between the republican and loyalist delegations, he achieved no agreements.<sup>33</sup>

Apparently, the loyalists were quite flexible during the talks, but the republican delegation remained intransigent. Gerry Adams in particular was uninterested in constructive dialogue and completely refused Biaggi's suggestion of an I.R.A. truce. The conference eventually disintegrated and hope for a Camp-David style settlement in Northern Ireland ended.

The failure of Biaggi's peace forum was a serious blow for the N.U.P.R.G. It represented the end of American interest in their scheme for Ulster independence. Apart from this the group's ideals never received significant support within the unionist community. The vast majority there believed that an independent Ulster would be economically inviable and that breaking the link with Britain would only lead to eventual absorption by the Republic of Ireland. Independence remains a political option which attracts only minimal support.

The collapse of peace negotiations also had detrimental consequences for Irish-American nationalism by exacerbating a conflict which had been festering between the I.N.C. and Noraid. When the Caucus formed in 1974, Father Sean McManus made clear that the group endorsed the "armed struggle" of the I.R.A.. He soon realized, however, that congressmen did not want to be associated with an organization which supported

violence in Ireland. Consequently, McManus began to deny that the Caucus had links with the I.R.A., refused to send funds to Ireland, and adopted the dove of peace as its emblem. In 1977, he told reporters:

The I.N.C. has no connection whatsoever with the I.R.A. or indeed with any other group in Ireland. We are an exclusively American based organization dedicated to the non-violent pursuit of human rights, justice and peace. The I.N.C. is logically and necessarily opposed to British policy in Ireland because the British government historically, currently, and par excellence uses violence to achieve political objectives. But the Caucus is opposed to all forms of violence whether it be British or Irish, state or civilian. The Caucus believes totally in the philosophy of non-violence.<sup>34</sup>

Noraid was incensed by this shift within the Caucus. The group accused the I.N.C. of hypocrisy because it was making money by appealing to Irish-American sympathy for the for Ulster Catholics yet was sending no money to alleviate their suffering. Personal animosities also grew between McManus and Michael Flannery who was incensed by what he called I.N.C. attempts to encroach on Noraid fund-raising. In 1978, just before the annual Noraid dinner, McManus organized his own function and began soliciting republican supporters for \$25 donations. Flannery strongly condemned this action, believing it reduced potential donations which Noraid would have collected.<sup>35</sup>

Noraid leaders also condemned the Caucus for maintaining dialogue with Ulster loyalists. After Fred Burns O'Brien met leaders of the Ulster Independence Association in 1977,

Michael Flannery accused him of being an agent for the American government. The Noraid chief conveyed this suspicion to Provisional Sinn Fein in Belfast which then issued a statement accusing Burns O'Brien of scheming with the C.I.A. to undermine Irish-American groups. They declared him persona non grata with the republican movement and warned to keep out of Ireland.<sup>36</sup>

Fred Burns O'Brien immediately denied the accusations against him. He was supported by Fr. Sean McManus, who issued a statement condemning the Sinn Fein allegations. This conflict with the leadership of the republican movement in Ireland alarmed some members of the Caucus who had opposed McManus's more moderate line. Irish National Caucus chapters in New Jersey, Illinois, Connecticut and Pennsylvania condemned the central leadership in Washington. These chapters attacked the discussions with Ulster loyalist groups and eventually broke away to form independent organizations.<sup>37</sup>

The feud between Sinn Fein, Noraid and the Caucus increased after the failure of the "peace forum" conference at the Europa Hotel in 1979. The I.N.C. accused the republican delegation of inflexibility and issued an article in The Andersonstown News attacking Sinn Fein for wrecking "a great opportunity for political progress."<sup>38</sup>

Sinn Fein quickly responded by accusing the Caucus of furthering the aims of British propaganda. Gerry Adams stated that because the peace forum did not include British

officials, it gave credence to the perception that the Ulster conflict was purely sectarian. An article in An phoblacht/Republican News outlined this view and concluded:

The British government for the last decade has justified its presence in the six counties as one of security forces keeping religious communities apart. For republicans to sit down and talk with loyalists (in a peace forum which by definition means a meeting of the antagonists) positively helps the British in projecting their role as a peace keeping force instead of an occupation force.<sup>39</sup>

Noraid fully supported Sinn Fein and intensified its own condemnations of the Caucus. In October 1979, a series of articles appeared in The Irish People which personally attacked Fr. Sean McManus and accused the Caucus of fomenting divisions within the republican network in America.<sup>40</sup>

Journalists reporting on the conflict between Noraid and the Caucus concluded the feud had detrimental affects on American republicanism. Bernard Weinraub produced an extensive analysis of the split in which he supported the contentions of Irish government officials that fund-raising for republican groups had been seriously impaired. Republican publicity efforts also declined as Noraid and the Caucus devoted their energies to mutual criticism. Weintraub concluded that despite the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee, republicanism in America was in total disarray by the beginning of the 1980s.<sup>41</sup>

Apart from the adverse effects of internal squabbling, American republicanism also continued to suffer from the

actions of the I.R.A.. Between 1977 and 1978, the Provisionals began a series of fire bomb attacks. Some analysts alleged that this campaign was launched because of the decline in Irish-American funding. The I.R.A. could not afford to buy large amounts of explosives so they switched to incendiary devices. These only required a small amount of explosives attached to a can of petrol. When the device exploded, it sent a ball of fire bursting into the target.

In February 1978, the I.R.A. detonated a fire bomb such as this at the La Mon House Hotel near Comber, County Down. The bar was packed with people who were engulfed in a sheet of blazing petrol. The explosion killed twelve people while twenty-three received appalling burns. The incident produced front page reports in the main American newspapers and editorials describing the I.R.A. as "savage monsters." N.B.C. television news broadcast pictures of the charred remains of victims and implied this was the consequence of money donated to Noraid.<sup>42</sup>

In 1979, republicans also launched a series of attacks on British politicians and members of the "establishment." In March, an I.R.A. team assassinated Sir Richard Sykes, the British ambassador to Holland. Eight days later, the I.N.L.A. planted a bomb which killed Airey Neave, Conservative Party spokesman on Northern Ireland, as he drove out of the House of Commons parking lot. These killings increased American criticisms of Irish republicanism, but the condemnations

reached unprecedented levels after the attack on Lord Louis Mountbatten.

On August 27, 1979, the I.R.A. detonated a bomb on Mountbatten's fishing boat off the west coast of Ireland. The explosion killed Mountbatten, his grandson Nicholas and a local boat boy. The elderly dowager Lady Bradbourne, a passenger on the boat, died of her injuries the next day while Lord and Lady Bradbourne were both seriously injured.<sup>43</sup>

The killing of Lord Mountbatten created an international wave of revulsion against the I.R.A.. The attack was seen as particularly callous against a figure whose long and distinguished military career had never brought him near Ireland. During the Second World War, many American troops had served under Mountbatten and he had earned the admiration and respect of many. Throughout the United States, the attack became the primary news item and hundreds of editorials described the I.R.A. as everything from "fanatical terrorists" to "psychopathic murderers."<sup>44</sup> Typical of the response in the United States media was the commentary given by The Atlanta Constitution:

It is tempting to describe the I.R.A. terrorists who killed Lord Mountbatten as animals, but that's demeaning to animals. It would be more accurate to describe them as savages, but at least savages can be excused because of ignorance . . . It is a terrible shame that a man of such talents and achievements can be killed by cowards so low. They are truly the dregs of humanity.<sup>45</sup>

Irish-American republicans responded to this universal condemnation of the I.R.A. in the media by issuing statements justifying the attack. They said the killing was justified because Mountbatten was a member of the British ruling class. Typical of these was the reaction of Noraid spokesman Tom Duffy:

The I.R.A. is waging a war on behalf of the Irish nation. All members of the enemy are legitimate targets . . . I think the killing - not the murder - was just part of the war that is going on. He should not be more immune than anyone else. We wonder why the sympathy and tears are so selective. They worry about a 79-year old man, but they haven't said a word about all the young Irish people that have been killed over the years.<sup>46</sup>

These statements by republicans did not change the American media perception of the Mountbatten killing. On the contrary, a number of newspapers attacked Noraid's "callous view" of the killing and issued editorials urging Irish-Americans not to fund the group. Many newspapers also appealed to the Carter administration to clamp down on I.R.A. gunrunning.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps the greatest challenge to Irish-American republican groups in this period, apart from the extremely adverse publicity in the media and their own internal conflicts, was their continued harassment by constitutional nationalists. The Four Horsemen continued their work against Noraid and the I.N.C. These politicians further increased their prestige by persuading the British to launch new policy initiatives in Ulster.

In Ireland, constitutional nationalists also maintained their attacks on Irish-American republicanism. Following the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Irish government and S.D.L.P. condemned Mario Biaggi and accused him of giving encouragement to the I.R.A.. In February 1978, Irish Taoiseach Jack Lynch sent a much publicized open letter to Biaggi. Lynch attacked the Congressman for his "public identification with supporters of violence in Ireland" and strongly condemned the Irish National Caucus. This letter was sent to every member of Congress in the hope that it would discourage membership of the Ad Hoc Committee. Lynch also wanted to embarrass Biaggi in the American media. Jack Holland claimed that this objective was particularly successful and concluded:

Editorial after editorial poured scorn and derision on the Bronx politician for thinking he knew anything about Northern Ireland. He was generally held up to ridicule as a dupe of clever pro-I.R.A. manipulators or abused as a cynical politician playing for Irish-American votes.<sup>48</sup>

The Lynch administration launched similar attacks on the republican network in America from 1978 onwards. The Irish Foreign Minister, Michael O'Kennedy, persistently attacked Noraid while members of the Irish diplomatic corps worked to isolate the Ad Hoc Committee in Congress. Irish officials also kept linking the I.N.C. with support for violence, despite the group's continued claims to the contrary.<sup>49</sup>

The Irish government further strengthened its links with constitutional nationalists in America. It assisted the Four

Horsemen in their condemnations of republican groups. Irish diplomats encouraged these leading Irish-American politicians to pressure the British government into political change. Eventually this activity produced results which enhanced the prestige and influence of the "Big Four" and eclipsed the relatively unsuccessful attempts of republicans to influence political events in Ulster.

After their 1977 St. Patrick's Day statement, the Four Horsemen had fully expected the British government to launch a new political initiative in Northern Ireland. They believed they had made a bold and imaginative move in attacking the republican network in America and felt they deserved a reward. What they wanted was a renewed effort by the British to construct a political framework which would give the nationalist community real power.<sup>50</sup>

Although the British government warmly welcomed the 1977 St. Patrick's Day statement, it did not want to take any new political initiatives in Ulster. The dismal failure of the constitutional convention in 1976 had convinced the Callaghan administration that the best way to govern the province was to continue direct rule for an indefinite period. The British had also introduced the twin policies of Ulsterization and Criminalization and believed their success depended on a long period of political stability.<sup>51</sup> They therefore opposed new political initiatives which would be likely to increase conflict and tension in Ulster.

British Secretary of State Roy Mason, therefore, made no further attempts to reach a political agreement in Northern Ireland. In contrast, the Four Horsemen felt that a new political initiative was the minimum reward they deserved for attacking American republicanism. When the "Big Four" realized that the British were not going to make any major move in Ulster, they became increasingly critical of the Callaghan administration. Their growing anger and frustration was compounded by a series of official reports in 1978 which confirmed the British had committed a series of human rights violations in the province.

The origins of these official reports dated back to December 1971, when the Irish government had filed complaints with the European Commission on Human Rights. The complaints alleged that British troops had used five illegal interrogation techniques on internees. The five methods consisted of a series of sensory deprivation techniques, which included exposing suspects to continuous "white noise" and covering their heads with black hoods for extended periods of time. In September 1977, the European Court on Human Rights found Britain guilty. The judges concluded that the five techniques, while not constituting torture, were "inhuman and degrading."

The leaders of constitutional nationalism in America responded to the verdict of the European Court and the lack of political activity in Ulster by sharply criticizing the

British in their 1978 St. Patrick's Day statement. Fourteen major politicians including Senators Joe Biden, Gary Hart, George McGovern and Congressman Tom Foley, joined the Four Horsemen in their condemnation. The joint statement continued to criticize Irish-Americans who supported the I.R.A., but also attacked the British government and unionists for blocking political progress.<sup>52</sup>

The criticisms of British political inactivity in Ulster increased throughout 1978. Tip O'Neill, speaking at an Ireland Fund dinner in May, alleged that the Callaghan administration's lack of commitment to a political settlement was contributing to the continued death and destruction in Northern Ireland.<sup>53</sup> Senator Edward Kennedy concentrated on the abuse of human rights and on June 11 called for the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate allegations of brutality by the R.U.C.<sup>54</sup> Hugh Carey showed his displeasure at British policy by refusing to attend a dinner honoring Prime Minister Callaghan in New York.<sup>55</sup>

In December 1978, Senator Daniel Moynihan traveled to London in an attempt to assess the effects of this increased criticism on British officials. He met with Roy Mason and Foreign Secretary David Owen. The Senator told them that the campaign of constitutional nationalists against republican groups in America would be ineffective unless there was political progress in Ulster. Mason and Owen explained that a new political initiative, in a situation in which there was no

basis for consent, would only make the problem worse and intensify violence. This casual attitude infuriated Moynihan who told reporters:

I came away absolutely dazed; he (Mason) had no intention of doing anything about Northern Ireland except keeping British troops there. The question of Northern Ireland never ever came up at conferences of the two leading British political parties. There is no political will to settle.<sup>56</sup>

When Moynihan returned to the United States, he gave details of the London meeting to his constitutional nationalist colleagues. They were similarly outraged at the British attitude and determined to increase their efforts for a political initiative in 1979. Their resolve was further heightened by the continued evidence exposing misconduct by Ulster's security forces.<sup>57</sup>

In the summer of 1978, Amnesty International conducted an inquiry into allegations of police brutality during the interrogation of terrorist suspects. The Amnesty report provided strong evidence of seventy-eight cases in which suspects suffered serious physical injury while being held at Castlereagh Interrogation Center.

The British government responded to these findings by calling an independent inquiry to examine interrogation procedures. Harry Bennett, an English Crown Court Judge, led the investigation in early March 1979. The subsequent Bennett Report confirmed that R.U.C. detectives physically mistreated terrorist suspects during questioning and recommended the

installation of closed-circuit televisions to monitor interrogations. The report also called for regular physical examinations to be carried out on suspects in order to detect physical abuse.

The Bennett Report's findings of R.U.C. misconduct contributed to the severity of criticisms contained within the 1979 St. Patrick's Day statement by the Four Horsemen. The message accused the British government of "negligence" and "acquiescence" in the face of "gross violations of human rights" and called for a more extensive investigation into the ill-treatment of suspects. It renewed the demand for a fresh political initiative in Ulster and received full endorsement from Irish Foreign Minister Michael O'Kennedy.<sup>58</sup>

John Hume encouraged the Four Horsemen to increase their pressure on the British government and suggested to Tip O'Neill that he could lead a political delegation to Ireland. Hume felt that such a trip, timed to coincide with the British general elections in April, could convince both the Conservative and Labour parties to give more consideration to a political solution in Northern Ireland.<sup>59</sup>

Tip O'Neill, convinced by Hume's suggestion, led a delegation of fourteen leading Democrats and Republicans to Ireland in the Spring of 1979. O'Neill held discussions with leaders of the S.D.L.P., and also with Harry West of the Official Unionists and Ian Paisley. He was reportedly very impressed by the sincerity of the two Unionist leaders and the

talks increased his optimism about the success of new attempts to establish political dialogue.

O'Neill also traveled to London to meet leaders of the main political parties. Although Prime Minister Callaghan suggested there might be a new Ulster initiative if the political climate changed, O'Neill felt there was no real intent for such a move. He was further infuriated by a political deal Callaghan had reached with the Unionist M.P.s at Westminster. The Prime Minister, leading a minority government, had agreed to increase Unionist representation in exchange for continued support of Labour policies in the House of Commons.

O'Neill condemned the Labor/Unionist deal and accused both British parties of using Ulster as a "political football." On April 20, he issued his strongest attack on British policy and stated:

I have been deeply concerned by the lack of political progress in Northern Ireland over the last few years ... together with all sides in Ireland we insist that Britain bears a heavy responsibility for the failures of recent years on the political front. We have been concerned that the problem has been treated as a political football in London or has otherwise been given a low priority ... we insist on an early, realistic and fresh initiative on the part of the incoming British government, so as to get negotiations moving quickly.<sup>60</sup>

This statement caused an immediate political controversy in Britain. Shirley Williams, the Education Secretary, and former Prime Minister Harold Wilson attacked Irish-Americans

for their ignorance of the Ulster conflict. Margaret Thatcher re-emphasized these criticisms while Robert Adley condescendingly observed, "There are few more nauseating sounds than ignorant Irish-American politicians visiting Dublin and grubbing around for votes in the United States by venting their spleen on Britain."<sup>61</sup>

British television and newspapers carried O'Neill's remarks as the lead story on April 20, 1979. The major tabloids ran banner headlines advising the House Speaker to "Keep Your Nose Out of British Affairs!" The "quality press" issued editorials which were equally abrupt. The Daily Telegraph commented:

Mr. O'Neill's observations were both brief and confused, and probably intended primarily for the Irish electorate in America, but Americans would be best advised to do their electioneering at home ... What makes Mr. O'Neill's speech a scandal rather than a trivial impertinence is the effect which it is likely to produce in Ulster itself. There it will both encourage the I.R.A. in its new campaign of murder and harden Protestant militancy.<sup>62</sup>

This critical reaction from British politicians and the media was strongly condemned by constitutional nationalists in Ireland. Both the Irish government and S.D.L.P. defended O'Neill. Garret FitzGerald sent a widely publicized letter to The Daily Telegraph describing him as;

a man of outstanding political courage and statesmanship. A man who has shown that his only concern with our affairs is to work for peace, regardless of what it may cost him in votes from Irish-American extremists.<sup>63</sup>

On April 22, Vice-President Walter Mondale met with Irish Foreign Minister O'Kennedy in Washington. After hearing O'Kennedy's views, Mondale defended Tip O'Neill and said the House Speaker had acted out of a genuine concern felt at the highest levels of the United States government about what was happening in Northern Ireland. Michael O'Kennedy implied that Jimmy Carter fully supported O'Neill's remarks. One day later, however, White House aides distanced the President from the controversy and said the House Speaker's remarks did not necessarily reflect the views of the Carter administration.<sup>64</sup>

Hugh Carey delivered the strongest reaction to the British attacks on Tip O'Neill. The New York governor issued a joint article with Dr. Kevin Cahill, his adviser on Northern Ireland. The article appeared in major newspapers throughout America and defended O'Neill's remarks. It re-emphasized the call for a new political initiative and proposed that if Britain refused to act it should be made an "international outcast" and the United States should impose economic sanctions:

If political encouragement and financial incentives do not succeed in strengthening Britain's willingness to initiate moves towards peace, then the American Congress should seriously consider applying the same economic sanctions that are employed against Rhodesia, Russia, and other nations for violations of human rights.<sup>65</sup>

Despite this American pressure, the new British government, now headed by Margaret Thatcher, gave no

indications that it would change the Ulster policy that had been followed by the Callaghan administration. Constitutional nationalists, therefore, re-doubled their efforts. In May 1979, Taoiseach Jack Lynch met Margaret Thatcher in London and expressed his strong desire for a fresh political move. In America, Senator Kennedy gave an extensive interview to The Belfast Telegraph in which he re-emphasized that the American government would give extensive financial aid to support an agreed political framework in Northern Ireland. He also warned that if a new political initiative was not taken, this would strengthen republican groups in America and undermine the ability of the Four Horsemen to block funding for the I.R.A.. He said that the lack of political progress in Ulster;

makes it more difficult for the moderate forces and voices that have spoken and condemned the kind of support that Noraid has provided in search of a more violent solution. It makes our job more difficult. The Speaker is representing the moderates, and we are having difficulty in holding a consensus. I personally feel extremely strong about the need to condemn violence and terror. But our ability to influence and convince people that there is a better way would be diminished if nothing happens.<sup>66</sup>

Daniel Moynihan re-emphasized Kennedy's argument in an interview with B.B.C. television on June 2, 1979. He denounced the I.R.A. as "a band of sadistic murderers" but told reporters that the U.S. wanted a united Ireland and would not be "endlessly patient" in waiting for this. He also accused the British government of abusing the successful efforts of

the Four Horsemen against I.R.A. fund-raising in America, by adopting a complacent attitude to the Ulster problem.<sup>67</sup>

The Thatcher government reacted to these renewed criticisms with the traditional off-hand dismissals of Irish-American ignorance about Ulster. Surprisingly, Dr. Connor Cruise O'Brien supported the British response. The former Irish cabinet minister wrote an open letter to Daniel Moynihan which appeared in the American press. O'Brien stated that Irish-American pressure would achieve nothing except make Unionists more intransigent and encourage the I.R.A.. He further issued a strong personal attack on Moynihan's lack of knowledge about Ulster and accused him of being motivated by an "ethnic anglophobia:"

When you and I last talked about Ireland, it struck me that you knew little about the subject. But in your manner, as we talked of Ireland, there was something odd: a vague, muffled stubborn certainty ... Where does that certainty come from? Not from study, nor from personal experience. But it comes easily from the level of the mind which is dominated by the confident intuitions of ethnic tradition ... (Which has) taken over your own thinking process. And even more unfortunately, your speaking process.<sup>68</sup>

This letter led to an exchange of criticisms between O'Brien and the Four Horsemen in the press and in periodical journals. The conflict grew so intense that Tip O'Neill was reported as describing the former minister as "a silly son of a bitch."<sup>69</sup> Although members of the Irish government and S.D.L.P. did not articulate similar opinions in public, they made it clear that they fully welcomed Irish-American

political support. John Hume published an article in Foreign Affairs in which he criticized O'Brien's views and pointed out:

The support for violence from the United States has been contained and has in fact dropped. That this should have been maintained during the past years of political vacuum in Northern Ireland is an extraordinary achievement. There are many men, women and children who are alive today, I am convinced, because of the political courage and concern of these men (Four Horsemen).<sup>70</sup>

Constitutional nationalists grew increasingly frustrated by the lack of British response to their calls for political change. The Four Horsemen eventually concluded that the only way their appeals would be given serious consideration was to take punitive measures. The opportunity for such action presented itself in the summer of 1979.

Since the early 1970s, the Royal Ulster Constabulary had purchased a significant number of weapons from American arms manufacturers. In 1979, the R.U.C. placed an order for 3,000 .357 Magnum handguns and 500 rifles with the Connecticut arms manufacturers, Sturm, Ruger and Company. Following previous government policy, the United States State Department had permitted the sale of arms to the police in Northern Ireland.

The Irish National Caucus received information about this arms shipment and Fr. Sean McManus pushed Mario Biaggi to reverse State Department policy. Biaggi attacked the arms sale on two grounds. He contended that by permitting the sale of United States weapons to the R.U.C., the State Department was

supporting one particular faction in Northern Ireland and could not claim its policy was neutral and impartial. The Bronx Congressman also pointed out that both Amnesty International and the European Court had found the R.U.C. guilty of human rights abuses. He contended that it would be a massive contradiction for the Carter administration to claim its foreign policy was guided by a desire to protect "human rights," yet supply weapons to a proven violator. Biaggi announced that when the annual Appropriations Bill for the Department of State came through Congress in July, he would sponsor an amendment designed to halt further weapons sales to the Ulster police.<sup>71</sup>

In June, Tip O'Neill issued a statement in which he supported the ban on sale of arms to the R.U.C.. He hoped that the threat of his support for such an amendment would persuade the Thatcher government to take the call for a new political initiative seriously. Instead, the new Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Humphrey Atkins, condemned O'Neill as irresponsible in criticizing the sale of weapons which the R.U.C. would use "to defend the community and themselves from attacks by mindless assassins." In Washington, deputy British Ambassador Peter Jay, met with O'Neill and conveyed his government's regret and displeasure at the Speaker's remarks.<sup>72</sup>

When the State Department Appropriations Bill came before Congress on July 12, 1979, Biaggi proposed his amendment.

After a short debate, the House voted in support of Biaggi and in early August, the State Department announced it would suspend its license for arms sales to the R.U.C., pending a review of policy. Tip O'Neill played a vital role in this decision. He could have easily blocked Biaggi's amendment. As Speaker of the House, he controlled the flow of legislation on the floor of Congress. But on this occasion, he did not intervene. Instead he chose to let the amendment carry as an indication to the British government of the kinds of problems it could expect if calls for a fresh move on Northern Ireland continued to be met with derision and ignored.

The State Department had supported the sale of guns to the R.U.C. and traditionally maintained a pro-British policy. Because the Carter administration was facing internal criticism at home and from Congress, Tip O'Neill's power was elevated. Carter relied on the Speaker's support to get legislation through Congress and he could not afford to criticize such a powerful and essential ally. Considering these factors, the administration felt the need to maintain good relations with O'Neill was more important than the risk of offending the British. Therefore, the R.U.C. arms sales were suspended.<sup>73</sup>

In America, Irish-American weekly newspapers from New York to San Francisco all hailed the arms suspension as a great victory and editorial comments in the metropolitan and national newspapers was generally favorable. The New York

Times criticized the suspension while The Washington Post gave it tacit support. The Chicago Tribune issued strong praise for the decision:

When Tip O'Neill criticized the State Department for licensing sales of weapons to the police in Northern Ireland he was exactly right. The sales should be stopped immediately ... If the R.U.C. really needs the weapons [and we question the wisdom of introducing 3,000 handguns and 500 automatic rifles to an already over-armed environment] there are plenty of other countries that can provide them [other than America].<sup>74</sup>

In Northern Ireland, the reaction from Unionists was swift and hostile. On August 2, Ian Paisley delivered a strong protest to the American Ambassador in London, while Alan Wright, Chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Federation, accused the Carter administration of "tacitly supporting terrorism in Northern Ireland."<sup>75</sup> The Belfast NewsLetter ran an editorial which attacked the conduct of United States police forces and described the R.U.C. as one of the most professional in the world. It claimed the State Department not only "denied arms to the force that keeps this country in some semblance of order, but also gave an almighty boost to the killers. A powerful propaganda weapon has been placed in their hands."<sup>76</sup>

In Britain, these attacks were echoed by an assortment of Conservative M.P.s, including Mrs. Jill Knight and Mr. John Stokes. Among government ministers and those directly involved with Northern Ireland, however, reaction was uncharacteristically muted. The arms sale suspension came as a

profound shock and brought home the power of the Irish-American lobby. Humphrey Atkins refrained from the customary attacks on the Four Horsemen and down played the arms ban. He said that the R.U.C. had no pressing need for new weapons and in the future they could be obtained from other countries.

British Defense Minister Francis Pym, a former Northern Ireland Secretary, supported Atkins' restrained reaction. He said that the efforts of Irish-American politicians had been misinterpreted in Britain and their concern for Ireland was positive and genuine. Merlyn Rees, another former Ulster Secretary, supported Pym and praised the Four Horsemen for their work against the I.R.A. network in America. Almost immediately, the British press interpreted this changed attitude as indicative that the government had yielded to Irish-American intimidation and was about to make new political moves in Ulster. The Daily Telegraph warned:

The government should realize, before it is too late, that any proposal for Ulster bearing the marks of American sponsorship, would be foredoomed to failure, the price of which might well be counted in the lives of U. K. soldiers and civilians.<sup>77</sup>

A further indication of the shift in British policy came just five days after the R.U.C. arms ban. Hugh Carey, on his way back from vacation in Europe, met with Humphrey Atkins in London. There were reports that Carey was accompanied by a State Department official at this meeting and they discussed the possibility of holding a peace conference in New York. Atkins said he would consider the proposal but maintained that

Ulster's political future could not be negotiated. When Carey returned to New York, he announced he would host talks between Atkins and Irish Foreign Minister O'Kennedy in September and said he had received strong indications that the Thatcher government would make significant policy changes in Ulster.<sup>78</sup>

In Britain, while some newspapers and political commentators dismissed the "Carey initiative", others reacted quite positively. The Guardian, for example, ran an editorial which concluded:

Humphrey Atkins should follow his first thought and accept Hugh Carey's invitation to take part in informal talks, in New York, on the future of Northern Ireland. He should not be deterred by the mist of diplomatic protocol and Anglo-Irish suspicion which have swiftly enveloped the Governor's suggestion.<sup>79</sup>

Throughout August, press speculation about the proposed "Carey initiative" increased as Edward Kennedy, Tip O'Neill and the Irish government gave their support. On August 21, A. McIlroy, New York correspondent for The Daily Telegraph, reported that "an authoritative American diplomatic source" told him that there were extensive unofficial consultations between Whitehall and Dublin over the agenda of the New York talks. McIlroy claimed the main elements of the discussions would be the prospect for political progress in Ulster; an exchange of views on cross-border economic cooperation; and joint measures to combat the I.R.A.<sup>80</sup>

It appears, however, that these discussions between British and Irish officials collapsed because of the

opposition of Margaret Thatcher. She discussed the feasibility of the Carey initiative with Humphrey Atkins, but remained unconvinced the exercise could produce significant benefits. Consequently, Atkins wrote to Carey on August 23, and said he would not be attending the proposed discussions. He was careful, however, to praise the Governor for his actions against I.R.A. fund-raising and wrote that he found their meeting in London, "invaluable and enjoyable and looked forward to seeing him again."<sup>81</sup>

The fact that the British government was even prepared to contemplate talks in New York is indicative of the changed perception of Irish-American involvement in the Ulster question. Many political analysts agree that the R.U.C. arms ban brought home to the Thatcher administration the power of the Four Horsemen and indicated the potential trouble they could cause in Washington. British officials also feared that if they did not respond to the Irish-American lobby, they would exploit the Ulster issue in the upcoming presidential race.<sup>82</sup>

Constitutional nationalists did not attack Atkins' refusal to go to New York because they felt the British were on the verge of making a major political initiative in Ulster. Their expectations were realized on October 25, 1979, when Atkins announced he would convene discussions aimed at finding consent among Ulster's political parties. Most significantly, the Northern Ireland secretary chose to disclose details of

the new initiative before the Association of American Correspondents in London.

At this press conference, Atkins lavished high praise on President Carter and the Four Horsemen for steering the flow of Irish-American money away from the I.R.A.. He appealed directly to the Irish-American leaders for more understanding of the British position and asked for their assistance in encouraging political dialogue in Ulster:

I hope that as a result of speaking to this audience today more awareness will be forthcoming in the United States and that will in turn temper the attitudes and utterances of some people and groups there who in their profound ignorance of the situation only play into the hands of an outcast terrorist organization whose aim is to destroy the democratic structure of government in Ireland and replace it with a distinctively Marxist oriented regime.<sup>83</sup>

In New York, the British Information Service quickly issued copies of the Atkins address to the media. On November 12, Margaret Thatcher gave an extensive interview to The New York Times in which she further elaborated on the new political initiative. Sean Cronin reported that the U.S. State Department was very enthusiastic about the change in British policy and said it would be most pleased if the discussions produced an agreement.<sup>84</sup>

In late October, the British issued a White Paper on the new initiative. It excluded from consideration either the Stormont system or the Sunningdale formula. Discussion of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland was also ruled out.

Within these parameters, the main political parties were free to consider any arrangements for the devolution of power from Westminster. The White Paper described the task of the conference as being "to establish the highest level of agreement."

Ironically, in view of the role played by John Hume in working for the initiative, there was initial confusion about whether the S.D.L.P. would participate in it. Internal party divisions led to the resignation of Gerry Fitt as leader. He was succeeded by John Hume and in December the party eventually agreed to take part in the conference. Atkins also persuaded the D.U.P. and Alliance parties to attend, but failed to secure the cooperation of the Official Unionists.

The first session of the Atkins conference took place on January 7, 1980, and the last on April 18. By the end of January, it was clear that very little basis for agreement existed among the parties. The Four Horsemen were somewhat disappointed that the British did not force the Unionists into some form of cooperation. This disappointment, however, did not quench their conviction that they had succeeded in forcing the British to do something in Ulster.<sup>55</sup>

Analysts of the Atkins initiative almost universally agree that American pressure was the key element finally pushing the British into action. One of the strongest proponents of this view is Adrian Guelke who concluded:

While the evidence of the role of the American connection is largely circumstantial, no other

factor loomed as large in analysis of the initiative and it seems reasonable to conclude that American pressure was the main reason for the initiative.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the eventual failure of the Atkins conference, the Four Horsemen saw their campaign as a major success. They fully believed that for the first time in the present "troubles," Irish-American political pressure had actually been instrumental in changing British policy. The Big Four could now give a concrete example of the influence of constitutional agitation and persuade Irish-Americans that theirs was the only way to achieve real political change in Ireland.

In the summer of 1980, the leaders of constitutional nationalism in America were again able to demonstrate their power and ability to influence Irish politics. On July 8, an article in The Washington Star reported that the new Irish government of Charles Haughey was planning to remove Sean Donlon as the Ambassador in America. Political analysts in Ireland suggested the move was part of a change in policy by the Taoiseach designed to win support among the militant nationalist elements in Fianna Fail.

Haughey especially wanted to cement an alliance with Neil Blaney T.D.. In 1979, Blaney had toured the United States under the sponsorship of the Irish National Caucus. During the trip, he launched a series of attacks on Sean Donlon because of his constant attempts to undermine the Ad Hoc Committee. Donlon, since his appointment as Ambassador in 1978, had

continued to lead a sustained campaign against republican groups in America. When Blaney returned to Ireland he began pushing Haughey for Donlon's removal.<sup>87</sup>

Reports of this deal between Haughey and Blaney initiated a series of criticisms from Irish politicians. John Hume and Garret FitzGerald both called the move a classic piece of political opportunism which would weaken constitutional nationalism in America. When the Four Horsemen heard of Haughey's proposed action, they each issued statements praising Donlon for his invaluable work in promoting constitutional nationalism in America.

Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy contacted John Hume and William Shannon, the American Ambassador to Ireland. They instructed both men to convey their extreme displeasure to Haughey.<sup>88</sup> Later, O'Neill and Kennedy telephoned the Taoiseach and said they would not cooperate with his administration if Donlon was removed from Washington.<sup>89</sup> Haughey, faced with this intense pressure from America, backed down. On July 9, he met with his cabinet and announced Donlon would remain as the Irish Ambassador. Brian Lenihan, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, further stated that there would be no major changes in the government's policy towards Northern Ireland.<sup>90</sup>

Reports immediately circulated that the Four Horsemen had reversed Haughey's decision to remove Donlon, and their intervention received praise in the American press. O'Neill

and Kennedy, however, wanted Haughey to make a public condemnation of Irish-American republican groups. John Hume conveyed their feelings in an appeal which stated:

In order that all shreds of suspicion be removed and this unfortunate affair closed, it is necessary that it be made clear that the activities of congressman Mario Biaggi and the organizations with which he is associated enjoy no support whatsoever among any section of Irish opinion.<sup>91</sup>

Haughey again acquiesced to this pressure and on July 27, made a major policy speech at a Fianna Fail conference in Cork. He strongly attacked Irish-American republicanism and told his audience there was "clear and conclusive evidence available to the government that Noraid has provided support for the campaign of violence and direct assistance for its pursuit." The Taoiseach also attacked the Irish National Caucus and accused it of prolonging the violence in Ulster.<sup>92</sup>

The Donlon affair was yet another example of the influence of the Four Horsemen. Their obvious ability to affect political developments in Ireland increased the prestige of constitutional nationalism in America. The increasing political successes of Kennedy, Moynihan, O'Neill, Carey and their supporters stood in sharp contrast to the failures of the Ad Hoc Committee. While Noraid and the Irish National Caucus were engaged in mutual antagonisms and Mario Biaggi was still suffering from the failure of his peace initiative, constitutional nationalism was going from strength to strength. As both nationalist factions entered the

eighties, it seemed certain that constitutionalism would consolidate its ascendancy and republicanism would remain marginal with little influence in America.

## NOTES

1. Some republicans also hoped that the establishment of a formal group might succeed in attracting the Four Horsemen back into the traditional nationalist fold. Caucus leaders admitted privately that having the Irish issue presented in Congress by representatives with names like Rosenthal, Biaggi, and Eilberg, implied that Irish-American politicians were suspicious of the I.N.C. They hoped that if the congressional group could exploit the abuse of human rights in Northern Ireland, the Big Four would eventually adopt a more militant, pro-republican position.

2. The Irish People, 1 October 1977.

3. David McKittrick, "The Irish Connection," World Press Review 26 (November, 1979).

4. In October 1973 Biaggi ran for mayor of New York against Abraham Beame. His campaign collapsed after he was questioned by a grand jury investigating sponsorship of private immigration bills in Congress in 1971. Newspapers reported some politicians were taking bribes and hinted Biaggi had links with the Mafia. During the grand jury investigation, the press reported that Biaggi took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer questions about his finances. In the mayoral race, Biaggi categorically denied this accusation. When the federal judge released details of the investigation, however, it showed the congressman had in fact taken the "Fifth". This revelation wrecked Biaggi's campaign and he was forced to withdraw and issue a public announcement he had "made a mistake".

5. Dr. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author, 19 December 1990.

6. Because Congressmen have to fight for re-election every two years, this makes them particularly susceptible to the influence of political groups which promise to deliver votes. Some political analysts believe that the Ulster issue has been important to political success in New York. Roger Williams, for example, contends that Peter Peyser (R., N.Y.) and Lester Wolff (D., N.Y.) won their congressional seats in 1972 because of their support for the Fort Worth Five. Father Sean McManus continually supports this assertion and claims that I.N.C. electioneering has successfully blocked attempts by congressmen who are allied with constitutional nationalists to win seats in the Senate. See Paul Artherton, "Irish-American

Lobbies Reflect Splits at Home," Fortnight Magazine, 18 March 1985, 13.

After the formation of the Ad Hoc Committee, a number of State and local politicians also began to get involved in the Ulster issue. One of the most vocal was Peter King, the comptroller for Nassau County, Long Island. King became an outspoken proponent of Irish republicanism and made a number of trips to Belfast. He visited republican drinking clubs in Andersonstown and delivered fiery speeches attacking every aspect of British rule in Ulster. See Frank Lynn, "King Presses Case on Irish Issue," The New York Times, 26 November 1977.

7. See report and editorial on the Pearse Kerr case in The Irish People, 19 November 1977.

8. The New York Times, 26 November 1977.

9. Damian Eastwood had been active in republican groups in San Francisco. Biaggi and Philip Barton(D.,C.A.) said that because of information supplied by the F.B.I., Eastwood had been continuously interrogated about republican activities in America. See Warren Hinckle, "Bay Area Man's Plight in an Ulster Jail," The San Francisco Chronicle, 14 February 1978.

10. Linda Quigley, the eighteen year old Belfast woman arrested with Eastwood refused to cooperate with the R.U.C. Because of this, she was sentenced to four years imprisonment for possession of an explosive device.

11. Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg, Northern Ireland : A Role For The United States? Report before the House Committee on the Judiciary. (August/September 1978): 219.

12. Letter from Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg to President Jimmy Carter, reprinted in The Irish People, 23 September 1978.

13. From report entered in Congressional Record, House of Representatives, 96th. Cong., 1st sess., 14 September 1979.

14. See Linda Charlton, "Biaggi, a Bronx Power, Has a Second Constituency in Northern Ireland," The New York Times, 7 May 1978.

15. Congress, House, Subcommittee on Europe, Report of Congressman Lester Wolff on Trip to Northern Ireland: Hearing Before Subcommittee on European Affairs. 18 July 1972, 23.

16. Sally Belfrage, Living With War : A Year in Northern Ireland (London: MacMillan, 1987), 237.

17. See U.V.F. journal Combat for information on the C.U.L.A. June 1975. James Heaney recalled receiving continuous abusive phone calls from Toronto every time he appeared on the radio or television in Buffalo.

18. "Arms smuggling is said to aid Protestants Less than I.R.A.," The New York Times, 5 February 1976. British detectives received an anonymous tip that these weapons were hidden on board the Dart America. When they uncovered the weapons the British authorities also arrested Tom Thompson in Liverpool. Thompson was the "supreme commander" of the U.D.A. in Britain and received a ten year prison sentence for his involvement in the gunrunning scheme.

19. This claim was first reported in The Belfast NewsLetter and later in The Los Angeles Times and The New York Times, October 16, 1972. A 1981 trial in Glasgow revealed an attempt by the U.V.F. to establish an arms pipeline from the United States. Six men were found guilty of buying Ingram machine-guns in Atlanta and shipping them to the loyalist paramilitary group in Belfast. See The Washington Post, 30 July 1981. In 1986 police in Toronto smashed a major gunrunning network which had been organized by U.V.F. leader John Bingham and Canadian loyalists. One of the key figures in the conspiracy was William Taylor who bought weapons in the U.S. and transported them back into Canada in a dummy fuel tank in his truck. The weapons were then sent to the U.V.F. via loyalists in Liverpool. See The Irish Echo, 4 April 1990.

20. This allegation was made by the American Irish Political Education Committee in its Newsletter the article entitled, "Loyalist Death Squads," appeared in the October/November 1984 edition. In the 1970s a number of prominent loyalist leaders did manage to travel to the United States and met with small groups of their supporters. In 1975 Andy Robinson, Andy Tyrie, and Tommy Lyttle of the U.D.A. and Ken Gibson, Hugh Smith, and William Mitchell of the U.V.F. toured the U.S. and attended a symposium on Northern Ireland at the University of Massachusetts. Following this, in September 1977, Glen Barr of the U.D.A. conducted a lecture tour of America as a guest of the State Department.

21. Information from F.A.R.A. file number 2706 on Alexander International Development Consultants, 12 July 1976 - 12 July 1984.

22. Information from F.A.R.A. file for 12 January 1979.

23. See Chris Walker, "The American File," The Listener (February 3, 1979).

24. The New York Times, 26 May 1978. See also, "Barr Plans For Northern Ireland to Include United States," The Irish Times, 22 February 1978.

25. Apparently this disillusionment had increased after the failure of the Paisley/Baird strike in May 1977. The U.D.A. leaders felt that both politicians had used them merely to enhance their own political careers. See Robert Crawford, Loyal to King Billy : A Portrait of the Ulster Protestants (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987).

26. Hamilton Fish and Joshua Eilberg, op.cit., 48-49.

27. Ibid., 47.

28. Alf McCreary, "Ulster Protestants Promote Plan to Cut British Ties," The Christian Science Monitor, 18 January 1979.

29. From Ulster, newspaper of the U.D.A., February 1979. Glenn Barr recalls his disbelief during a radio phone in when an Irish-American alleged that the British were holding on to Ulster because there was gold and coal in the Mourne mountains.

30. Ed Maloney, "The U.D.A. Roadshow Returns Home," Hibernia Magazine (February 22, 1979). Harold Alexander also arranged for the N.U.P.R.G. to meet loyalists in America. In Ardmore Pennsylvania they attended an Ulster heritage dinner which was attended by top officials from the American Orange Lodge and other loyalist supporters. Information from F.A.R.A. documents 12 July 1979.

31. Sean Cronin, "O'Dwyer Plays Host to Top Loyalists," The Irish Times, 19 February 1979. Also Jack Holland, "An Ulster Twilight in New York," Hibernia Magazine (February 15, 1979). O'Dwyer seems to have maintained his contacts with the loyalists. In Donal O'Donovan Dreamers of Dreams : Portraits of the Irish in America (Bray: Kilbride Books, 1984), 159, he says, "Anytime I've been to the North I've never failed to meet and discuss with Protestant leaders. There's a lot of political maturity in guys like Andy Tyrrie."

32. Although the U.V.F. had initially been enthusiastic about Biaggi's plan, by the summer of 1979 they had returned to the traditional view of American "interference" in Ulster. The U.V.F. Brigade Staff wrote to Biaggi and strongly rebuked his actions. They attacked the Ad Hoc Committee for its support of the I.R.A. and accused it of working to push Ulster Protestants into a united Ireland. The U.V.F. condemned the ignorance of the Jewish members of the Ad Hoc Committee for supporting the I.R.A. - an organization which, it claimed, had strong links with the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

From letter printed in U.V.F. newspaper Combat August 1979. See also The Belfast Newsletter, 6 August 1979.

33. Jack Holland, The American Connection, 140-141.

34. Letter from Fr. Sean McManus to The Chicago Tribune, 16 December 1977.

35. Noraid leaders also alleged that the Caucus was deliberately trying to embarrass them. During an Irish-American meeting in Boston in 1978, Fr. Sean McManus and Fred Burns O'Brien delivered a report on their recent trip to Belfast. They told the audience that the I.R.A. was furious with Noraid because of its delays in sending funds. Michael Flannery believed this was an attempt to link his organization to the direct financing of violence. He launched a sharp personal attack on McManus and accused the Caucus of working for the British.

36. Kevin Kelley, The Longest War : Northern Ireland and the I.R.A. (Westport Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1982), 280.

37. The Irish People, 18 August 1979.

38. "M. Dawson Attacks P.S.F.," The Andersonstown News, 18 August 1979.

39. An Phoblacht/Republican News, 1 September 1979.

40. See for example, the editorial in The Irish People, 18 October 1980 which outlines all the points of contention between Noraid and the Caucus.

41. Bernard Weinraub, "Split Among Irish-Americans Said to Cut Funds to I.R.A.," The New York Times, 7 September 1979.

42. The adverse publicity caused by the La Mon bombing caused I.R.A. leaders to recognize the extremely adverse effects such incidents had on the republican movement. They began scaling down the fire bombing campaign and took measures to tighten discipline in their attacks.

43. On the same day as the Mountbatten assassination, the I.R.A. exploded a booby trap bomb in Warrenpoint which killed eighteen members of the Parachute Regiment.

44. For a collection of these commentaries see, Editorials on File "The Murder of Lord Louis Mountbatten," August 1979.

45. The Atlanta Constitution, 30 August 1979.

46. "Irish Rebel Aide in U.S. Terms Killing Justified," The New York Times, 29 August 1979.

47. See, for example, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 29 August 1979.

48. Jack Holland, op. cit., 132. Biaggi says that the conflict with Lynch only served to win greater publicity for his own cause. He also claims there were no mass defections from the Ad Hoc Committee.

49. The Ancient Order of Hibernians were particularly critical of Lynch's actions. President Jack Keane threatened to cancel the annual convention which was planned for Killarney. The resultant loss of revenue to the Irish economy would be used to show the depth of the organization's disdain for Lynch. The A.O.H. eventually decided to go ahead with the Killarney convention because of the advanced stage of preparations. Delegates, however, refused to admit the customary representatives of the Irish government and passed a vote of no confidence in the Lynch administration. See Roy Reed, "U.S. Group Snubbed by Dublin Leaders," The New York Times, 6 July 1978.

50. Senator Edward Kennedy and John Hume, correspondence and interview with author.

51. Ulsterization involved the transfer of security from the British Army to the R.U.C. and U.D.R.. Criminalization involved the categorization of republican and loyalist prisoners as common criminals.

52. "St. Patrick's Day Statement Critical of Britain," The New York Times, 16 March 1978.

53. Full text of this speech is printed in The Irish Times, 12 May 1978.

54. "Call for Independent Special Prosecutor to Investigate Charges of Police Brutality in Northern Ireland," Statement by Senator Edward Kennedy, 11 June 1978.

55. Carey was particularly intense in his criticisms of the British because he had to run for re-election in 1978. Some of the Governor's aides told him that the attacks he made on the I.R.A. in 1977 had cost him substantial Irish-American support. Consequently, Carey made a series of statements attacking the abuse of human rights in Northern Ireland and called for Congressional Hearings on the matter. Carey also met with Mario Biaggi and in return for assistance in his re-election campaign, the incumbent Governor endorsed the objectives of the Ad Hoc Committee. See Jack Holland, "Hugh

Carey's Problems in New York Elections," The Irish People, 4 November 1978.

56. "Irish-Americans Switch, Chide U.K.," The New York Times, 8 April 1979.

57. Senator Edward Kennedy, correspondence with author, 17 April 1988.

58. The New York Times, 17 March 1979.

59. John Hume, interview by author.

60. The Irish Times, 20 April 1979.

61. The Daily Telegraph, 21 April 1979. The only major British politician to back O'Neill was John Pardoe, Liberal Party spokesman on Northern Ireland.

62. The Daily Telegraph, "More Than Impertinent," 21 April 1979.

63. "Tip O'Neill on Northern Ireland," letter from Garret FitzGerald to The Daily Telegraph, 23 April 1979.

64. "Mondale Backs O'Neill," The Daily Telegraph, 23 April 1979.

65. Hugh Carey and Kevin Cahill, "A Life Before Death for Northern Ireland," The New York Daily News, 22 April 1979. The President of the International Longshoremen's Union, Teddy Gleason, promised his workers would impose an embargo on all British goods if a new political initiative was not forthcoming.

66. "Edward Kennedy, His Views, His Life," interview with Barry White in The Belfast Telegraph, 9 May 1979.

67. "U.S. Wants Ireland United, Says Moynihan," The Chicago Tribune, 4 June 1979.

68. Connor Cruise O'Brien, "An Irishman's Open letter to Senator Moynihan," The Christian Science Monitor, 18 July 1979.

69. The Daily Telegraph, 25 September 1979. O'Brien had elaborated his attacks in articles entitled "Hands Off," Foreign Policy (Winter 1979/80) and "The Four Horsemen," Harper's Magazine 263 (December, 1981).

70. John Hume, "The Irish Question : A British Problem," Foreign Affairs (Winter, 1979/80), 312. See also "U.S. Politicians Role in the Search for Ulster Peace," letter from Hume to The New York Times, 24 October 1979.

71. For details see Adrian Guelke, The International Dimension (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1988), 140.

72. "Tip O'Neill in Fresh Ulster Row," The Daily Telegraph, 2 June 1979.

73. Lawrence Halley, Ancient Affections (New York: Prager, 1985), 166. The British government has tried to reverse the ban on a number of occasions, but so far their efforts have proved unsuccessful.

74. The Chicago Tribune, "A-Senseless Irish Arms Sale," 7 June 1979, and The Washington Post, "Guns For Ulster," 5 June 1979.

75. The Belfast NewsLetter, 2 August 1979.

76. "A Shocking Decision," The Belfast NewsLetter, 3 August 1979. In August Unionist M.P. Rev. Robert Bradford flew to America to tell State Department officials of the disgust felt by Ulster citizens at the decision. He was joined by William Best, the former Grand Master of the American Orange Order, who claimed he personally contacted President Carter to convey his outrage. There were also a number of Unionist protests outside the American consulate in Belfast while the office received a number of threatening phone calls. Information from telegram between U.S. Consul General in Belfast and State Department dated 1 June 1980.

77. The Daily Telegraph, 7 August 1979.

78. The Irish News, 8 August 1979.

79. The Guardian, 8 August 1979. Although the majority opinion within the British press had been critical of the Irish-American intervention in the Ulster crisis, there was a growing body of opinion which adopted a different perspective. The Economist, for example, did not attack Tip O'Neill's "political football" speech and actually ran an editorial describing the "Four Horsemen" as, "Candid Friends" (March 24, 1979). Mary Holland also wrote a series of articles in The New Statesman describing how the Irish-American leaders were motivated by a genuine desire to help Ireland and that it would be a grave error for the British government to ignore their pleas. Holland's thesis was further supported by an article by Bernard Crick which described the profound changes among Irish-American politicians which had produced a high

degree of sophistication in their views on Northern Ireland. See Mary Holland, "Kennedy's New Irish Policy," and Bernard Crick, "The Pale Green Internationalists," both in The New Statesman 11 May and 7 December 1979.

80. A. McIlroy, "Agenda Ready For Ulster Summit in New York," The Daily Telegraph, 24 August 1979.

81. "U.S. Summit on Ulster Vetoed," The Daily Telegraph, 24 August 1979.

82. British government officials felt that Jimmy Carter, because of his increasing unpopularity, could be persuaded to appeal to Irish-American support by adopting a militant position on the Ulster conflict. See Michael Leapman, "How the Presidential Race Could Prolong Ulster's Agony," The Times (London), 16 January 1980. Tom Collins, The Irish Hunger Strike (Dublin: White Island Books, 1986), 321, specifically contends the Atkins initiative was taken, "to forestall Ted Kennedy talking about British political failure in Northern Ireland during the 1980 American Presidential Race."

83. "Northern Ireland : Secretary of State's Address to U.S. Correspondents," British Information Service, 29 October 1979.

84. Sean Cronin, Washington's Irish Policy (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1987), 316.

85. Senator Edward Kennedy, correspondence with author.

86. Adrian Guelke, "The American Connection to the Northern Ireland Conflict," Irish Studies in International Affairs 1 no.4 (Summer 1984): 36. Other supporters include Paul Arthur and Kieth Jeffrey, Northern Ireland Since 1968 (London: Basil Blackwell, 1988), and Liam Clarke, Broadening the Battlefield (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 1987).

87. See Mary McGrory, "Irish Envoy's Firing Stirs Up Irish Trouble," The Washington Star, 8 July 1980, and Sean Cronin, "Donlon to be Replaced as Washington Envoy," The Irish Times, 8 July 1980. Noraid had continually criticized Donlon and editorials in The Irish People referred to his leadership as the "Vichy Erin" regime in Washington, collaborating at every opportunity with the British.

88. Elizabeth Shannon, Up in the Park : The Diary of the Wife of the U.S. Ambassador to Ireland (New York: Atheneum, 1983), 278.

89. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author, 19 December 1990. See also Sean Cronin, *op.cit.*, 319.

90. The Irish Times, 15 July 1980.

91. Statement by John Hume in The Irish Press, 13 July 1980. Hume maintains that the Four Horsemen supported Donlon because they felt he was competent and not simply because he opposed the I.R.A.

92. "Northern Ireland : A Positive Role for Irish-Americans," Address by Charles Haughey to the Fianna Fail Organization, Bulletin of Foreign Affairs, 27 July 1980.

## Chapter 7

### From the Blanket Protest to the Hunger Strikes, 1979-1981

Support for the I.R.A. among Irish-American activists decreased in the mid-seventies because of the continued success of constitutional nationalists. Political actions taken the Four Horsemen weakened the effectiveness of republican publicity campaigns and undermined their fund-raising. Noraid tried to counteract this pressure by highlighting British human rights violations and exploiting the draconian legal system in Ulster. They concentrated on publicizing a series of prison protests undertaken by republicans against the British penal system. Most Irish-Americans remained apathetic and showed little interest in these republican maneuvers.

The lack of Irish-American activist concern for I.R.A. prisoners changed dramatically, however, when the inmates launched a hunger strike campaign in 1980-81. It provided American republican groups with a series of publicity victories which enabled them to regain much of the ground lost to constitutional nationalists. The deaths of ten prisoners rejuvenated the republican network and won levels of Irish-

American support far in excess of that induced by Bloody Sunday.

The key issue in the republican prison protests concerned the inmate's classification within the penal system. Convicted Irish republicans have traditionally fought to be acknowledged as prisoners of war instead of common criminals. Recognition of I.R.A. prisoners as "political" gave them the same standing as captured soldiers in a legitimate war of national liberation. It was only natural when republicans were convicted or interned in the early seventies that they would fight within the jail for "prisoner of war" status.

The first protests began in Belfast's Crumlin Road Jail. On May 8, 1972, republican prisoners refused penal labor and eventually rioted to demand treatment as political prisoners. William Whitelaw, the Secretary of State, denied the legitimacy of the prisoner's demand and announced there would be no change in prison conditions. Provisional I.R.A. leaders in Crumlin Road then issued a statement which declared they would go on hunger strike if Whitelaw did not reverse his position. On May 15, after having received no concessions from the British, the Provisional prisoners carried out their threat and began refusing food.<sup>1</sup>

Five republicans, led by Billy McKee, initiated the fast and warned authorities that "We will hunger strike until our demands to be recognized as political prisoners are met and our protest will last until death if necessary."<sup>2</sup> Each

consecutive week, five more republicans joined the hunger strike. Eventually the protest spread to Armagh Women's Prison and to the internees in Long Kesh. At the peak of the strike, over sixty prisoners were refusing food.

William Whitelaw ignored the hunger strike and seemed unconcerned about growing public demonstrations supporting the prisoners. Even after May 20, when Billy McKee's physical condition rapidly deteriorated, the government remained unresponsive. In June, however, British officials began contacts with Provo leaders outside the jails. These discussions eventually led to the short-lived truce between June and July of 1972.

As part of the pre-conditions to talks, the Provisionals asked Whitelaw to accept the demands of the hunger strikers. The Secretary of State was so anxious to commence dialogue that he immediately announced a change in the prison regime and introduced a "Special Category Status." Republican and loyalist prisoners were granted the right to wear their own clothes; to abstain from penal labor; to associate freely; to participate in recreational and educational activities; and to have full remission of sentence restored.

These concessions, although denied initially by the government, amounted to de-facto recognition of republicans as prisoners of war. The hunger strike, therefore, ended. On July 7, the delegation of top Provo leaders met Whitelaw in London and agreed upon a truce.

Although the British achieved nothing from the truce, they had acknowledged republicans were political prisoners. Worse than this for Westminster, the new prison regime became a "training ground" for the I.R.A. and was christened "The Republican University." Inside Long Kesh, the prisoners ran their own affairs and organized themselves along military lines. Provo leaders conducted weapons training using wooden rifles, gave lectures on the use of explosives, and continually planned schemes for escape. Living conditions were among the most favorable in the entire European penal system. It was not long before the prisoners constructed a poteen still, had free access to educational and recreational facilities, and received frequent parcels from relatives. For many, the experience in prison encouraged their commitment to republicanism and increased their military prowess.<sup>3</sup>

This situation grew increasingly repugnant to the British government and made it determined to reform the prison regime in Northern Ireland. In 1974, Merlyn Rees commissioned an independent inquiry into anti-terrorist legislation in Ulster. Headed by Lord Gardiner, the inquiry commission published its report in January 1975. It concluded that granting of special category status was a mistake and recommended all prisoners be treated equally. Rees hesitated to implement these recommendations because of ceasefire with the Provisionals in 1975. When he realized that continued contact with the I.R.A. was fruitless, he closed the "incident centers" in October

1975 and announced that after March 1, 1976, special category status would no longer apply to new prisoners.

Republicans immediately grasped the significance of this change. Not only would it eliminate their comfortable lifestyle within the prisons, but it denied their claim to be captured soldiers and different from common criminals. I.R.A. inmates naturally prepared to resist the new prison reform.

One of the first measures announced by the British was that prisoners would no longer be allowed to wear their own clothes and would have to wear regulation uniforms. The first republican to be subjected to this new regime was Ciaran Neugent, a long time I.R.A. activist from Belfast. When warders brought prison clothes to his cell in the newly constructed H-Block compounds at the Maze Prison, Neugent refused to wear them. He remained naked in his cell for one day until the authorities brought him a blanket. He told warders that the only way they could get him to wear prison clothes was to nail them to his back. He remained in his cell wrapped only in the blanket. This "blanket protest," as it became known, grew as each new republican came under the reformed prison regime.

In April 1976, supporters of the prisoners formed a Relatives Action Committee. It publicized the prisoners' condition and organized demonstrations. The I.R.A. also began a campaign of attacks against prison officers. By the end of 1976, they had assassinated seven warders and that figure

eventually rose to eighteen by the time the protest ended. This I.R.A. campaign led to an intense hatred between the prison officers and the protesting prisoners and made the British government even more determined to resist the "blanket protest."

In 1977, while the I.R.A. attacked prison officers, the Relatives Action Committee organized a series of demonstrations. But they were not well attended and the prison protest failed to raise universal anger within the nationalist community. Republicans trying to publicize the protest in America faced similar problems. Despite sustained efforts to get media attention, the "blanket protest" received little coverage in the U.S. press and television. Noraid demonstrations attracted only handfuls of supporters. The situation was so bad that The Irish People launched a series of attacks on the apathy of Irish-Americans. One such editorial commented:

As we go to press, Irishmen -- naked but for a blanket -- have been beaten, humiliated and tortured for twelve months in H-Block. I give you these details because it seems to me that so many Irish people don't want to know about it -- they're too busy having a good old time for themselves...and that is why there is a Long Kesh and torture chambers called H-Blocks. The Irish don't care! The Irish don't want to know! The Irish are selfish! And, the selfishness of the Irish has left them divided, because, the wily enemy caters to our selfishness and keeps us in bondage.<sup>4</sup>

The prisoners in H-Block escalated their protest in response to the apathetic public response. In April 1978, they

refused to empty their chamber pots and neither shaved or bathed. Warders would not clean the prisoners' cells and soon some 300 republicans began smearing the walls with excrement.

Initially, this new "dirty protest" was slow to win support and publicity. Public demonstrations continued to be poorly attended and media coverage was limited. Many Irish-Americans were revolted by the unorthodox prison protest. Public demonstrations consisted of small groups chanting outside British consulates. The Irish People continued to attack Irish-Americans for their lack of concern while the limited number of reports in the American media tended to support the British position. Tim Pat Coogan commented on the "dirty protest:"

Its bizarre and repellant nature, the fact that the marches almost inevitably ended in stone throwing and violence, and the public view that the whole thing was only a Provisional propaganda stunt, all militated against widespread public support."

In the summer of 1978, however, republicans finally succeeded in making some headway in their campaign. Republicans exploited a series of investigations into British torture, culminating in the Bennett Report, to justify the political status claim. The prisoners had always maintained they were convicted under "special" legislation in "special" non-jury Diplock Courts. Under this system, the emphasis was on confessions, which prisoners claimed were routinely obtained through torture. The Bennett Report confirmed ill treatment of republican prisoners while academic works such as

peter Taylor's Beating the Terrorists? provided further evidence of physical abuse during interrogation.

Supporters of the prisoners claimed that the justice system created a "conveyor belt" in which republicans were charged under "special" emergency legislation, in "special" non-jury courts, and convicted on the basis of evidence obtained by "special" procedure. They argued that this unique treatment proved the prisoners were not ordinary but were political, and deserved a "special" status.

The Relatives Action Committee employed this logic in their publicity efforts and, in August 1978, achieved an important success. The Catholic Archbishop of Armagh, Tomas O'Fiaich, visited the H-Blocks and issued a strong condemnation of the prison authorities. After seeing the appalling conditions in which the prisoners were living he lamented:

One would hardly allow an animal to remain in such conditions, let alone a human being... The nearest approach to it that I have seen was the spectacle of hundreds of homeless people living in sewer-pipes in the slums of Calcutta. The stench and filth in some of the cells, with the remains of rotten food and human excrement scattered around all walls, was almost unbearable. In two of them I was unable to speak for fear of vomiting.

O'Fiaich then went on to give support to the prisoners demand for political status:

The authorities refuse to admit that these prisoners are in a different category from the ordinary, yet everything about their trials and family background indicates that they are different. They were sentenced by special courts

without juries. The vast majority were convicted on allegedly voluntary confessions obtained in circumstances which are now placed under grave suspicion. Many are very youthful and came from families which had never been in trouble with the law, though they lived in areas which suffered discrimination in housing and jobs. How can one explain the jump in the prison population of Northern Ireland from 500 to 3,000 unless a new type of prisoner has emerged?<sup>6</sup>

O'Fiaich's statement generated extensive publicity in the media and was quoted in the American press. Major U.S. newspapers began to run the first major articles on the prison protest, encouraging supporters of the prisoners to increase their appeals to Irish-Americans.

In October 1978, Fr. Raymond Murray, a longtime activist for the prisoner's cause, went on a publicity tour of the United States. The tour was financed by the Irish National Caucus. Murray met with top American politicians and media executives to explain the protest. He distributed copies of a pamphlet entitled The Castlereagh File, outlining extensive cases of alleged police brutality at the R.U.C. interrogation center.

Murray was so enthusiastic about his reception in America that he and Fr. Dennis Faul produced a new booklet entitled The Sleeping Giant. It called upon H-Block activists to concentrate their efforts on a trans-Atlantic publicity campaign. The clergymen claimed that this was the best way to force the British into concessions in the prisons.<sup>7</sup>

In the autumn of 1978, republican supporters organized American tours for family and friends of the prisoners. The

inmate's wives spoke at Irish-American gatherings and held press conferences to outline the extent of British brutality in the H-Blocks. They gave first-hand accounts of the horror both they and their husbands were experiencing. The American media covered these visits and occasionally the relatives succeeded in winning newspaper columnists over to the prisoner's cause. After meeting with four of the women, Chuck Stone, a reporter for The Philadelphia Daily News, wrote an article supporting the H-Block protest. After what Stone described as "the stomach-wrenching rottenest of British atrocities which would make Idi Amin proud" he concluded that, "the real heroes in this dirty and endless war are the prisoners in the H-Blocks."<sup>8</sup>

The prisoners' relatives also won support from journalists Pete Hamill and Jimmy Breslin in The New York Daily News but received the greatest publicity from Jack Anderson, a leading columnist with The Washington Post. In 1978, the Irish National Caucus persuaded Anderson to write about Northern Ireland. He met with prisoner's relatives in October and afterwards wrote a scathing attack on the British policy. In an article which was syndicated to over nine-hundred newspapers, he compared the H-Blocks to the tiger cages in Vietnam and concluded:

It is estimated that perhaps 70% of the political prisoners in Long Kesh have been convicted by uncorroborated statements or forced confessions made in Stalin-like kangaroo court procedures. Human rights violations have put Northern Ireland on an unenviable par with some

of the most barbarious regimes of communist commissars or tinhorn Latin American dictators. The British are trampling on the rights of Irish citizens in a manner reminiscent of Oliver Cromwell's iron fisted rule more than three centuries ago.<sup>9</sup>

This article created substantial publicity in America. It was strongly condemned, however, by the British government. Tim Pat Coogan in On the Blanket, humorously reported that Anderson's views, "went down in the British Embassy in Washington like a Long Kesh turd in the salad bowl."<sup>10</sup> Ambassador Peter Jay attacked the article and described H-Block prisoners as "bloody murders." He further argued their conditions were self-inflicted.<sup>11</sup>

Peter Jay's reply was given prominence in a number of American newspapers, but British officials in Belfast felt that a more determined campaign would have to be conducted against H-Block publicity. In February 1979, "two of the best-informed and most persuasive of the government's team of policy advisors in Belfast" traveled to the United States. These two top ranking civil servants met with British diplomats in New York and Washington and advised them on ways to present their case more persuasively. They told B.I.S. officials to conduct a more sustained media campaign to counteract the effects of the H-Block relatives' tours.<sup>12</sup>

Determined to achieve this result, British authorities allowed American reporters, photographers, and television cameramen to tour the H-Blocks on March 15, 1979. They hoped this concession would help to bring the "reality" of the

conditions in the Maze to Irish-Americans and stifle republican propaganda. The correspondents were not allowed to interview the protesting prisoners. Despite this restriction, however, reports of the tour in the American press tended to sympathize with the men. Some British officials consequently believed their exercise had backfired.<sup>13</sup>

In October 1979, encouraged by the increasing media reports, various prisoner support groups in Ireland merged into the National H-Block/Armagh Committee. This new group revitalized the publicity battle and increased support within the nationalist community by stressing that endorsement of the H-Block protest did not necessarily mean acceptance of the armed struggle. The committee established an information bureau which kept Irish-Americans up-to-date with every new development in the prisons and shipped large amounts of literature across the Atlantic.

American republican groups quickly became more successful at increasing awareness of the H-Block issue. Noraid supporters drew widespread attention when they symbolically wore blankets during the 1979 St. Patrick's Day parade in New York. They also organized demonstrations against Royal Navy ships docking in U.S. ports. Actress Jane Fonda attended one such protest in San Francisco as a show of solidarity with the prison protest.<sup>14</sup>

Republicans also began to exploit Roman Catholic symbolism in order to win the support of devout Irish-

Americans. Noraid handouts carried drawings of bearded, long haired, prisoners clad in blankets and clasping rosary beads. The comparison with Christ suffering was obvious and intentional. Editorials in The Irish People constantly employed this imagery and told readers how the prisoners were suffering religious persecution. One of these editorials presented the allegation in the following manner:

In the H-Block concentration camp, a young Irish republican -- naked but for a blanket -- faces a trio of British soldiers. One hand holds his blanket around his shoulders and the other grasps the crucifix of his rosary. His rosary beads have been a great source of comfort to him all these long, cold, and dreary nights as he recited decade after decade for his parents, family, friends, and especially for his fallen comrades.

Now these foreign mercenaries make fun of his religion and his dedication to the Mother of God. They use four letter words as they grasp at his neck. The rosary beads snap in broken pieces. A part falls to the floor and one of the soldiers laughs raucously as he stamps his boot on it.<sup>15</sup>

Irish-American republicans continued to use this kind of emotive imagery throughout the prison campaign. They also sponsored U.S. tours by ex-blanketmen designed to give Irish-Americans a personal account of the "horrors" in H-Block. In August 1980, Ciaran Neugent illegally entered America and conducted a hectic information tour in which he addressed crowds of Irish-American activists. He met with newspaper columnists, conducted radio talk shows, and appeared on the McNeil-Lehner Newshour.<sup>16</sup>

The publicity generated by Neugent's tour prompted the British to send Cyril Grey, a key official in the Northern Ireland Office, to the embassy in Washington. Although the Thatcher administration described the move as a "routine deployment," it was specifically designed to strengthen anti-republican activities in America. British diplomats took seriously Neugent's claims that his tour was winning widespread moral and financial support for the H-Block issue.<sup>17</sup>

On August 28, Neugent led a demonstration outside the British Consulate in New York. Wearing only a blanket, he read a statement to reporters attacking British barbarity against republican prisoners. When Neugent finished, eight immigration officials seized him and he was later deported.

Despite Neugent's arrest, publicity for the H-Block campaign in America continued due to a visit of U.S. churchmen to Northern Ireland on August 24, 1980. The delegation was sponsored by the H-Block Committee. Relatives of the prisoners hoped the clerics would be allowed to visit the Maze prison and report on conditions themselves.

The leader of the group was Fr. Daniel Berrigan S.J., a committed civil right activist. When he asked for permission to visit the H-Blocks, British officials refused fearing a republican propaganda exercise. Berrigan reacted furiously and condemned the Maze compounds as comparable to Nazi concentration camps.

Berrigan further elaborated on these criticisms in an extensive article printed in The New York Times. He blamed the British government for the "disgraceful" conditions in H-Block and supported republican claims to be political prisoners.<sup>16</sup> The article initiated a prolonged propaganda battle. Michael Allison, the British Minister of State in Northern Ireland, and Patrick Nixon of the B.I.S. both wrote scathing letters to the editor specifically attacking each issue Berrigan had raised. The priest was in turn defended in letters from Paul O'Dwyer and Fr. Sean McManus.

The publicity surrounding Berrigan's tour encouraged Noraid to continued financing trips by former blanket protestors to the United States. In September 1980, Liam Carlin and Fra McCann entered the country illegally and gave lectures on their experiences in prison. They conducted a nationwide publicity campaign while evading immigration officers from New York to Los Angeles.

British officials condemned the apparent ease with which the two men were able to escape arrest and the political support they attracted.<sup>19</sup> In Boston, Fra McCann was awarded a citation from the Massachusetts State legislature which commended "his heroic stand in suffering over three years of torture and degradation." After a private meeting with Edward King, the then-Governor of Massachusetts, the Boston City Council extended its best wishes to McCann and wished him success in "educating the American people in the struggle to

achieve justice." Liam Carlin received similar citations from State legislatures in California and Michigan. He also succeeded in persuading a number of City Councils throughout the U.S. to support political status for republican prisoners.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the increasing publicity for, and support of, the prisoners' cause in Ireland and America, by September 1980 they felt that they would have to intensify their campaign to extract concessions from the British. Rumors of a hunger strike circulated, and British officials began looking for ways to compromise on the political status issue.

The Thatcher government was conscious that news of a hunger strike would be exploited in the United States and add to the adverse publicity which had been generated by the tours of former blanketmen. On October 23, 1980, Humphrey Atkins announced that protesting prisoners would not be required to wear prison clothing. To avoid giving the appearance of a special status, he said the new clothing rules would apply to all male prisoners -- common criminals as well as "terrorists."<sup>21</sup> Leaders of the H-Block prisoners discussed this new proposal but rejected it as a failure to recognize their claim to political status. On the morning of October 27, seven prisoners, led by Brendan Hughes, began refusing food.

In Ireland, the H-Block Committee organized the inevitable demonstrations in support of the prisoners. It again was careful to emphasize that participation in protests

was not a show of support for the I.R.A.'s campaign of violence. This had some effect. Following a demonstration in west Belfast on October 26, 1980, protest marches throughout the province attracted substantial support.

In America, all the major newspapers reported on the outbreak of the hunger strike and the television networks ran footage of large protest demonstrations. The Irish-American press was saturated in coverage of the latest developments and American republicans organized weekly protest marches nationwide.

On October 29, Brendan Hughes called for an escalation of protests outside the prisons. He particularly asked for greater efforts from the Irish-American groups and emphasized that demonstrations in New York, Boston, and Chicago would bring most pressure on the British government. After Hughes' statement, The Irish People issued the following editorial linking the hunger strikes directly to the heroes of the War of Independence and encouraging Irish-Americans to become active:

Irish lives and Irish public opinion do not greatly trouble the British. Public opinion in America does. Sixty years ago Terence MacSwiney died on a hunger strike. His death, however, helped force the British to the treaty table. Irish-American interest made his suffering front page news. Longshoremen refused to unload British ships. The mood throughout the U.S. was one of indignation. His death cost the British more than the concessions necessary to save his life...Let the present hunger strike be wielded mightily by Irish republican supporters in the U.S. Let the hunger strike become known to every American and through it reveal the brutality of

British colonial rule in Ireland. The publicity tour by Neugent, McCann, and Carlin has laid the groundwork but an intelligent campaign is an absolute necessity. Only then will the Brits concede. Only then can Irish lives be saved.<sup>22</sup>

The hunger strike widened after December 1, when three female prisoners in Armagh Jail announced they would join the protest. The participation of women added a new dimension to the campaign. Sympathy for the protest increased. Demonstrations attracted significantly larger numbers and media coverage expanded. In analyzing this development, Kevin Kelley concluded:

It seems that the starvation of three young girls in a British jail was more objectionable and horrifying a protest to some on-lookers than was the specter of seven-hundred grown men in the Maze. In a society in which women are assigned a protected and condescendingly reversed position, a hunger strike by three lasses was considered an unspeakable tragedy.<sup>23</sup>

In this increasingly urgent situation, Irish-American republicans tried to increase political pressure on Britain. The Irish National Caucus lobbied members of the Ad Hoc Committee and encouraged them to support the prisoners. Mario Biaggi tried unsuccessfully to get Donald McHenry, Chief U.S. delegate at the United Nations, to mediate with the British.

Caucus activities achieved greater success when Fr. Sean McManus convinced Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R., N.Y.) to conduct a fact-finding tour of Ulster beginning December 8, 1980. D'Amato was accompanied by Dennis Dillon, a Nassau County District Attorney, and Long Island councilmen Peter King. The Senator attended an H-Block rally in Belfast. When a reporter

suggested there were two sides to the prison dispute, D'Amato replied, "yes, there are two sides, a right one and a wrong one." Dennis Dillon was asked about the purpose of their visit and replied it was because, "American news organizations are distorting the problem by presenting it in a balanced way as if the English had some right to be here."<sup>24</sup>

These statements were criticized by the Northern Ireland Office in Belfast. In America, John Oakes, a former senior editor of The New York Times, attacked D'Amato's association with the Irish National Caucus and commented:

In his haste to ingratiate himself with one segment of his local constituency, D'Amato took a reckless step into the dangerous minefield of foreign affairs... His visit to Northern Ireland, at the moment of explosive sectarian tension, demonstrated a kind of careless irresponsibility to which obscure politicians suddenly elevated to seats of unaccustomed power occasionally succumb.<sup>25</sup>

Such publicity kept the hunger strike a major news item in the U.S. media. The vast majority of American newspapers however, did not support the I.R.A. prisoners and denied the legitimacy of political status. The Washington Post captured the general opinion in an editorial which stated:

The strike is bound to start looming large in the American consciousness as Christmas nears. Calls will come from troubled Irish-Americans, I.R.A. sympathizers, and humanitarians to have the British do something. Americans as a whole need to understand, however, as a good number of Irish-Americans already do, that what is involved is an assault on the very tissue of authority by which any government is sustained.<sup>26</sup>

While accepting that the British were right to hold out against granting political status, other papers suggested that Margaret Thatcher employ some flexibility in the dispute. The New York Times, for example, suggested there was room for compromise over the issue of prison clothing:

Right though they are on principle, the British have otherwise played into the hands the H-Block prisoners. They seemed recently to have granted a lesser demand that the prisoners be allowed to wear civilian clothes. But they had to be prison-issue civilian clothes, which the prisoners deemed just as offensive as uniforms. The inflexibility of the British on such bureaucratic fine print has only gained sympathy for the hunger-strikers among moderates. By contrast, jailed terrorists in the Irish Republic are free to wear what they wish, which is surely a better policy than letting clothes make the martyr.<sup>27</sup>

In response to the largely pro-British editorials, American republican groups began bombarding the major U.S. newspapers with protest letters. While this campaign failed to produce major editorial reversals, some syndicated columnists did support the hunger strike demands. In The Chicago Tribune, Coleman McCarthy wrote two articles calling for political status and the complete withdrawal of British forces from Ulster.<sup>28</sup>

The British government, hoping to prevent the American media from adopting a more favorable view of the hunger strikes, began its own series of publicity initiatives. Michael Allison held a number of formal lunches with American correspondents in London to ensure adequate coverage was given of the British viewpoint. On November 24, Conservative M.P.s

John Biggs-Davison and Brian Mawhinney were sent to Washington to coordinate B.I.S. publicity against the prisoner's demands. They distributed a new glossy brochure entitled H-Block : The Facts, which described conditions in the Maze prison as "on par with the best in Western Europe" and reemphasized that the prisoners suffering was self-imposed.<sup>29</sup>

Ironically, Republicans claimed that the publicity efforts of Mawhinney and Biggs-Davison actually helped their cause by increasing exposure to the issues involved. Some British newspapers also reported the two M.P.s made little impact. Demand for their appearance on television and press conferences was "embarrassingly small."<sup>30</sup>

The event which did help the British position was the meeting between Margaret Thatcher and Charles Haughey on December 8, in Dublin. It was part of a series of Anglo-Irish Summits which had begun in May 1979. When the talks concluded, Charles Haughey claimed an "historic breakthrough" in Anglo-Irish affairs and that a new formalized relationship between Britain and Ireland would emerge. As a result of the discussions, there was also speculation that a solution to the hunger strike was near. Margaret Thatcher did not repudiate any of Haughey's claims or the press speculation.<sup>31</sup>

Haughey's claims of a breakthrough in the crisis were greatly exaggerated. Political analysts claim the Taoiseach's statements were designed to deflect attention away from the country's disastrous economic position. They also believe

Haughey was trying to maintain support from the republican wing of Fianna Fail. Margaret Thatcher did not immediately dismiss his statements because of their political usefulness. in The Uncivil Wars, Padraig O'Malley alleged she used Haughey's exaggerated claims to blunt Irish-American criticism of her handling of the hunger strike. Suggestions of a positive change in Anglo-Irish relations would dilute the expected outcry if any of the prisoners should die:

Thatcher allowed Haughey a certain leeway to exaggerate the outcome because it tied him all the more firmly to her in the event that the hunger strikers died and she faced an international political backlash.<sup>32</sup>

The American press interpreted the Haughey statement as an indication that the British were working hard to find a solution, not only to the hunger strike, but to the whole Northern Ireland problem. Articles contained suggestions that Thatcher would be giving Dublin a direct political role to play in the future of the province. A flurry of editorials praised the progress in Anglo-Irish affairs and attention was deflected from Thatcher's handling of the hunger strike. The Washington Post commented:

It is encouraging to find these two strong-willed leaders accepting a common commitment to explore a new arrangement. The terror in Northern Ireland will go on, at some level, a hunger strike is but a form of it. But terror cannot be allowed to dominate Irish-British dialogue. The politicians must show they believe in a political alternative. From the sidelines, Americans can quietly cheer Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Haughey on.<sup>33</sup>

The meeting between Thatcher and Haughey also helped the position of constitutional nationalists in the United States. The Four Horsemen had been noticeably subdued in their reaction during the hunger strike. They were alarmed at the publicity American republicans were generating and they were subjected to a series of criticisms for doing nothing to resolve the dispute. Haughey's exaggerated claims after the meeting with Thatcher allowed them to show how political dialogue was making progress. They all praised the results of the Anglo-Irish summit and resisted calls to support the hunger strikers demands.

The hunger strike reached its crisis point on December 16, 1980, while these political developments occurred. Sean McKenna, one of the original protestors, was nearly blind and had received the last rites. Within the prison, frantic negotiations were conducted between Brendan Hughes and British officials. Eventually the prison authorities presented the hunger strikers with a thirty-four page document which hinted that concessions could be given if the fast was ended. After an extensive debate among the prisoners and their representatives, it was decided the document opened the way for significant changes in the prison regime. On December 18 1980, the prisoners ended their fast in anticipation of negotiations with British officials.

Republicans claimed the prisoners had won a major victory while the British maintained that no concessions had been

granted. In America the media presented the end of the hunger strike as "an important victory for Thatcher and an indication of the unyielding stand that she took throughout."<sup>34</sup> When leaders of the prisoners tried to negotiate concessions, the British were much more inflexible. Kevin Kelly concluded it was the general impression that;

It seemed to most observers that the Provos had surrendered in the face of Thatcher's unbending policy and out of fear that they would actually have to make good on their threat to fast until death... The Provos had been badly out maneuvered by the British in the propaganda war. Many people in Ireland and around the world were left, rightly or wrongly, with the impression that Britain had won and the I.R.A. had lost on this key battleground.<sup>35</sup>

The British failure to make substantial concessions after the ending of the hunger strike caused extreme bitterness among the prisoners. While some leaders wanted to continue negotiations in the hope of making a breakthrough agreement, the vast majority of republicans in the H-Blocks braced for another hunger strike.

There was considerable resistance when support groups on the outside heard of the prisoners attitude. Sections within the H-Block Committee believed the prisoners' cause had been dealt a serious blow by the ending of the first hunger strike. They believed it would be impossible to build up national and international support for another fast. Leaders of Sinn Fein urged Bobby Sands, the commander of republican prisoners in the Maze, to negotiate. Irish-American republicans, believing they could not afford to tie up resources in another protest

which might end in failure, were likewise exhausted after the first hunger strike campaign and expressed similar reservations about another protest.

The H-Block prisoners responded to the hesitancy of republican groups on the outside by testing the government's flexibility. On January 20, 1981, some went off the dirty protest and washed for the first time in three years. They asked for clothes to be brought from their families. When these arrived, the prison authorities refused to pass them on to the prisoners. This led to a riot in the prison. Republicans concluded the only course of action was another hunger strike.

Despite their initial apprehension, H-Block activists gave their full support when the second fast began. The hunger strike started on March 1, 1981, when Bobby Sands refused food. Other strikers joined him at fortnightly intervals. The strategy was to allow these prisoners a reasonable time period for negotiations if Sands died. Kevin Kelly pointed out that this staggered system;

meant that there would be a time-lag of about a week or two between the death of one prisoner and the imminent demise of whoever was next in line. In this way, the pressure on the authorities would be relentless.<sup>36</sup>

In the first weeks of the hunger strikes the initial fears of the H-Block Committee seemed confirmed. Public demonstrations in Ireland were poorly attended and publicity was minimal. The perceived failure of the first hunger strike

had also weakened Irish-American republicanism. In February, Margaret Thatcher traveled to Washington to receive an honorary law degree from Georgetown University. Despite strenuous attempts to organize a protest, only a handful of demonstrators appeared at the ceremony.<sup>37</sup>

To add to the problem of poor attendance at demonstrations, American republican groups also suffered from the continued activities of constitutional nationalists. During the first hunger strike, the Four Horsemen were criticized for not using their political influence to resolve the dispute. Republicans attacked Tip O'Neill, in particular, claiming he was callous and uncaring. They tried to convince Irish-Americans that;

A few words uttered by any of the four might have had great effect upon the British and prevented much of the suffering endured by the hunger strikes. Yet, the four were silent and did nothing... They are shallow, self-serving politicians unworthy of our support.<sup>38</sup>

In response to this attack, the Four Horsemen began considering ways to re-establish their image and leadership among Irish-Americans. In February 1981, Senator Chris Dodd, Congressman Tom Foley, and Carey Parker, chief aide to Edward Kennedy, held a meeting with John Hume. They agreed that efforts to counteract republican groups in America would be greatly enhanced by the formation of a formal group in Congress. Consequently, twenty-four of the most influential Senators, Congressmen and Governors formed "The Friends of Ireland" on St. Patrick's Day 1981. They announced the group

would champion the goals of constitutional nationalism and attack Irish-American support for violence.<sup>39</sup>

Constitutional nationalists achieved a further success when they persuaded President Ronald Reagan to endorse the new group. Sean Donlon had successfully established good relations with the new President since his inauguration. He convinced Reagan to take the unprecedented step of visiting the Irish Embassy for lunch on St. Patrick's Day. The President welcomed the formation of the Friends of Ireland and issued a statement obviously aimed at Noraid:

We will continue to condemn all acts of terrorism and violence, for these cannot solve Ireland's problems. I call on all Americans to question closely any appeal for financial or other aid from groups involved in this conflict to ensure that contributions do not end up in the hands of those who perpetuate violence.<sup>40</sup>

Formation of the Friends of Ireland and the Reagan statement compounded the problems faced by American republicans in winning support for the H-Block prisoners. The hunger strike campaign in Ireland also seemed to suffer when Frank Maguire, M.P. for Fermanagh/South Tyrone, died suddenly in early March 1981. Maguire had been an outspoken supporter of the hunger strike and had created substantial publicity by his militant speeches.

Although Maguire's death was a setback, the situation it ultimately created produced an unparalleled publicity coup for the prisoners. Sinn Fein, despite the fear of rejection at the polls, eventually nominated Bobby Sands as a candidate for

Maguire's vacant seat. After a series of political maneuverings, Sands was left as the sole nationalist candidate running against Harry West of the Unionist Party.<sup>41</sup>

During the election campaign, the H-Block Committee successfully presented their case to the nationalist electorate. They convinced many that a vote for Sands was not necessarily an endorsement of the I.R.A., but a means to save a prisoner's life. As the election day neared, media coverage in Britain reached unprecedented levels. When Sands was elected on April 9, journalists and newsmen flocked to Belfast in the greatest build up of the international press that Northern Ireland had ever witnessed. The battle of wills between a starving M.P. and the "Iron Lady," Margaret Thatcher, presented an irresistible media event. Journalist Gerry Foley caught the essence of the situation when he observed:

The election victory brought an altogether new dimension to the hunger strike. Now, overnight, the British were dealing with not just a "convicted terrorist," but an elected M.P. The issue was now front page news throughout the world.<sup>42</sup>

Media coverage of the hunger strike reached saturation levels as Sands' condition deteriorated in late April. Twenty-three nations sent television crews to Belfast while over four-hundred international journalists reported on the event. When Sands died on May 5, 1981, there were over three-hundred photographers at his funeral to provide the world's press with front page pictures.

Perhaps most significantly for groups like Noraid, American journalists composed the largest segment of the international newsmen. The three major U.S. television networks sent sixteen camera crews to the province and provided the American public with daily news footage of the deepening crisis.<sup>43</sup>

Republicans and some media analysts claim that this build up of journalists had a profound effect on the nature of news coverage from Ulster. Noraid had continually attacked the mainstream U.S. media coverage of the conflict as pro-British. They alleged that most American reporters never went to Belfast and wrote all their reports from the comfort of London. They further claimed these journalists took their information from British sources and therefore produced reports which were highly critical of Irish republicanism. American republicans were particularly critical of The New York Times, transforming the popular catch phrase and accusing it of containing, "All the News That's Brit to Print."<sup>44</sup>

These republican criticisms of the U.S. media have been supported by journalists who worked in Ulster. Jo Thomas, who covered the province for two years with The New York Times, recalls how easy it was to remain in London -- with its fine restaurants and excellent entertainment -- and compose reports from the weekly press briefing issued by the British Foreign Office. She maintains that;

Because of the way assignments in London are generally structured, with large territories to

cover -- sometimes all of Europe and the Middle East -- American journalists cover Northern Ireland infrequently, in short trips sandwiched between other assignments, if they go there at all. Many stories are simply written from London, with no on the ground reporting. If they go to Northern Ireland, they seldom leave Belfast. Sometimes the press officers at the Northern Ireland Office will do something as blatant as arranging the visiting correspondents' entire itinerary.<sup>45</sup>

Republicans claim that it was the large build-up of journalists in Belfast between April and May of 1981 that marked a change in the nature of American media coverage of Ulster. Reporters scoured the province to report on the daily violence and talked directly to the groups involved. Liz Curtis and Roger Faligot contended that for the first time in years, U.S. journalists provided information stemming from other than British sources.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, there was much greater criticism of the British position on the hunger strike. Lamenting this change, The London Sunday Times concluded:

The hunger strikers have rekindled a flagging interest in Ulster and its problems; as a result, world opinion has begun to shift away from the British government and in favor of the I.R.A. The image of the gunman has actually improved. And the general opinion is emerging that the time has come for Mrs. Thatcher to begin negotiations with Dublin leading to eventual union with the south.<sup>47</sup>

In America, no other event in the Ulster conflict had received as much media coverage as the hunger strikes. It became the lead item of network television news, and the column inches previously devoted to Northern Ireland in the

press ran into miles. With Sands' impending death, editorial comment generally attacked the hunger strike and the I.R.A.. Some encouraged the British to take a tougher stand against the prisoners. The Chicago Tribune, for example, asked, "If forced feeding could deny Irish nationalists the incendiary martyrdom they seek, why has the British government not used it?"<sup>48</sup>

Almost all the major American newspapers denied the legitimacy of political status for I.R.A. and I.N.L.A. prisoners. They backed the British government's claim that concession to this principle would only encourage terrorism. The Detroit News typified editorial opinion on the issue when it commented:

Margaret Thatcher was right to refuse political status to Bobby Sands, the I.R.A. man who died on a hunger strike at Maze Prison. Mr. Sands belonged to a terrorists organization, and no government can afford to concede that repugnant acts of violence are somehow sanctified by political aspirations.<sup>49</sup>

The American press maintained its lack of support for political status throughout the hunger strike but, as more prisoners died, they launched equally strong attacks against the British government. Many newspapers attacked the legal system and the process whereby most of the prisoners ended up in the H-Blocks. The Boston Globe commented, "The British prison system in Northern Ireland is defective because the system of justice is a sham."<sup>50</sup> The New York Times supported

this contention and renewed its earlier calls for Britain to allow the prisoners to wear their own clothes.<sup>51</sup>

In July 1981, after a series of independent negotiating teams failed to secure a compromise between prison authorities and the hunger strikers, the American press issued strong attacks against Margaret Thatcher. They attacked her "haughtiness," "starchy tone," and "monumental inflexibility." The Baltimore Sun condemned Thatcher's "misplaced resolve" and urged President Reagan to "convince her that stubbornness, not flexibility, is the great evil to be avoided."<sup>52</sup> The Chicago Tribune, in assessing the violence after Bobby Sands' death, concluded:

Much of the blame for this can be laid on Mrs. Thatcher and her obstinate refusal to work for reform... It must be abundantly clear to her now that her policy of complacency and inactivity has failed miserably. Now that she has won her point, she should give some consideration to relaxing prison rules to accommodate some of the inmates demands."<sup>53</sup>

Newspaper columnists also produced innumerable articles on the hunger strike. Many extended the editorial attacks on Margaret Thatcher's uncompromising stand and urged her to talk directly with the prisoners. In The Wall Street Journal, Alexander Cockburn castigated "The Bankrupt British Policy in Northern Ireland," while Dennis Shanahan, in The Chicago Sun-Times, described Bobby Sands as an "extraordinary individual" in dying for a principle which "subsumes life and sets fire to the soul."<sup>54</sup> Coleman McCarthy in The Washington Post, again gave strong support to the prisoners and told his readers;

The prisoners' demands -- involving changes in political status, work rules, and privileges -- are modest. The men are not seeking to be released from prison for reduced terms, even though their arrests and convictions were suspect and their sentences -- such as fourteen years merely for being found in a car that had an unloaded gun in it--were extreme."<sup>55</sup>

American television stations broadcast a series of background reports on the hunger strike which tended to romanticize Irish republicanism. On April 27, 1981, "C.B.S. Morning News" presented a very complimentary biography of Bobby Sands and his republican ideals. It told viewers of Sands' poetry and political writings and how "he memorized the entire contents of Trinity by Leon Uris, translated them into Irish, and then tapped them out in code to his co-prisoners in other cells."<sup>56</sup> On May 3, C.B.S. ran an extensive report describing the New York Irish-American reaction to the hunger strike in New York. With republican songs playing as a background, those interviewed cursed Margaret Thatcher, praised Bobby Sands, and expressed their own willingness to die for Ireland.<sup>57</sup>

Many local television and radio stations broadcast similar reports and interviewed prominent Irish-American republicans. Michael Flannery and Martin Galvin, Noraid Publicity Director, appeared frequently as commentators on New York's W.N.B.C. television station. They typically accused the British of being "murderers" who only responded to "violent resistance."<sup>58</sup>

The British government was extremely concerned about the American media presentation of the hunger strike. Officials at the B.I.S. feared that unfavorable reactions to British policy could lead to overflowing Noraid collection boxes. The Thatcher administration also dreaded the prospect of increased militancy from Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy and the possibility they would try to get the U.S. government involved.

These fears increased as American media reports of the hunger strike grew more critical of Britain. The English press carried reports of how Britain was losing the propaganda war and occasionally condemned specific views in the United States. For example, The London Times attacked The New York Times' suggestion that the hunger strikers be allowed their own clothing. It called American media reports "prejudiced and inaccurate" and concluded:

Advice such as that in The New York Times is well meaning no doubt, as well as apparently being a salve to the liberal conscience and popular in certain Irish constituencies in the U.S.. But is very dangerous none the less!"<sup>60</sup>

Britain's Daily Mail focused on a report by Michael Daley, a correspondent with The New York Daily News, and accused it of being "a malevolent piece of lying propaganda" which was designed "to persuade American politicians to take an increasingly anti-British line."<sup>60</sup> Daley's article recounted the story of a British army patrol firing on a teenage boy. He told the story through the eyes of "gunner

Christopher Spell," one of the British soldiers. After the allegations from The Daily Mail, Daley admitted that Christopher Spell was a pseudonym. He said the rest of his story was true but, in order to spare his newspaper any further "embarrassment," he resigned on May 8, 1981.<sup>61</sup>

British government officials also criticized American network news reports on the hunger strike. They generally adhered to a view expressed later by R.J. Raymond, "Covering the Ulster conflict is a task for which American television reporters are unprepared. They have neither the sources in Northern Ireland nor the necessary knowledge of Irish history."<sup>62</sup>

Officials at the British Information Service were particularly incensed at some of the reports on American local television and radio. They attacked specific programs which they considered pro-republican. The British press joined these condemnations and one weekly journal concluded:

In cities with big Irish-American populations, local newscasts have been appalling. Highly popular, they are not so much journalism as news-as-show business. Presenters picked for their pretty faces and ethnic mix, have been let loose on the complexities of Ulster.<sup>63</sup>

The Thatcher administration began sending delegations to America to counteract republican publicity in the media. Senior officials from the Northern Ireland Office and prominent M.P.s assisted the B.I.S. in trying to influence editorial boards and television executives. These efforts produced few noticeable results. One official lamented:

I'm very much aware that opinion in the U.S. is severely against us. We haven't enough resources to counter this very skillful campaign. And, American opinion is very important to us. If the U.S. government was persuaded that our actions in Northern Ireland are wrong, or that human rights are being violated, it would effect overall policy toward Britain. But, there is no real interest in our side of the story in the U.S.!"<sup>64</sup>

The failure of British officials to adequately counteract Irish republicanism in America produced continual criticism from unionist politicians. They accused the Thatcher administration of incompetence and lack of commitment to the publicity battle. These criticisms were endorsed by a number of British newspapers, which in turn, called on the government to employ private publicists and lobbyists in its campaign. There was also a demand for the appointment of a top official from the N.I.O to head the British Information Service. The Economist characterized the government's efforts as follows:

The intermittent salesmanship by such Northern Ireland ministers as Humphrey Atkins and Adam Butler has been embarrassingly patrician and inept. It is an axiom of public relations that the best publicity cannot sell a bad product. But in America no publicity is conspicuously not selling a good one--especially when a worse product is being sold by one of the world's most effective techniques; ethnic loyalty backed by terrorists ready to die for the cause.<sup>65</sup>

The unprecedented media coverage of the hunger strike in the U.S. greatly increased Irish-American concern for events in Ulster. News reports in The Irish Echo, Irish Voice and Irish Advocate were almost completely devoted to the latest developments in the H-Blocks. They unanimously supported the

prisoners' "five just demands," printed information about protest demonstrations, pleaded with Irish-Americans to get involved in the publicity campaign, and published severe condemnations of the Thatcher government. The Irish People surpassed all of these newspapers in its violent attacks and threats against the British. It also tried to humanize the hunger strike by printing extensive weekly biographies of the prisoners, describing their typical Irish Catholic background, their endearing personal characteristics, and emphasizing their idealistic devotion to the centuries old cause of Irish freedom."<sup>66</sup>

Noraid and other groups capitalized on the increased Irish-American concern for the hunger strikes. They built support by publicizing the intense suffering endured by the prisoners as their bodies grew weaker from lack of food. They emphasized the prisoners' extreme courage and nobility in being willing to die for the eternal cause of Irish unity. The Irish National Caucus, in particular, re-emphasized Catholic symbolism in their publicity materials and continually drew an analogy between the prisoners and Christ's suffering on the cross.

Through these appeals, republicans succeeded in attracting previously uninterested Irish-Americans. As the hunger strike continued, they organized the largest and most prolonged public demonstrations in the current troubles. The biggest of these took place in New York City outside the

British Consulate on Fifth Avenue. Republicans held daily protests throughout May 1981. They peaked in the week after Sands' death, when an average of several thousand people protested daily.<sup>67</sup>

Initially these demonstrations were orderly, typically consisting of protestors marching up and down Fifth Avenue, led by pipers playing Irish laments, chanting pro-republican slogans. As the hunger strike reached a climax the protests became more militant. Irish-American republicans burned effigies of Margaret Thatcher and there were a series of attacks on the British consulate. Demonstrators forced British officials to remove the Union Jack from outside their consulate and the flag had to be removed from businesses throughout the city.<sup>68</sup>

On July 6, 1981, seven protestors, including Fr. Daniel Berrigan, broke into the British Consulate and held a three hour sit-in. Consular staff claimed they broke furniture and destroyed documents in the library.<sup>69</sup> On August 4, an I.R.A. sympathizer entered the British mission at the United Nations. He said he had a bomb strapped to his body and demanded to talk to Margaret Thatcher about the hunger strike.<sup>70</sup>

Demonstrators dressed in I.R.A. uniforms maintained all night vigils outside the British Consulate throughout the hunger strike. They cursed and jeered at consular staff entering or leaving the building. The British Embassy was forced to ask for greater police protection for its staff in

New York and had to increase security at its consulates throughout the United States. One British diplomat told The London Times, "When I go to work I am called a bastard, a murderer, a butcher, and a liar--and I suffer the same all over again when I leave."<sup>71</sup>

Irish-American republicans demonstrators were given an added bonus when Prince Charles visited the United States in mid-June 1981. Noraid ran a spontaneous campaign to disrupt his public engagements. As the Prince toured New York harbor in the yacht Highlander, a small flotilla of protesters, waving anti-British placards, followed and chanted republican slogans.

Later, when the Prince attended a ballet performance at the Lincoln Center, he was greeted by thousands of jeering demonstrators. Inside, at regular intervals, protestors arose from their seats and ran down the aisle shouting "obscenities" at the Royal box. The Chicago Tribune reported:

A middle aged man with a thick Irish accent, rose from a \$200 seat at the back of the auditorium and ran down the aisle screaming insults at a "royal whose country is committing human rights violations."<sup>72</sup>

Following these protests, The New York Daily Post published an article which criticized the timing of the royal visit and complained at the cost to the city of providing security to Prince Charles. Mayor Ed Koch and Mario Cuomo, Lieutenant-Governor of New York, joined the controversy, issuing statements which attacked "the centuries-old British

policy of denying basic civil rights in Ireland" and supporting the withdrawal of British troops from Ulster.<sup>73</sup>

As a result of the demonstrations against Prince Charles, British officials advised Princess Margaret to cancel a proposed trip to Washington in July 1981. The Princess had raised the fury of Irish-Americans in 1979. During a dinner party in Chicago, she reportedly referred to the Irish as "pigs." British Information Office agents convinced the Princess that her presence in the U.S. would only act as a "royal rag to the Irish-American bull."<sup>74</sup>

In light of this information, Princess Margaret canceled the trip. Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips followed her lead and declined an invitation to visit Pennsylvania in August for a horse show. Irish republicans gloated at these successes and determined to escalate the H-Block publicity campaign.<sup>75</sup>

Noraid continued to enhance its publicity efforts with tours of former "blanket men" Noel Cassidy, Charles Crumley, and Seamus Delaney, all ex-Maze inmates, conducted illegal lectures and press conferences in the U.S. during late spring 1981. These former prisoners were later joined by a group of relatives of the hunger strikers, including Sean Sands, the brother of Bobby, and Oliver Hughes, brother of Francis who died on 11 May. They visited twenty-six cities on a three week tour and conducted innumerable press interviews, television appearances and public lectures.

The relatives enraged Irish-American audiences with personal accounts of British brutality. Elizabeth O'Hara, sister of I.N.L.A. hunger striker Patsy O'Hara, told how prison officers had tortured her brother before he died by leaving hot meals beside his bed. On July 8, Oliver Hughes told a crowd in New York that during his brother's funeral, "British thugs stopped the hearse and bashed the funeral director senseless. I heard one of them say "'get the casket, we'll burn the body.'"76

These personal accounts greatly assisted Noraid's publicity and further infuriated British officials. Republicans allege that the Thatcher government eventually persuaded U.S. officials to curtail the relatives' tours. The Irish National Caucus, for example, claimed that American immigration officers harassed Alice McIlwee, mother of hunger striker Tom McIlwee. Despite the fact she had American citizenship, the U.S. consulate in Belfast questioned McIlwee about her intended public appearances and never issued her a visa. She only managed to get to the U.S. by obtaining an Irish passport and visa at the American Embassy in Dublin.<sup>77</sup>

Despite these allegations of harassment, Jack Holland contends that the relatives' tours greatly increased republican fund-raising and publicity in America. He says they were, "one of the most successful tours ever on the Irish-American circuit" and claims they raised over a quarter of a million dollars. This was achieved despite strained relations

between Noraid and Elizabeth O'Hara, who insisted on emphasizing that her brother Patsy was a member of the "Marxist" Irish National Liberation Army.<sup>78</sup>

One of the most significant aspects of the hunger strike was the amount of political support the prisoners received. After Bobby Sands died, his campaign agent, Owen Carron, was elected to the vacant seat in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. During the June 1981 elections in the Irish republic, hunger striker Kieran Doherty was elected to the Dail. Because of these electoral victories, the British could no longer claim that the prisoners were a small group of fanatics without public support. Republicans in America continually emphasized the victories at the polls and tried to win support from politicians, labor leaders, and the Catholic church. They achieved some notable and widely publicized successes.

Two days after Bobby Sands died, the 135,000 member International Longshoremen's Association (I.L.A.) imposed a twenty-four hour boycott of British ships. The action affected vessels from Maine to Texas and was masterminded by Teddy Gleason, President of the I.L.A. Later, an Irish-American Labor Coalition was formed to coordinate trade union activities in support of the hunger strike. The new organization ran boycotts against British goods and organized a mass demonstration to greet the Queen Elizabeth II when it sailed into New York on May 9, 1981.<sup>79</sup>

On April 27, 1981, Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York sent a message to Mrs. Thatcher which urged her to change prison regulations in the H-Blocks. A number of other bishops and high ranking clerics supported Cooke. Although the church did not officially support political status for H-Block prisoners, it continued to press the British for concessions. As each successive prisoner died, there were large commemoration services at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York and in churches all over America:<sup>80</sup>

The Irish National Caucus played a leading role in the American campaign to publicize the prison conflict. Father Sean McManus had shown solidarity with Bobby Sands by undertaking a twelve day hunger strike outside the British Embassy in Washington.<sup>81</sup> After this, McManus tried to get members of the Ad Hoc Committee to support the prisoners. He contacted Hamilton Fish, Jr. (R., N.Y.) in the hope that the Congressman's close friendship with Vice-President Bush would have some influence. Fish tried to get the Reagan administration to mediate in the hunger strike but he was later contacted by the State Department and told there would be no such action.

Undeterred by this State Department response, McManus then encouraged Mario Biaggi to lead a hectic drive within Congress to rally support for the hunger strikers. Biaggi succeeded in getting members of the Ad Hoc Committee to endorse a series of statements which sharply criticized the

Thatcher administration. In April 1981, the Caucus also organized a trip by former U.S. Attorney General, Ramsay Clarke, and Fr. Daniel Berrigan to the H-Blocks. British authorities refused to let the two men meet with Bobby Sands and they reacted with bitter condemnations of Margaret Thatcher. During a news conference in Belfast, Clarke commented:

The fact is that Margaret Thatcher -- who had the power to keep Sands alive, to wear his own clothes, and to receive a letter a day in prison -- permitted him to die... She has destroyed any claim she may have had of moral leadership by this outrageous act... People around the world will wonder what failure of character in the government there is that permits young men to die because it will not do a small thing that is right.<sup>82</sup>

Ramsay Clarke's statement infuriated British politicians and prompted The London Daily Mail to issue a bitter attack on the former Attorney General. The newspaper accused Clarke of hypocrisy for failing to acknowledge the murder of R.U.C. Constable Gary Martin, killed in riots after Sands' death, and concluded;

Former U.S. Attorney Generals and foreign prelates do not concern themselves with the death of a policeman doing his duty. Too commonplace! Too predictable!... When pity apes the political fashion, truly it can be grotesque in its selectivity.<sup>83</sup>

The hunger strikers received strong support from State Assemblies and city governments, particularly on the East Coast. Many issued resolutions calling for political status, while some city politicians tried to get British diplomats

evicted from their consulates. The Boston City Council changed the name of Chestnut Street to "Francis Hughes Avenue," in honor of the dead hunger striker. Maire Howe, assistant majority leader of the Massachusetts House of Representatives, led a group of republican demonstrators who dumped British tea into Boston Harbor in a symbolic protest inspired by the American colonists in 1773.<sup>44</sup> In response to Bobby Sands' death, the Massachusetts State legislature passed a resolution;

condemning the government of Prime Minister Thatcher for its insensitivity to the value of human life and the real issues of Ireland's divisive struggle, and wholeheartedly supports the ultimate objectives of the I.R.A..<sup>45</sup>

While this local political pressure had no impact on government policy in Washington, it did increase the strains on constitutional nationalist leaders. The Friends of Ireland recognized the growing sympathy for the hunger strikers among Irish-Americans who were concerned with Ulster but they did not want to be associated with republican groups. In April 1981, they tried to maintain the position adopted during the first hunger strike -- urging the British government to compromise on some of the prisoners' demands while refusing to support the prison protest.

As the hunger strike progressed and the crisis deepened, constitutional nationalists were pushed into a more militant position and their criticisms of Britain intensified.

Following Sands' death, Senator Edward Kennedy made the following statement:

I urge the British government, which has clear responsibility for prison administration in Ulster, to act on an urgent basis to end its position of inflexibility, and to implement reasonable reforms capable of achieving a humanitarian settlement of the hunger strike.<sup>86</sup>

On May 6, 1981, the Four Horsemen sent a telegram to Margaret Thatcher which was made public in the American and British press. It strongly condemned Thatcher's "intransigence" and urged her to end the "posture of inflexibility that must lead inevitably to more senseless violence and more needless deaths."<sup>87</sup>

In her public response to this telegram, Thatcher was careful to acknowledge the contribution the four politicians had made to cutting Noraid fund-raising. Yet, she refused to offer concessions, claiming that Britain had tried all possible ways to end the hunger strike, and bluntly stated:

The responsibility for additional deaths rests firmly on the shoulders of those who are ordering these young men to commit suicide in the cause of subverting democratic institutions.<sup>88</sup>

Thatcher's cool response led constitutional nationalists to concentrate on securing the involvement of the American government. Edward Kennedy made initial contacts with the State Department and encouraged the Irish government to launch a direct appeal to the President. On July 15, 1981, Sean Donlon met with Reagan in the Irish Embassy. He conveyed a

which described Moynihan, Carey, Kennedy, O'Neill, and Ed Koch as, "Five Guilty Men." The newspaper claimed that because of their statements on the hunger strike, all five were "equally responsible morally" for the bomb attack.<sup>91</sup>

The positive effects of the prison protests on American republicanism can be gauged in the F.A.R.A. statements of Noraid. For the six month period up to July 1980, Noraid received \$90,056. In January 1981, its collections rose to \$105,124. Due to hunger strike publicity the group collected \$15,424 in November, \$33,395 in December, and \$21,695 in January. This marked a steady increase from the \$9,139 collected in October 1981.<sup>92</sup>

In the six month period from January to July 1981, Noraid's fund-raising leapt to a total of \$250,511. The monthly figures rose from \$5,088 raised in February, to \$42,848 in May, and \$84,894 in June--the period of maximum publicity for the second hunger strike. Martin Galvin further stated that in the week after Sands' death, Noraid received \$20,000 directly to its Bronx office alone, compared to a previous weekly rate of \$3,500 in donations nationwide.<sup>93</sup> Noraid chapters from Los Angeles to Baltimore all reported similar increases in weekly funding and in October 1981, the group claimed it had established twelve new chapters due to increased membership during the hunger strikes.<sup>94</sup>

Noraid refused to file a financial statement after July 29, 1981, so no official documents exist on the amount of

money raised during the final three months of the hunger strike. Political analysts allege, however, that the group continued to receive unprecedented levels of financial support.

The hunger strike, therefore, rejuvenated Irish-American republicanism and reversed a downward trend in support and effectiveness which had been growing from the mid 1970s. Not only did Noraid increase its fund-raising, but it used the prison protest to achieve a significant publicity victory. This success substantially damaged the work of the British Information Service. Republican activities also eclipsed the efforts of constitutional nationalists and the Friends of Ireland.

It was Ulster unionists who were most alarmed by the American reaction to the hunger strike. They were infuriated by reports of the large republican demonstrations in New York and believed increased Noraid fund-raising would directly enhance the military capacity of the I.R.A.. Leaders of the Democratic Unionist Party (D.U.P.) and the Official Unionist Party (O.U.P.), therefore, determined to launch their own publicity campaign in the U.S. to counteract Irish-American republicanism.

## NOTES

1. For a good analysis of the hunger strike tradition see Daniel O'Neill, "The Cult of Self-Sacrifice : The Irish Experience," Eire-Ireland 24 no.4 (Winter 1989): 89-105.
2. The Irish News, 17 May 1972.
3. See Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, The Provisional I.R.A. (London: Heinemann, 1987), 270-274.
4. The Irish People, 17 September 1977.
5. Tim Pat Coogan, On the Blanket : The H-Block Story (Dublin: Ward River, 1980), 152.
6. The Irish News, 1 August 1978.
7. Fathers Dennis Faul and Raymond Murray, The Sleeping Giant : Irish-America and Human Rights in Northern Ireland (Undated), 12.
8. Chuck Stone, "No St. Patrick's Day in Belfast, Only British Terror," The Philadelphia Daily News, 15 March 1979. For an analysis of the relatives tours see Sean Toolan, "Women Visit City for Aid to Help End Irish prison Torture," The Chicago Tribune, 11 October 1978.
9. Jack Anderson, "A Camp David for Northern Ireland," The Washington Post, 29 October 1978.
10. Tim Pat Coogan, op.cit., 169.
11. For an excellent report on the publicity battle between Anderson and the British see Kieth Kyle, "America's Ireland," The Listener 101 (February 15, 1979): 238-9.
12. See Chris Walker, "The American Threat To Ulster," The Spectator (February 3, 1979):11. See also Alf McCreary, "Ulster Prison Protest Fuels Propaganda," The Christian Science Monitor, 7 December 1978.
13. Leonard Downie, "Press Tours Ulster Prison Befouled by I.R.A. Protestors," The Washington Post, 16 March 1979.
14. The Irish People, 29 September 1978. Noraid units in the Bay Area offered \$500 reward for any British officer

captured, painted green, and returned to ship. There were no reports of successes in this mission.

15. The Irish People, 6 April 1978. For an analysis of how republicans in Ireland exploited Catholic symbolism see Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, The British State and the Ulster Crisis (London: Verso Books, 1985), 120.

16. Neugent had earlier entered the United States illegally in August 1979. Before he could have any impact on H-Block publicity, he was arrested and deported.

17. For details of Neugent's activities in the United States see The Irish People, 6 September 1980, and also "Civil Servant to Counter I.R.A. in U.S.," The Times (London), 31 August 1980.

18. Daniel Berrigan, "The Prisoners of Ulster," The New York Times, 9 October 1980. See also reports on Berrigan's visit in An Phoblacht/Republican News, 31 August 1980.

19. Eileen McNamara, "Hackles Rise Over Visitor From Belfast," The Boston Globe, 8 October 1980.

20. For example, Liam Carlin met with leaders of Detroit City Council on October 29, 1980. They subsequently issued a resolution demanding that the British government grant political status to the H-Block prisoners. Such support, while mainly symbolic, was sufficient to irritate the B.I.S. and political leaders in London. See Linda Melvern, "Provos Step Up Their Dirty Propaganda War," The Times (London), 28 September 1980. Immigration agents finally arrested Fra McCann on 1 October and seized Liam Carlin one month later in Pittsburgh. Following their deportation, Rose McAllister, a former inmate of Armagh Women's Prison, entered the U.S. illegally and continued the publicity campaign.

21. "Northern Ireland : Prison Conditions," British Information Service Report, 24 October 1980.

22. The Irish People, 1 November 1980.

23. Kevin Kelley, The Longest War : Northern Ireland and The I.R.A. (Westport: Hobarth, 1982).

24. William Borders, "D'Amato Ends Visit to Northern Ireland," The New York Times, 10 December 1980. Republicans in New York later reported that the U.S. State Department had exerted considerable pressure on D'Amato not to undertake the visit because it would be used to boost the I.R.A.'s image.

25. John Oakes, "D'Amato's Irish Fling," The New York Times, 18 December 1980.

26. The Washington Post, 5 November 1980.

27. The New York Times, "Don't Let Clothes Make the Martyr," 27 November 1980.

28. Coleman McCarthy, "Suffering Prolonged in Ireland," The Chicago Tribune, 16 December 1980.

29. H-Block : The Facts, (Belfast: H.M.S.O., 1980).

30. The Times (London), 13 May 1981.

31. For reports on Haughey's reaction to the talks see The Irish Times, 9 December 1980.

32. Padraig O'Malley, The Uncivil Wars : Ireland Today (Boston, Houghton and Mifflin, 1983), 29.

33. The Washington Post, 21 December 1980.

34. The New York Times, 20 December 1980.

35. Kevin Kelley, op.cit., 327.

36. Ibid., 334.

37. The decision to honor Margaret Thatcher led to a bitter dispute between Fr. Sean McManus and Edward Doherty of the U.S. Catholic Conference. Doherty defended Georgetown's action and in doing so described the Caucus as being "a propaganda front for the Provisional I.R.A.." McManus was infuriated and press reports alleged he was preparing a \$1 million law suit against Doherty for libel. See Chris Winner, "Irish Caucus Sues U.S.C.C.," The National Catholic Reporter 17 (April 24, 1981): 38-39.

38. The Irish People, 27 December 1980.

39. The Friends of Ireland was led by Senators Kennedy and Moynihan and House Speaker O'Neill. It also included Senator Chris Dodd (D.,Conn.), Congressman Tom Foley (D.,Wash.) and Governors Carey of New York and Byrne of New Jersey.

40. Statements by Presidents : Administration of Ronald Reagan, 17 March 1981.

41. For a detailed analysis of the process whereby Sands was left as the sole nationalist candidate see Paul Bew and Henry Patterson, The British State and the Ulster Crisis, 121.

42. Gerry Foley, "Bobby Sands : The Making of a Martyr," Magill, 11 May 1981.

43. Neil Hickey, "Northern Ireland : How T.V. Tips the Balance," T.V. Guide, 26 September 1981.

44. See Maurice Burke, A Decade of Deceit : The New York Times and the War in Ireland (New York: Noraid Publications, 1981). For an academic analysis see David Paletz et.al, "The I.R.A., Red Brigades, and F.A.L.N. in The New York Times," Journal of Communications (Spring, 1982), and "Terrorism on T.V. News : The I.R.A., The F.A.L.N., and The Red Brigades," in William Adams (Eds.), Television Coverage of International Affairs (New Jersey: Cables, 1985), 143-165.

45. Joe Thomas, "All The News Not Fit To Print," Irish-America Magazine (June, 1988). Roger Faligot, Britain's Military Strategy in Ireland (London: Zed Press, 1983), 75, supports Thomas and claims that when American correspondents came to Belfast, "They didn't go further than the Europa hotel lounge" and took their reports from the British Army Information Unit.

46. Liz Curtis, Ireland : The Propaganda War (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 203, and Roger Faligot, op. cit., 82.

47. Philip Knightly, "Is Britain Losing the Propaganda War," The Sunday Times, 31 May 1981. See also David Willis, "I.R.A. Capitalize on Hunger Strike to Gain Worldwide Media Attention," The Christian Science Monitor, 29 April 1981.

48. The Chicago Tribune, "Bobby Sands' Fast," 30 April 1981.

49. The Detroit News, "America and Ireland," 5 May 1981.

50. The Boston Globe, 6 May 1981.

51. The New York Times, "Britain's Gift to Bobby Sands," 29 April 1981.

52. The Baltimore Sun, 13 July 1981.

53. The Chicago Tribune, 8 May 1981.

54. Alexander Cockburn, "The Bankrupt British Policy in Northern Ireland," The Wall St. Journal, 7 May 1981, and Dennis Shanahan, "May Bobby Sands and Ireland Rest in Peace,"

The Chicago Sun-Times, 27 May 1981. It is probably significant that these commentators were all Irish-American.

55. Coleman McCarthy, "In Ireland Where the Struggle Continues," The Washington Post, 26 July 1981.

56. C.B.S. Morning News, 27 April 1981.

57. Ed Rabel, "The Irish Connection," C.B.S. Sunday Morning News, 3 May 1981.

58. Stuart Simon, "How Britain is Losing the Irish Argument," The Listener (December 2, 1982): 5.

59. The Times (London), 30 April 1981 and 10 April 1988.

60. The Daily Mail, 9 May 1981.

61. Michael Kramer, "Just the Facts Please," New York Magazine (May 25, 1981). British officials also criticized foreign photographers for staging riots during the hunger strike. Some free lance photographers from France apparently paid teenagers to hurl stones and petrol bombs at the security forces. One American reporter alleged, "I saw them go up and hand them money afterwards. It was disgusting but I want to make it clear no American was involved." Following these incidents, foreign journalists held a conference in the Europa hotel and condemned the practice. See Anne Keegan, "Irish Riots On Cue," The Chicago Tribune, 20 May 1981.

62. Raymond J. Raymond, "Irish-America and Northern Ireland: An End to Romanticism?," The World Today 39 (March, 1983): 109-110.

63. "Blarney: A Lot of it About in American Media Coverage of Ulster," The Economist, (May 16, 1981): 16.

64. Neil Hickey, op.cit., 15, and David Blundy, "Funeral Guns Mute Ministerial Offensive," The Times (London), 12 July 1981.

65. "The Selling of Ulster," The Economist, (June 27, 1981): 17. A number of Conservative M.P.s criticized the government's publicity efforts in the House of Commons on June 25, 1981.

66. The Irish Echo and The Irish People, 9 May 1981.

67. For a typical description of these demonstrations see The New York Times, 10 May 1981.

68. The Times (London), 13 August 1981.

69. "Maze Protestors Attack British Consulate in U.S.," The Times (London), 9 July 1981.

70. The Wall St. Journal, 5 August 1981. The bomb turned out to be a fake but the incident was reported in Britain and re-emphasized the feeling that the hunger strike was getting substantial Irish-American support.

71. The Times (London), 12 July 1981. See also the report by Michael Leapman in this newspaper entitled, "Soft Assignment a Fiery Time for Our Man in New York," 13 May 1981.

72. The Chicago Tribune, 18 June 1981.

73. The New York Daily Post, "Koch Sends the Brits a Bronx Cheer," 19 June 1981.

74. British Information Service officials, interviews with author. Princess Margaret's "Irish pigs" remark was reported by Irv Kupcinec, an esteemed journalist with The Chicago Sun-Times. It led to an outburst against the Princess from almost every Irish-American society. When she later traveled to San Francisco, Noraid herded a group of pigs outside her hotel. Some were painted in the colors of the Irish tricolor and "Mags" printed on their backs. There were also reports that the I.R.A. sent an assassin to kill the Princess in California. See reports in The Daily Telegraph, 25 October 1979.

75. Irish republicans have since used royal visits as a way to publicize the British occupation of Ulster. In 1988, for example, one Irish-American demonstrator lunged at the Duchess of York with a flag pole shouting, "British Murderers Out of Ireland!," The Times, 23 January 1988.

76. Reported in The Irish People, 18 July 1981. Maura McDonnell, sister of Joe McDonnell, and Malachy McCreesh, brother of Raymond McCreesh, also participated in this tour. They were accompanied by Meurig Parri, a former British officer in Northern Ireland, who said he represented a group called "Veterans Against the War."

77. Tom Collins, The Irish Hunger Strike (Dublin: White Island Books, 1986), 547. Father Sean McManus was a friend of the McIlwee family and acted as a pallbearer at Tom's funeral.

78. Jack Holland, op.cit., 50-54. Holland also reports a major dispute between the I.R.S.P. and Noraid over who should receive money collected on the relatives tours. The I.R.S.P. claimed it should get a proportional amount because of the I.N.L.A. men who died on hunger strike. Noraid refused to accept this logic and, consequently, there were extremely

bitter exchanges between the two groups. Despite this conflict, Noraid kept all the funds collected during the tours.

79. Tom Collins, op.cit., 11. See also The Wall St. Journal, "U.S. Dock Workers Set Protest Day Over Ulster," 6 May 1981.

80. For a report on Cardinal Cooke's plea to Thatcher see The Times (London), 27 April 1981.

81. In April 1981, former Yippie leader Abbie Hoffman, conducted a similar hunger strike in support of Sands. Hoffman held his fast in a New York prison cell where he was serving a sentence for drug possession.

82. Speech reported in Alan Brownfeldt, "Many Americans Unaware of I.R.A.'s Terrorists Connections," Human Events 41 (June 13, 1981): 17.

83. The Daily Mail, 7 May 1981.

84. Howe continues to be one of the most prominent anti-British activist in Boston. In 1987 she was awarded \$10,000 in a legal suit against the British government. The case arose from an incident in 1985. She was detained by security forces for five hours after taking photographs of the Maze prison. The Northern Ireland High Court ruled in favor of her charge of wrongful detention. See The Boston Globe, 19 May 1987.

85. Resolution on the Death of Right Hon. Robert Sands M.P., Prisoner of War and Irish Nationalist. Commonwealth of Massachusetts, (May 7, 1981).

86. Statement of Senator Edward Kennedy on the Death of Bobby Sands, 4 May 1981.

87. "Letter From Four American Politicians to Margaret Thatcher," British Information Service, 6 May 1981.

88. "Northern Ireland : The Prime Minister Replies to American Politicians," British Information Service, 14 May 1981.

89. Garret FitzGerald, interview with author, 19 December 1990. See also Sean Cronin, "Government Asks U.S. to Intervene in Maze Crisis," The Irish Times, 15 July 1981.

90. From private information provided by Irish diplomatic sources.

91. The Daily Express, 13 October 1981. James Dooge, the Irish Foreign Minister, was outraged at this editorial and issued a statement claiming, "Far from being attacked, they deserve the appreciation of all those who genuinely desire a return to peace," The New York Times, 15 October 1981.

92. All Noraid financial figures from F.A.R.A. registration file 2239, 29 July 1980 - 29 January 1981.

93. The Chicago Tribune, "Money Pours in After Sands' Death," 26 May 1981.

94. John Breecher, "The I.R.A.'s Angels," Newsweek Magazine, 18 May 1981. See also Jane O'Hara, "Going Great Guns for the Cause," Macleans 94 (November 23, 1981), and Stanley Penn, "Ulster Pipeline : How U.S. Catholics Help Their Brethren in Northern Ireland," The Wall St. Journal, 12 October 1981.

## Chapter 8

### Ulster Unionists and The Hunger Strikes, 1980-1985

From the beginning of the "troubles," Ulster unionists constantly condemned the Irish-American dimension to the Northern Ireland conflict. They particularly had resented Senator Edward Kennedy's attacks on Stormont and his support for the N.I.C.R.A.. When Kennedy later issued his Congressional Resolution calling for British withdrawal, unionists reacted furiously. Prime Minister Brian Faulkner described the Senator as an "ignoramus" and accused him of "playing American politics with Ulster peoples lives." The pro-unionist Belfast NewsLetter ran a front page editorial describing how the Scotch-Irish had provided fourteen U.S. Presidents and, "carved out a nation years before the departure of the Kennedys and the Famine Irish from the shores of Wexford". The editorial then advised Kennedy to straighten out his own personal affairs, after Chapaguidick, rather than interfere in Ulster, and concluded:

Of all Senator Kennedy's indescressions -- and they are too well remembered to recall here -- his dabbling in the affairs of Ulster is most mischievous and reprehensible. His lack of knowledge on the situation might be excused but to presume to advise, indeed to direct, from that position is to display again the foolish arrogance for which he has established a reputation.<sup>1</sup>

There was little noticeable change in this unionist attitude, even after Kennedy moderated his views in the mid-seventies. Despite the fact that the Four Horsemen condemned Irish-American support for the I.R.A., unionists continued to regard these politicians with extreme suspicion. Perceiving no difference between constitutional nationalists and republican groups in the U.S., they judged every political statement by Kennedy and his supporters as giving encouragement to the Provos.<sup>2</sup>

Unionists generally viewed the Four Horsemen as deviously working to win the American government's support for a united Ireland. They felt these leading Irish-American politicians would do anything within their power to harm Ulster Unionism. This attitude intensified after Tip O'Neill played a vital role in the R.U.C. "arms ban" of 1979. Unionists viewed O'Neill's action as a clear indication of the treacherous intentions of the Four Horsemen.

Despite this loathing for Irish-American political leaders, unionists directed their most bitter condemnations against Noraid. The Democratic Unionist Party (D.U.P.) and Official Unionist Party (O.U.P.) continually described Noraid members as "callous cowards," funding the murder of innocent Protestants from the safety of America. As mentioned earlier, some loyalist paramilitaries were so enraged by Irish-American republicanism that they threatened a trans-Atlantic assassination campaign against Noraid.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1970's, unionist politicians generally tried to counteract Irish-American nationalists by issuing condemnations of their "unwanted interference" in the internal affairs of Ulster. Some more ambitious politicians actually traveled to the United States and tried to publicize the unionist political position. These politicians also worked to establish a support network in America, to counteract the publicity of the Four Horsemen and Noraid.

Although a number of unionist groups did emerge, they remained extremely small. This was principally because, unlike Irish-Americans, there was no Ulster Protestant ethnic network which they could draw upon. The major waves of Ulster Protestant emigration had occurred in the eighteenth century. Most had completely assimilated into the mainstream of American society and retained no attachment for their ancestral homeland. There were only a few notable exceptions to this general trend.<sup>4</sup>

One of the oldest Ulster Protestant organizations in America is the Loyal Orange Institution of the United States. The first Orange Lodge was established in 1820 in New York. By the 1870s an extensive Orange network had grown throughout the East Coast, supporting Anglo-American nativism and organizing annual parades on the Twelfth of July. These parades naturally raised the antagonism of Irish Catholic immigrants. A number of people were killed in sectarian clashes during Twelfth celebrations in New York in 1871.<sup>5</sup>

The Loyal Orange Institution steadily declined from its peak in the 1870s. Today there are only twenty-nine lodges with a few hundred members.<sup>6</sup> Most of these Orangemen are immigrants from Northern Ireland. Some have tried to promote Ulster unionism in America. They hold an annual Twelfth of July parade in Philadelphia at which participants eat orange ice cream and drink orange dyed beer. Guest speakers try to outmatch their brethren in Belfast in the ferocity of their condemnations of the I.R.A..<sup>7</sup>

The Loyal Orange Institution in the United States promotes Ulster unionism in its quarterly newspaper The Sash. It also regularly supports publicity tours of America by Official Unionist M.P. Rev. Martin Smyth, Imperial Grand Master of the Loyal Orange Lodge. Recently, American Orangemen began making direct financial contributions to Unionist political campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

Ulster unionism has also received support in America from Scotch-Irish societies. These groups are almost exclusively centered in Pennsylvania, a region which had been extensively settled by Ulster immigrants.<sup>9</sup> One of the largest of these organizations was the Scotch-Irish Foundation of Philadelphia, founded in 1949 by descendants of Ulster immigrants. The Foundation encouraged a greater appreciation of the Scotch-Irish contribution to the United States by funding historical research.

When the present troubles broke out in Northern Ireland, the Scotch-Irish Foundation strongly supported Ulster unionism. President John McPherson and General Secretary John Tuten appeared on local television and radio in Philadelphia to challenge Irish-American nationalists. They conducted letter writing campaigns claiming there was no discrimination against Catholics under the Stormont government. McPherson and Tuten also tried to counteract what they perceived as a "anti-unionist bias" in the American media's presentation of the Ulster conflict.<sup>10</sup>

While the Scotch-Irish societies and the Orange network had been in existence before 1968, some groups formed in direct response to the current troubles. In 1971, the Ulster American Loyalists (U.A.L.) began in Los Angeles. It was mainly composed of Ulster exiles who had been recruited to work for West Coast aerospace industries in the 1960s. The U.A.L. encouraged unionist politicians to travel to California and present their views at public meetings. They also conducted information campaigns to warn Congress of the "devious" activities of Irish-American politicians in working for a united Ireland.<sup>11</sup>

To finance its publicity efforts, the U.A.L. organized a variety of fund-raising schemes and social functions. The largest of these was a yearly Twelfth of July dinner dance in Los Angeles. Members of the group decorated a function room

with Ulster flags, wore Orange Sashes, and danced the night away to recordings of loyalist flute bands.<sup>12</sup>

These groups, however, were atypical of the unionist support network in America. Individuals working on their own initiative promoted the Ulster Protestant cause. Harold Alexander, for example, maintained a single-handed publicity drive in support of the New Ulster Political Research Group. He also worked for at least ten other organizations ranging from the Ulster Unionist Council to the Progressive Unionist Party.<sup>13</sup>

Ulster clergyman Rev. Charles Reynolds organized a unionist publicity group in New York called the Northern Ireland Service Council. He hosted visiting unionist politicians and tried to offer an opposing opinion to Irish-American nationalist groups in the New York media.<sup>14</sup> In Chicago, Rev. Virgil Knight, a fundamentalist Protestant preacher, collected money among his congregation and delivered it to "families of soldiers, Ulster policemen and others killed by the I.R.A..<sup>15</sup>"

Throughout the 1970s, this small Unionist support network tried unsuccessfully to influence the American media and counteract the campaigns of Irish-American nationalists. Although the main unionist political parties in Northern Ireland tried to encourage and support the network, their efforts were not given strong priority. Both the O.U.P. and D.U.P. had limited financial resources and used their money

for political campaigns in Ulster. Unionists tended to leave the anti-I.R.A. propaganda war to the British Information Service, which possessed much greater financial resources and contacts with the media.<sup>16</sup>

Unionist concern with the Irish-American dimension was greatly heightened by the R.U.C. "arms ban" in 1979. There was also increased alarm over media reports on the importance of U.S. weapons and Noraid fund-raising to the I.R.A.. It was the 1981 hunger strike, however, which caused the most unionist anxiety. D.U.P. and O.U.P. leaders reacted bitterly to reports of how American cities were naming streets after dead hunger strikers; how republicans had forced the removal of Union Jacks from all public and commercial buildings in New York; and how the American media was pushing the Thatcher administration to make concessions to the hunger strikers.

Unionist outrage at the levels of support for the hunger strikers in America was compounded by their contempt for the British Information Service. Many O.U.P. and D.U.P. politicians felt that British efforts to challenge republican publicity were totally incompetent and inadequate. Unionists strongly criticized the Thatcher government for doing nothing to show their political position.<sup>17</sup> The commander of the Ulster Defence Association, Andy Tyrrie, expressed the attitude of many Ulster Protestants when he commented:

You must talk to the people in their own language. The I.R.A. does that and the Brits don't know how. It's our own fault the United States is badly informed. The I.R.A. puts its case in colorful and

romantic terms. The British are so earnest and so humorless they can't combat it.<sup>18</sup>

Unionists naturally believed that republican publicity victories in America would increase Noraid fund-raising and this money in turn would be used to finance the I.R.A.'s campaign of violence. In light of this conclusion, and the perceived ineptness of the B.I.S., unionists began to organize a comprehensive publicity campaign of their own. They determined to present Americans with the unionist perspective and counteract Irish-American nationalism.

The Belfast NewsLetter and The Belfast Telegraph both called for a major publicity drive aimed at presenting the Ulster unionist viewpoint to the American public. This call was further supported in publications ranging from the U.V.F.'s Combat to the Free Presbyterian Protestant Telegraph. One of the strongest endorsements of an American initiative came from the Orange Order. An editorial in its journal, The Orange Standard, supported a campaign to strengthen the unionist network in America and stated:

In the past decade the whole running has been made by the "shanty Irish" in information and propaganda about Ulster. The Scotch-Irish, an older and more honorable influence on the U.S., have been particularly muted... We have not seriously sought to inform or influence them. The case for Ulster has not been pleaded in America with any enthusiasm. Something more permanent must be added to the verbal and literary pleas for American understanding. There has to be a bringing together of people, whose support is for the suffering people of Ulster, in such a way that they can effectively help our cause.<sup>19</sup>

The leaders of Ulster's Protestant churches were the first to challenge the growing support for Irish-American republicanism. In the first weeks of April 1981, Bishop Robin Eames led a Church of Ireland delegation to the United States. The group had a series of discussions with religious and political leaders in Washington and New York. They held press conferences at which they condemned I.R.A. violence and tried to show "that Ulster Protestants were not all red-necked backwoodsmen and bigots."<sup>20</sup> Eames asked his colleagues in the American Episcopal Church for support and was rewarded when Bishop John Allin classified the I.R.A. as terrorists and called the hunger strike "mass suicide."<sup>21</sup>

Like the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had been alarmed by Irish-American support for the I.R.A. since the late 1970s. In its annual report in 1979, the church synod expressed "deep unease" over Noraid's activities. It also "deplored" the allegations of sectarian bias made against the R.U.C. by Tip O'Neill and his supporters.<sup>22</sup>

On May 15, 1981, following the example of the Church of Ireland, a ten man Presbyterian delegation visited America. Their objective was to present an alternative view to the rising republican publicity after the death of Bobby Sands. The group said it wanted to counteract the American media presentation of the hunger strike which they claimed was "clearly inclined towards the nationalist perspective."<sup>23</sup>

The Presbyterian group, led by Rev. J.A. Weir, were much more forceful in pushing the unionist perspective than the Church of Ireland delegation. They not only launched severe attacks against the hunger strikers, but also tried to defend the civil rights record of the Stormont government. Spokesmen for the group emphasized that the N.I.C.R.A. was principally a nationalist movement and claimed there was extensive anti-Protestant discrimination carried on by nationalist dominated local councils in the 1960s.<sup>24</sup>

The efforts taken by the two church groups inspired unionist politicians. John Dunlop, O.U.P. Member of Parliament for Mid-Ulster, began supporting publicity trips to the U.S. by victims of I.R.A. attacks. Many unionists felt that if Americans could hear about the horrors of I.R.A. attacks from the victims, it would greatly discourage financial support for Noraid. Partly from this premise, a group called the Loyalist League of Ulsterwomen (L.L.U.) formed in August of 1981.

In October 1981, two members of the L.L.U. undertook a tour of the United States to tell Irish-Americans about the "reality of the armed struggle." Ruby Speer and Kathleen McCurrie both lost their husbands to I.R.A. assassins. They traveled extensively throughout the East Coast, describing their personal tragedy to public meetings and media executives. The women also lobbied State Department officials to plead for the lifting of the R.U.C. "arms ban" and the

removal of the tax exempt status of the Irish National Caucus and Ancient Order of Hibernians.<sup>25</sup>

Following this trip, another group of victims called "Widows Mite" conducted a similar publicity drive in America. It consisted of Protestant churchmen and individuals such as Georgina Gordon, whose husband and young daughter were killed in an I.R.A. booby trap. They distributed 10,000 copies of a Widow's Mite Brochure, which listed innumerable examples of I.R.A. atrocities.<sup>26</sup>

These tours by Protestant church delegations and widows groups did not achieve much publicity in America and their efforts went largely unnoticed. Their limited achievements only served to increase unionist concern over the success of republican propaganda. The church leaders and widows contacted Unionist politicians upon their return and told them of the difficulty they encountered in trying to make a significant impact in America.<sup>27</sup>

The difficulty of getting the unionist viewpoint across was further confirmed by individual politicians who travelled to the United States at the time. When Harold McCusker of the O.U.P. toured the East Coast in October 1981, he reported the total lack of appreciation for the unionist cause to his colleagues. He was particularly incensed by the weakness of B.I.S. efforts to counter the I.R.A. and made a series of bitter complaints to the Thatcher government.<sup>28</sup>

Unionists became increasingly convinced that the only way to get their views heard in America was to organize a well-financed and sophisticated tour by top politicians. They felt that if a delegation of Unionist leaders crossed the Atlantic they could attract attention in the U.S., publicize their position, and thus destroy the influence of Irish-American nationalism.

Plans for what would become the most ambitious unionist initiative in America began in the autumn of 1981. One of the driving forces behind the scheme was Official Unionist M.P. Rev. Robert Bradford. He realized that a show of unionist solidarity would bring the greatest success. Bradford therefore brought together a tour party composed of the most prominent politicians from the D.U.P. and O.U.P.. It included John Taylor, Official Unionist Member of the European Parliament, and Peter Robinson, Deputy Leader of the Democratic Unionists. The key figure in this task force, however, was Rev. Ian Paisley.

Paisley, the most recognized Ulster unionist politician in America, was the natural leader of the publicity tour. From the early 1960s he had made numerous visits to the United States and established a small network of loyal supporters. These were mainly Protestant fundamentalists attracted by Paisley's fierce condemnation of the ecumenical movement, and staunch conservatives impressed by his fierce anti-communist rhetoric.

In the 1960s, one of Paisley's principal associates was Rev. Carl McIntire, head of the International Council of Christian Churches (I.C.C.C.) based in Collingswood, New Jersey. The I.C.C.C. was composed of over one-hundred and forty Protestant fundamentalist groups, of which Paisley's Free Presbyterians were prominent members. It vehemently attacked the ecumenical movement and condemned all aspects of "papist influence." Paisley and McIntire developed a close friendship and conducted joint protests against the World Council of Churches and its movement towards closer relations with Roman Catholicism.<sup>29</sup>

Soon McIntire became a regular speaker at Paisley's political demonstrations in Northern Ireland. At rallies in Belfast he typically alleged that the N.I.C.R.A. was part of a "godless communist plot to overthrow western civilization." McIntire stressed that Irish civil rights activists were motivated by the same "evil principles" as Black campaigners in America.<sup>30</sup>

McIntire also tried to aid the unionist cause in America. In August 1969, he organized counter demonstrations against Bernadette Devlin while she was in New York. The protests received little publicity and so McIntire contacted Paisley. He convinced the Ulster leader to come to America and challenge Devlin.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fact that Devlin left America before Paisley arrived, his tour caused controversy from the outset and won

significant publicity. When he flew into Philadelphia a group of unionist supporters engaged in a brawl with republicans waiving an Irish tricolor. In New York, Mayor John Lindsay refused Paisley's request for a meeting. The Ulster firebrand responded by accusing the Mayor of "barefaced discrimination" and telling reports outside City Hall that, "the Roman Catholic Church is getting closer to communism every day."<sup>32</sup>

The second leading figure in Paisley's American support network was Bob Jones, another anti-communist and anti-papist. He was President of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina. The University's founder, Bob Jones Sr., had believed the Bible ordained separation of the races. Consequently, the university had refused to admit African-American students from its founding in 1927. In 1971, B.J.U. was forced to relax its policies and admit married African-Americans. By 1975 it began admitting single African-Americans but declared that interracial dating would be punished by expulsion. These racial policies complemented the strictly conservative administration of B.J.U. which prohibited all its students from drinking alcohol, smoking, dancing, and unsupervised association between members of the opposite sex.<sup>33</sup>

Bob Jones first met Ian Paisley in 1962 at an anti-World Council of Churches conference in Amsterdam. The two established a strong friendship and Jones invited his new associate to preach at the annual B.J.U. Bible Conference in

1964. Paisley so impressed the student and faculty body that he subsequently made innumerable gospel tours to Greenville, and today is a prominent trustee of the University.<sup>34</sup>

Jones, like Carl McIntire, began supporting the Ulster unionist cause. He made frequent trips to Northern Ireland in the late sixties and seventies to attack republicanism and the "demonic" influence of Catholicism in Ireland. In 1966, Jones awarded Paisley with an honorary Doctorate of Divinity. The American preacher was also the key speaker at the opening of Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church in 1967.<sup>35</sup>

To mark the Bicentennial celebrations of the U.S. in 1976, Jones and Paisley produced a pro-unionist booklet entitled, America's Debt to Ulster. In the introduction, Jones denigrated Catholic Irish-Americans and asserted that the Ulster Protestant influence was Ireland's key contribution to America's greatness. He concluded that if "Ulster's enormous and vital role in the founding of the great American Republic is re-told," then Americans would no longer be "blinded" by the lies of Irish nationalists.<sup>36</sup>

In Paisley, Ed Maloney and Andy Pollack show that Jones' extreme conservatism made him a friend of some of America's most noted racists and right-wing politicians. He was closely associated with George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, Lester Maddox, Governor of Georgia, and Senator Storm Thurmond of South Carolina. Jones awarded honorary degrees to all three men and introduced them to Paisley's political ideals. Jones

also had contacts with Jerry Falwell's "Moral Majority" and used this connection to get Paisley an invitation to the Reagan inauguration in January, 1981.<sup>37</sup>

Paisley used these American contacts to establish a significant network of supporters in the U.S. and eventually began founding branches of his Free Presbyterian Church. Maloney and Pollack claim that the first of these churches was established with Bob Jones' assistance in Greenville. In 1977, a congregation of Protestant fundamentalists in South Carolina contacted Paisley and asked if he could provide them with a Free Presbyterian minister. Paisley agreed and sent over Rev. Alan Cairns, one of his strongest allies.

Rev. Cairns soon established an extension of the Free Presbyterian Church's Theological Hall and began training American ministers. He helped found new churches in Philadelphia and Londonderry, New Hampshire. By the mid-1980s, graduates of the Theological Hall were building up congregations in Florida, Georgia, Arizona and California.<sup>38</sup>

With this chain of American supporters and his long experience in traveling to the U.S., Paisley was the central figure in the proposed unionist publicity tour. He began contacting his associates across the Atlantic to organize speaking venues and build up media attention.

As plans were being finalized for the American venture, the I.R.A. assassinated Rev. Robert Bradford on November 14, 1981. There is no indication this action was taken to destroy

the unionist publicity tour, but Irish-American republican groups strongly supported the killing. An editorial in The Irish People said Bradford deserved to die because of his associations with loyalist paramilitaries and because he had "prayed for typhoid in the H-Blocks so the prisoners would suffer more."<sup>39</sup> Unionists received information on this editorial and were immediately enraged. The remaining members of the touring party became even more determined to make their efforts succeed.<sup>40</sup>

Much of the publicity and logistical organization of the unionist tour was conducted by David Burnside of the O.U.P. and Jim Allister of the D.U.P. They christened the tour "Operation U.S.A." and built it into the largest unionist publicity drive ever devoted to America. Allister and Burnside printed announcements of Operation U.S.A. in the unionist press and appealed for donations. They also organized a number of fund-raising socials throughout Northern Ireland to support what they described as "one of the most important unionist missions in history."<sup>41</sup>

Although unionists viewed the assassination of Robert Bradford as a serious setback to their American venture, Burnside and Allister used it to benefit the cause. They persuaded Bradford's widow, Nora, to take her husband's place on the tour. Both felt that she could convey the suffering caused by her husband's death and therefore show the American public the horror of I.R.A. murders.

To complement the testimony of Nora Bradford and the politicians, organizers of the tour produced 10,000 copies of a glossy brochure entitled Ulster : The Facts. The book was an elaborate defense of the unionist position, aimed at the American audience. It stressed Ulster's contribution to the founding of the United States and emphasized the province's "vital" role in World War II. The authors claimed that while Ulster fought alongside America and provided an essential staging ground for D-Day, the Republic of Ireland "helped the Nazis by remaining neutral." To emphasize this point, the book contained a photograph of Eamonn de Valera next to one of Adolf Hitler, obviously offering readers a direct comparison between the two men.

Ulster : The Facts also outlined the leftist connections of the I.R.A. and emphasized that its objective was to create Marxist revolution. There were photographs of secret weapons allegedly confiscated from the Provisionals with captions stating:

Money has come from the U.S. to provide arms and support for the killing of British citizens in Northern Ireland. Those who contribute such money are either people of feeble intelligence who have fallen naively for the lies of Irish republican propaganda or else - and this is a grave possibility - they are enemies of the American people, of the American way of life and of the Western alliance, who are working as the agents of these alien forces which want to destroy the standards of civilization we in the West have created and are prepared to uphold.<sup>42</sup>

The book was intended to capitalize on American anti-communism and aversion to international terrorism. In order to

grip the reader, it also contained a number of horrific color photographs of dismembered limbs and charred corpses. These were alleged to be victims of I.R.A. attacks. The photographs were so gruesome that they generated publicity in their own right. At a press conference to launch the book in Belfast, some journalists were so sickened they had to leave the room.<sup>43</sup>

David Burnside and Jim Allister arranged for 8,000 copies of Ulster : The Facts to be transported to America for distribution by members of the Operation U.S.A. team. They also tried to prepare for the expected pro-I.R.A. demonstrations. Members of the tour were booked into hotels under assumed names. Unionist organizers also contacted the American Consul in Belfast to express their concern that Irish-American republicans might use violence against them. The Consul General assured the group that they would get full police protection in every city they visited.<sup>44</sup>

In order to maximize publicity in America, the unionist organizing committee also employed the services of Jack Buttram, owner of a public relations firm working in Washington D.C. The Buttram Agency specialized in publicizing political causes to Congressmen and Senators on Capitol Hill. Buttram began organizing television and radio appearances for the Operation U.S.A. team, printed publicity materials, and arranged public lectures and press conferences. Because of

these activities, the Agency was forced to register under the F.A.R.A., as agent of both the D.U.P. and O.U.P..<sup>45</sup>

The organization of Operation U.S.A. was thus highly professional and unionist leaders believed it would make a considerable impact on American opinion. The Buttram Agency arranged a schedule which would take tour members all over the United States and give them as much media exposure as possible. Throughout late November 1981, David Burnside also tried to contact Ronald Reagan and Alexander Haig to arrange discussions with the Operation U.S.A. team.

The optimism of unionist organizers, however, was severely shaken by a series of adverse developments which seriously damaged their initiative. When Ulster-The Facts was released, it was immediately attacked by nationalists in Ireland. They took exception to its historical analysis which claimed the Easter Rising was "essentially a pro-German rebellion" and its association of Hitler with de Valera. Though unionists had expected these criticisms, they were not prepared for the equally strong attacks in the British press. A number of leading newspapers ridiculed the unionist booklet as "simplistic" and "historically inaccurate." The Guardian, in particular, condemned the book's allegation that the Irish government was assisting the I.R.A.. The newspaper pointed out the long series of Garda raids on arms dumps and the continuous prosecutions under the Special Criminal Court in Dublin.<sup>46</sup>

More damaging than these attacks, however, was the S.D.L.P.'s discovery that one of the book's gruesome photographs was not what it was claimed to be. The photograph showed a mangled victim and was entitled, "The Decomposed Body of an I.R.A. Victim Found by an R.U.C. Search Party." Michael Canavan, S.D.L.P. spokesman for Law and Order, disputed this claim and pointed out that the photograph was of Sam Miller, a victim of loyalist assassins.<sup>47</sup>

Unionists originally disputed Canavan's allegation, but after conducting research, David Burnside admitted that the booklet was in error. This acknowledgement caused considerable embarrassment to the Operation U.S.A. team. Irish-American republicans later used the mistake to denigrate the unionists during press conferences in the United States.<sup>48</sup>

The damage done to Operation U.S.A. by this adverse publicity was slight compared to the action taken by both republican and constitutional nationalists in America. The Irish National Caucus had closely monitored the development of the unionist initiative and received information on the tour schedule organized by the Jack Buttram Agency. Fr. Sean McManus fully realized that Ian Paisley was the key figure in the publicity initiative and so he began investigating ways to wreck the initiative. On December 2, 1981, he began a lobbying campaign in Washington aimed at removing Paisley's American visa. He wrote to Secretary of State Alexander Haig alleging that Paisley would be a disruptive influence in the United

States. Later, on December 14, McManus encouraged one hundred members of the Ad Hoc Committee to send a telegram to Haig endorsing this claim and requesting the State Department to deny a visa to Paisley.<sup>49</sup>

Members of the Friends of Ireland were also alarmed at the prospect of Paisley leading a major unionist publicity tour. They were particularly incensed by his strong opposition to the Anglo-Irish Summits and by his formation of the Third Force - a new loyalist parliamentary organization whose purpose was to defend Protestants from I.R.A. attacks.<sup>50</sup>

On December 8, 1981, Daniel Moynihan, Tip O'Neill and Ted Kennedy wrote to Alexander Haig and requested the removal of Paisley's visa "in light of his appeals to bigotry and religious hatred in Northern Ireland, his long standing tactics of intimidation and oppression, and his thinly-veiled exhortations to sectarian violence." On December 11, a group of nineteen Senators, including Robert Dole, Joseph Biden and even Jesse Helms, backed this request and informed Alexander Haig that "Paisley has consistently expressed the gospel of bloodshed in leading mob demonstrations through Roman Catholic areas of Belfast."<sup>51</sup>

When Paisley heard of this campaign in Washington, he held a press conference in which he casually dismissed the possibility his critics might succeed. He told reporters that he had traveled to the United States over fifty times in the 1970s without any trouble. Paisley further stated that there

was no way the government could exclude both a Member of Parliament and a Member of the European Parliament. He claimed The Friends of Ireland were;

dead scared at the success of my campaign against the Anglo-Irish Summit and the harm I'm doing their united Ireland cause. Evidently, the united Ireland men in the U.S. are afraid. They don't want the Unionist case to be made. The truth is going to hurt them too much !<sup>52</sup>

Paisley failed to appreciate the influence of The Friends of Ireland and was shocked to learn that on December 13, the State Department announced it was reviewing his visa. Government officials issued a rather unconvincing statement which claimed their review had started before the pressure from Congress. Following this re-assessment, the State Department announced on December 21 that it would revoke Paisley's visa because his presence "would be prejudicial to the American public interest."<sup>53</sup>

The visa denial caused immediate controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. Paisley violently denounced the decision and claimed it was taken because of the "anti-Ulster bigotry" of the Reagan administration. He pointed out that Deputy Secretary of State William Clark was a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and that Alexander Haig was a Roman Catholic. Paisley claimed that these facts naturally inclined the two officials towards Irish nationalism.<sup>54</sup>

Paisley also organized protest demonstrations outside the U.S. Consulate in Belfast and its staff reported receiving a series of threatening phone calls.<sup>55</sup> He also contacted his

supporters in America and urged them to protest the visa denial. Bob Jones began orchestrating a letter-writing campaign to Senators and Congressmen appealing for help. Typical of these was a telegram from Rod Bell, President of the Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship of America, to Congressman William Whitehurst. It stated:

His character is impeccable, the salt of the earth in his country. Americans will not stand for people like O'Neill and Kennedy to spread slanderous attacks against a man like Dr. Paisley. It will cause every Protestant and Baptist in the U.S. who loves freedom to rise up in vigorous protest. Dr. Paisley has hundreds of thousands of friends in the U.S. who will not stand for such Roman Catholic bigotry.<sup>56</sup>

In Britain, the press reaction was generally critical of the State Department's action. A number of newspapers suggested the visa denial would make Paisley a martyr and increase his support among militant unionists.<sup>57</sup> In America, the press reaction against the State Department was much stronger. Many newspapers viewed the denial of Paisley's visa as an attack on the principle of free speech and freedom of information. The Washington Post described the government's action as "shameful" while The Christian Science Monitor demanded that, "Ulster's voice should be heard!"<sup>58</sup> An editorial in The Los Angeles Times commented:

The American people would have been able to make up their own minds about Paisley's extremism. Revoking his visa is a form of extremism itself and not worthy of our country... Such actions by the State Department tend to harm American traditions more than they hurt objectionable characters like Paisley.<sup>59</sup>

While the American press supported Ian Paisley's right to visit the U.S., almost every editorial also condemned his political views. Any benefit Paisley received from the publicity surrounding the visa denial was far outweighed by the attacks which were launched against him. He was described as an "arch bigot" and one of the primary causes of sectarian strife in Ulster. Political commentaries generally reflected the opinion offered later by Mike Barnacle of The Boston Globe:

Paisley is a howling bigot who gets his kicks out of hating Roman Catholics... He has done everything a man could do to keep the fires of hate bright and burning in Ulster. He is a cynical, ignorant, manipulative, publicity seeking rabble rouser.<sup>60</sup>

These severe denunciations had an adverse effect on Ulster unionism. They failed to distinguish between Paisley's extremist views and those of moderate unionists. Consequently, Americans were given the impression that all Ulster Protestants were intransigent and narrow minded in their refusal to contemplate a political agreement with nationalists.

Among Irish-American activists there was considerable divergence of opinion over the visa issue. Noraid adopted the unlikely position of supporting Paisley. This was primarily because the group wanted all restrictions lifted so that prominent Irish republicans could come to America. Leading Irish-American republicans, such as Frank Durkan, wrote to

Alexander Haig appealing for a reinstatement of Paisley's visa because;

Stifling discussion on such a topical matter as Northern Ireland can only lead to frustration and encourage violence. In a situation where dialogue and expression of opinion are vital in order to clear the air, the suppression of any viewpoint, whether nationalist or Unionist, serves only to exacerbate the situation.<sup>61</sup>

In Ireland, John Hume opposed the State Department's decision but this did not change the strong opposition to Paisley from The Friends of Ireland. The Irish National Caucus and Ad Hoc Committee, while supporting visas for republicans, were not prepared to acknowledge a similar right to Paisley. The Irish Echo summarized the feelings of both groups in an editorial which stated:

Paisley insults every American Roman Catholic virtually every time he opens his mouth... Like Kohmeini, Paisley uses religion as an object of hate not love. The Irish-American community simply can not tolerate this fascist bigot's easy access to our beloved nation.<sup>62</sup>

The organizers of Operation U.S.A. realized Paisley's absence from the tour would greatly diminish its impact. They devised a plan to get permission for Paisley to at least visit New York. On January 6, 1982, Paisley re-applied for an American visa and stated that he wanted to address the United Nations. He hoped that if he promised to stay within a four mile radius of the U.N. building, the U.S. government would be forced to grant him admittance. This is how "unwelcome" political figures, such as Fidel Castro, are able to visit the United States without a visa.

The Reagan administration, however, refused to alter its position. Staff members at the U.S. Consulate in Belfast considered Paisley's renewed visa application but turned it down. They pointed out that the D.U.P. leader was unable to show that he had been invited to address the United Nations. To enforce this decision, the U.S. Embassy in London sent a telegram to all trans-Atlantic airlines informing them that Paisley's visa was void. It warned the airlines that if they carried him to America they would be subject to a hefty fine.<sup>63</sup>

When unionists realized that Paisley would not be permitted to enter the United States, they re-assessed their planned itinerary and tried to make the best of the situation. They contacted supporters in Toronto and arranged for Paisley to visit Canada instead. Eileen Paisley took the vacant position on the American tour and brought tape recordings of speeches her husband had intended to deliver.

On January 16, 1982, the Operation U.S.A. team flew out of Belfast for their various destinations. Despite the group's optimism, the tour was a publicity disaster from the beginning. Nora Bradford, Eileen Paisley, John Taylor, and Peter Robinson intended to begin their campaign with rousing speeches at the National Press Club in Washington. Without the presence of Ian Paisley, however, the media showed little interest. Not one American television network appeared at the Press Club to record Eileen Paisley reading out her husband's

speech. The few journalists who did attend condemned the unionist delegation for spreading Paisley's "bigotry" and "deep derangement."<sup>64</sup>

Following the press conference in Washington, the group split up. Nora Bradford and Eileen Paisley went south to make appearances in Birmingham and Atlanta. The climax of their trip came at a rally in Greenville where the women played a recorded message from Paisley to a group in Bob Jones University. Peter Robinson made a number of public appearances in California while John Taylor toured the Mid-West and Boston.

The scant publicity the four managed to attract was mostly negative. While Peter Robinson was speaking in San Francisco, someone telephoned a bomb threat and the hall had to be evacuated.<sup>65</sup> When the four met up again in New York, they signed into the Empire Hotel under assumed names. Noraid discovered their whereabouts, however, and groups of republicans picketed the hotel chanting pro-I.R.A. slogans and derogatory remarks about Rev. Robert Bradford. After these demonstrations, the F.B.I. arrested a man in Brooklyn who had a sub-machine gun and was alleged to be a contract killer hired to assassinate Peter Robinson.<sup>66</sup>

The Operation U.S.A. tour also suffered negative publicity because of its close association with Bob Jones. On January 9, 1982, the Reagan administration announced that it would reinstate the tax-exempt status of Bob Jones University. Its

tax-exempt status had been removed in 1976 because the government declared the admission policy towards African-Americans was discriminatory. Reagan's decision to lift the ban received widespread condemnation in America and newspapers carried articles attacking the "racism" practiced at B.J.U.. As the unionists tour group had strong contacts with Bob Jones, their image was also depreciated in this wave of negative publicity.<sup>67</sup>

Jones created more bad publicity for Ulster Unionism with his attacks on the State Department's refusal to grant Paisley a visa. In March 1982, Paisley re-applied for permission to attend the annual Bible Conference at Bob Jones University. The State Department again denied a visa. This prompted Jones to launch a severe personal attack on Alexander Haig. Before 7,000 students at the Bible Conference, Jones described the Secretary of State as a "Roman Catholic bigot" and "a monster in human flesh and a demon possessed instrument to destroy America." He asked his students to pray that "the Lord will smite him, hip and thigh, bone and marrow, heart and lungs, and all there is to him, and he shall destroy him quickly and utterly."<sup>68</sup>

Jones' attack caused a wave of publicity in the United States and initiated a series of criticisms in the media. A number of editorials described his views as "despicable" and "ignorant." Commentators writing on the statement also

attacked Ian Paisley and criticized similar unionist "intolerance" towards Catholics in Northern Ireland.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps the worst consequence to unionists of the Operation U.S.A. tour was that it actually enabled republicans to stage their own publicity drive. When the D.U.P. and O.U.P. first announced their American initiative, Sinn Fein said it would send Danny Morrison and Owen Carron M.P. across the Atlantic to disrupt the group. Carron and Morrison applied for visas but, like Paisley, they were refused. Undeterred by this, both men promised they would ignore the visa denial and enter the United States illegally.

On January 17, 1982, Carron and Morrison flew to Canada to challenge Ian Paisley's activities in Toronto. They obtained copies of his schedule and organized protests. The two Sinn Fein leaders worked alongside members of Toronto's Irish Prisoners of War Committee and effectively demonstrated against every public appearance of the D.U.P. leader.

Danny Morrison addressed a crowd of republicans outside a Free Presbyterian Church in which Paisley was preaching. They chanted pro-I.R.A. slogans in an attempt to drown out the sermon. Morrison and Carron also disrupted the official launching of Ulster : The Facts at a press conference in the Royal York Hotel, Toronto. Through such activities, the two Sinn Fein leaders deflected attention away from Paisley, challenged his political statements, and attracted media exposure for the republican perspective. Partly due to their

efforts, The Toronto Star, Canada's largest daily newspaper, refused to report on Paisley's tour.<sup>70</sup>

After the campaign against Paisley, Carron and Morrison decided to enter the United States to challenge the other four Unionists and attend the annual Noraid dinner in New York. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, however, had been monitoring illegal crossings by republican from Canada for months. They were alerted about Carron and Morrison and arrested the two men when they presented false passports to authorities in Buffalo.

The two Sinn Fein leaders were held in Erie State penitentiary. They immediately used the opportunity to exploit the propaganda potential. Both went on a blanket protest, refusing to wear prison clothes, and threatened a hunger strike if they were not allowed to contact republican supporters in New York. Morrison and Carron also refused legal assistance so they could deliver fiery republican speeches at their arraignment. These efforts produced the intended results, as the incident was reported on C.B.S. Evening News and in the major American newspapers. One observer reported that in Buffalo the affair "was played as the biggest international story since acid rain."<sup>71</sup>

Initially, U.S. officials filed felony charges and threatened to hold Carron and Morrison without bail. This infuriated Irish-American republicans who immediately encouraged Mario Biaggi to pressure the I.N.S.. Eventually,

federal prosecutors decided to indict the two men on criminal charges. Noraid posted bail and the Sinn Fein leaders returned to Ireland in late January, pending trial.

Their trial was initially set for March of 1982, but because of a series of delays, was not held until October of 1983. Carron and Morrison again milked maximum publicity from their situation. They claimed they did not have the finances to attend the trial and so the U.S. government was obliged to pay for their first class tickets to America. This was an intense embarrassment for a government which had maintained a strict ban on republicans entering the country from the early 1970s.

When Carron and Morrison arrived in New York they were released pending jury selection. Both men immediately began a circuit of public lectures and news conferences at which they defended the I.R.A.'s campaign and attacked the State Department's visa policy. They were handed yet another great publicity opportunity when James Prior, Northern Ireland Secretary of State, arrived in America to conduct a British information campaign in Washington and other major cities. Carron and Morrison followed Prior around the country, appearing unexpectedly at his press conferences to directly attack British policy. Their confrontations were widely reported in Ireland. Prior later admitted the two Sinn Fein leaders caused him extreme annoyance and embarrassment in America.<sup>72</sup>

When Carron and Morrison were eventually brought to trial, they used the event to issue an extensive defense of Irish republicanism from the dock. They were ultimately convicted of attempting to enter the United States illegally, though were sentenced to a mere one year period of unsupervised probation. The case concluded in controversy when Judge John Curtin congratulated the two defendants for their dignified conduct throughout the trial, praised their moving testimony about events in Ireland, and implied that the American government's visa policy was in error. Republicans in America rejoiced at the court decision and sarcastically thanked the Reagan administration for allowing Carron and Morrison to win this important publicity victory at U.S. government expense.<sup>73</sup>

The failure of Operation U.S.A. and the subsequent publicity victory of Carron and Morrison enraged unionist leaders. When the tour members returned to Northern Ireland, they told reporters their trip was a great success. Privately, however, they admitted the failure of their mission. John Taylor, in particular, was extremely discouraged over the inability to get the unionist view across to the American media. He complained about the "all pervasive influence" of Irish nationalists and the inherent bias against unionists among U.S. politicians and government officials.<sup>74</sup>

Unionists were deeply frustrated, having devoted so much effort to the Operation U.S.A. initiative yet achieving nothing except providing republicans with a propaganda

victory. Perhaps out of this frustration, unionists began issuing unusually severe condemnations of the American dimension to the Ulster conflict. James Molyneaux, leader of the O.U.P., presented the strongest of these in March of 1982. He held a news conference at which he suggested the C.I.A. were operating in Ulster, trying to achieve a united Ireland. Molyneaux also implied that the C.I.A. might have been involved in the assassinations of Airey Neave, Robert Bradford, and Lord Louis Mountbatten.<sup>75</sup>

It seems Molyneaux was motivated more by disappointment after the Operation U.S.A. tour than by conviction. He never produced evidence to support his allegations and was criticized by the American Embassy in London, which described his statement as "unworthy of comment." Even some members of the O.U.P. criticized Molyneaux and The Belfast Telegraph told him to stop "talking in riddles," to "produce hard evidence," or "withdraw the allegations!"<sup>76</sup>

The final aspect of Operation U.S.A. which frustrated the participants was their inability to strengthen the unionist support network in America. One of the main objectives had been to encourage greater effort from the various groups and individuals promoting the unionist cause. While in California, Peter Robinson claimed that his public appearances were extremely successful and that he was "deluged with calls and messages of support from Ulster exiles telling me to keep up the good work." Robinson said that because of this

enthusiastic response he was forming new unionist support organizations called "The Friends of Ulster."<sup>77</sup>

Despite Robinson's lofty claims, only a handful of people followed up on their promise and formed the "Friends of Northern Ireland" in San Francisco. The group consisted of only ten to fifteen Ulster exiles. Its initial publicity materials focused on attacking the I.R.A. by exploiting the American fascination with the English Royal Family. One publicity brochure stated:

There is no honest man in the English speaking world who would speak ill of the Queen's integrity or her conscientious attempts to maintain peace... It is natural that the I.R.A. should oppose her because, just as the Royal Family signifies the best in an orderly and civilized society, the Provisionals represent the ultimate in Marxist revolutionary disorder.<sup>78</sup>

The Friends of Northern Ireland tried to monitor the activities of Noraid in the Bay Area and sent information back to Peter Robinson. They also worked unsuccessfully to present the unionist case to local Congressmen. Their enthusiasm soon waned, however, and by mid-1983 the group disintegrated and ceased to function.

There were also some unionist groups that formed in the early 1980s by their own initiative and not out of inspiration from Operation U.S.A.. Again, however, they remained generally ineffective and collapsed from lack of interest. David McCalden formed one such organization, the Ulster American Heritage Foundation (U.A.H.F.) in 1981. McCalden was born in Belfast in 1951 but moved to California in 1978. He was

indignant at the publicity success republicans had achieved in America because of the hunger strikes and decided to establish the U.A.H.F. to counteract I.R.A. propoganda. He began producing a quarterly newspaper called the Ulster American Newsletter, which described the group's activities and defended unionism. The group was very small consisting of only about ten activists. All the organizational work was conducted by McCalden and Peter Peel, a history teacher at Santa Monica College. Peel had the distinction of being the great-great grandson of the founder of the British police force, Sir Robert Peel.<sup>79</sup>

McCalden tried to encourage interest in Scotch-Irish history by organizing exhibits at his local library in Manhattan Beach. These displays featured biographies of the American Presidents of Ulster dissent, music by Van Morrison and James Galway, and free samples of Bushmills whiskey.<sup>80</sup> He also conducted a campaign against the flying of the Irish tricolor outside the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas. He unsuccessfully tried to persuade the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who were in charge of raising national emblems outside the mission, that because Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie were Scotch-Irish, an Ulster flag should be raised in their honor.<sup>81</sup>

The U.A.H.F. tried to counteract Irish-American republicans at every feasible opportunity. McCalden participated in television and radio debates with Noraid's

Martin Galvin and wrote pro-unionist articles to the press. He attended public debates on Northern Ireland organized by San Francisco's Irish Forum, and later lambasted republican "yahoos" for getting drunk and pelting his table with dinner rolls.<sup>82</sup> When hundreds of Noraid supporters in Los Angeles demonstrated against a visit by Queen Elizabeth in 1983, McCalden and Peel organized their own two man counter protest. They braved republican obscenities and hails of saliva to parade outside the British Consulate carrying the Union Jack and Ulster Flag.<sup>83</sup>

McCalden valiantly continued his activities until 1987, when he stopped publishing the Ulster-American Newsletter because the organization could not afford the quarterly production costs of fifty dollars. The U.A.H.F. never built formal links with any of the unionist parties in Northern Ireland, but did assist in organizing the itinerary of politicians visiting the West Coast. Some unionists suspected McCalden of having contacts with white supremacist groups. They therefore tried to avoid him, heeding the warning of Harold McCusker that "our image in the United States is bad enough without having to contend with charges of supporting anti-Black and anti-Semitic racism."<sup>84</sup>

The only other unionist group which formed in this period was the American Aid to Ulster (A.A.U.) in Philadelphia. The A.A.U. was led by Annette Ravinsky, an Italian-American Jew. She claimed she was motivated by the I.R.A.'s support of the

P.L.O. and the similarities between Ulster Loyalists and Jews in Israel. She regularly contributed articles to the U.D.A. newspaper, Ulster, in which she warned Protestants to take up arms against the I.R.A. or else they would be "butchered like they were in 1641" and become "the Vietnamese boat people of Western Europe."<sup>85</sup>

In 1982 Ravinsky and some of her companions visited Northern Ireland for the Twelfth of July parades. She met with U.D.A. leaders and promised to help raise money for loyalist prisoners and challenge republican supporters in Pennsylvania. During the Philadelphia St. Patrick's Day Parade in 1983, which honored Bobby Sands, she plastered the route with anti-I.R.A. stickers. When the Noraid delegation passed her group, they booed and hissed and chanted, "Bloody Communist Murders!"<sup>86</sup> Ravinsky maintained her activities until 1985 but again, like David McCalden, lost enthusiasm for her gargantuan task and quit.

The ineffectiveness and quixotic nature of these groups served only to increase unionist frustration and paranoia over the failure of Operation U.S.A.. They faced a situation in which the I.R.A. was getting important support in America. Unionists could do nothing about this and were again forced to rely on the "incompetent" British Information Service to counteract Irish-American republicanism. Consequently, the American dimension to the Ulster conflict contributed to the

unionist sense of being an embattled community and accentuated their tendency towards political intransigence.

## NOTES

1. The Belfast NewsLetter, "Edward Kennedy's Boomerang," 22 October 1971.

2. For an example of this view see Robert Cielou, Spare My Tortured People : Ulster and the Green Border (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1983), 226.

3. Harold McCusker M.P., former Deputy Leader of the official Unionist Party, interview by author, 6 January 1989.

4. The most comprehensive analysis of the impact of these immigrants on the United States is James G. Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish : A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1962). See also R.J. Dickson, Ulster Emigration to Colonial America (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1966).

5. Michael Funchion, Irish-American Voluntary Organizations (Westport:1983), "Loyal Orange Institution of the United States of America," 223-226. See also "Statement by William Morton, New Jersey State Grand Lodge," Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland op. cit., 522.

6. J.W.G. Patton, Executive Officer Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland, interview by author, 6 January 1989. For an analysis of why Orangism failed to take root in America see Cecil Houston and William Smyth, "Transferred Loyalties : Orangeism in the United States and Ontario," The American Review of Canadian Studies 14 no. 2 (Spring, 1984): 193-211.

7. The Orange Standard, "Formation of New Lodge in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania," November, 1977. In Philadelphia there is a junior Orange association called The Apprentice Boys of Derry Club and in Hatboro' P.A. there is an Orange Home for elderly members.

One of the L.O.L.'s most colorful lodges is No.99, composed of Mohawk Indians from Quebec. Publicity photographs show the Indians in traditional costumes, including feathered headdresses and tomahawks, but also sporting orange sashes. The Indians were given pride of place at the recent tercentenary celebrations of the Battle of the Boyne in Belfast. See The Sunday Life, 30 September 1990.

8. J.W.G. Patton, interview with author. The American L.O.L. has made financial contributions to the unionist campaign against the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Patton alleges, however, that this financial support is atypical. He claims that the majority of cash received from America is used for "benevolent purposes."

9. See Wayland Dunaway, The Scotch-Irish in Colonial Pennsylvania (London: Archon Books, 1962).

10. "Letter From John McPherson" Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland, op. cit., 519-520.

11. Merlyn Rees comments on one letter he received from the U.A.L. in Northern Ireland : A Personal Perspective (London: Methuen, 1985), 20. See also "Statement of Harry Benison, Chairman of the Ulster American Loyalists," Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland, op. cit., 362-363.

12. Wendy Martin, "The Wearin' of the Orange," The Chicago Tribune, 8 July 1973. Martin also tells of Ulster unionists in Chicago who held regular social gatherings. They made threatening phone calls to leaders of local Noraid units and tried to get City hall to dye the Chicago river orange on the Twelfth of July - a protest against the tradition of dying it green on St. Patrick's Day. See also Barbara Brotman, "Orangemen Get Their Irish Up Over Snubs," The Chicago Tribune, 14 July 1980.

13. Information from F.A.R.A. report number 2706 on the Alexander Development Consultants, 12 July 1976 - 12 July 1984.

14. See interview with Reynolds on C.B.S. Evening News, 3 May 1981. Reynolds continually challenged Irish-American nationalists in letters to the editor. Sometimes these efforts rebounded. Irish-American groups lampooned Reynolds when he claimed that a top I.R.A. leader was Kevin Street. In reality, Kevin Street is the address of Provisional Sinn Fein in Dublin. The New York Times, 11 October 1971.

15. Kraft had campaigned in America against state support for Catholic schools. He established a bank account for his deposits which was controlled by a "Committee for Relief of Victims of the I.R.A.." The Chicago Tribune, 7 February 1972.

16. John Taylor, Official Unionist Member of the European Parliament, interview by author, 6 January 1989.

17. Alf McCreary, "The War Over Ulster in America," The Christian Science Monitor, 13 November 1981.

18. Andy Tyrrie quoted in Neil Hickey, "Northern Ireland : How T.V. Tips the Balance," T.V. Guide, 19 September 1981.

19. The Orange Standard, "Ulster's Case in America," July 1980.

20. The Christian Science Monitor, 28 December 1981.

21. The Times (London), 30 April 1981. The Church of Ireland group also met with Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York and leaders of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

22. The Northern Ireland Situation Report by the Presbyterian Church in Northern Ireland, 1979.

23. The Washington Post, 15 May 1981.

24. Rev. Robert Cobain, Publicity Officer of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, interview by author, 7 January 1989. The Presbyterian group established a formal link with the American branch of the church. They began sending copies of Update, the Presbyterian church's views on the Ulster conflict, to churches throughout America. Rev. Robert Cobain was later able to elaborate on the views of his group in an article entitled, "A Protestant View of Northern Ireland," Commonweal (March 11, 1983).

25. Information in letter from John Dunlop M.P. to President Ronald Reagan dated 4 September 1981. See also a report on the trip in Ulster, December, 1981. A major part of the women's schedule was organized by Harold Alexander.

26. The Belfast Telegraph, 4 March 1982.

27. Rev. Robert Cobain, interview by author.

28. Harold McCusker M.P., interview by author.

29. Biography of Ian Paisley in The New York Times, 25 August 1969.

30. The New York Times, 30 August 1969.

31. Paisley was concerned not only by Devlin's activities in New York, but also by statements issued from the Unionist "Truth Squad." The "squad" consisted of Unionist Party M.P.s Robin Bailie and William Stratton Mills. While these two politicians had originally been sent out to counteract Bernadette Devlin, they also criticized Paisley. At a meeting of five-thousand unionist supporters in Pennsylvania, Bailie denounced him as a "trouble maker," The Irish Times, 4 September 1969.

32. The Irish Times, 12 September 1969.
33. Article on Bob Jones University in The New York Times, 16 January 1982.
34. Ed Maloney and Andy Pollack, Paisley (Dublin: Poolbeg, 1986).
35. Clifford Smith, Ian Paisley : Voice of Protestant Ulster, (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1987), 19. Paisley has continually been criticized for his use of the title "Doctor" from his honorary degree from B.J.U.. This "degree charlatantry" has been an aspect of Paisley's character since his earliest political campaigns. The Free Presbyterian church proudly lists his Bachelor of Divinity and Doctorate from the Pioneer Theological Seminary in Rockford, Illinois. Paisley also has a Master's degree in Theology from Barton College in Colorado. Both these institutions were degree mills. They were subsequently closed down and censored by the Illinois and Colorado state governments.
36. Ian Paisley, America's Debt to Ulster (Greenville: B.J.U. Press, 1976).
37. The Belfast Telegraph, 5 January 1981.
38. Ed Maloney and Andy Pollack, op.cit., 249. The authors claim that membership of these churches, outside Greenville, is very small with rarely more than forty regular worshippers.
39. The Irish People, 21 November 1981.
40. John Taylor M.E.P., interview by author.
41. Clifford Smith, op.cit., 179.
42. Ulster : The Facts (Belfast: Crown Publications, 1982), 30.
43. The Belfast NewsLetter, 15 January 1982.
44. Information in telegram from Consul General Mosher to State Department, dated 29 December 1981.
45. Information from F.A.R.A. files on The Buttram Agency No.3588, 1984-1987. From this initial contact with Ulster Unionists, Buttram became their chief contact in Washington and arranged numerous visits in the future.
46. The Guardian, 16 January 1982.
47. The Belfast NewsLetter, 19 January 1982.

48. The Belfast NewsLetter, "Burnside Admits Error," 21 January 1982.

49. Correspondence from McManus to Alexander Haig dated 2 December 1981.

50. Paisley had announced the formation of the Third Force in the Autumn of 1981. He won considerable publicity by staging a military style rally in the Antrim hills at which hundreds of members waved gun licenses in the air.

51. Correspondence from Senators to Alexander Haig dated 11 December 1981.

52. The Belfast Telegraph, 10 December 1981.

53. The Times (London), 22 December 1981.

54. The Protestant Telegraph, 9 January 1982.

55. Correspondence from U.S. Consul General Belfast to State Department, dated 23 December 1981.

56. Correspondence from Rod Bell to Congressman William Whitehurst dated 16 December 1981.

57. The Daily Telegraph, 26 December 1981.

58. The Washington Post, "Presenting Ian Paisley," 8 January 1982, and The Christian Science Monitor, "Let Americans Hear Ulster Voices," 23 December 1981.

59. The Los Angeles Times, "Protect Us From Our Protectors," 1 January 1982.

60. Mike Barnicle, "His Business is Bitterness," The Boston Globe, 23 September 1985.

61. Correspondence from Frank Durkan to Alexander Haig dated 18 December 1981.

62. The Irish Echo, "Time To Put Up or Shut Up," 12 December 1981.

63. The Times (London), 16 January 1982.

64. Coleman McCarthy in The Washington Post, 23 January 1982. While in Washington the group tried to meet Ronald Reagan by attending the city's First Presbyterian Church. They went to a Sunday service which the President was prone to attend, but he did not appear. The only consolation the group found was that the church had an Ulster flag among its

collection of international emblems. Information from John Taylor M.E.P., interview by author.

65. Mark Hosenball, "Irish Burlesque," The New Republic (March 3, 1982): 11-12.

66. The Belfast NewsLetter, 30 January 1982.

67. The Reagan administration was alleged to have changed its policy on tax-exemption after pressure from Senator Strom Thurmond and Congressman Trent Lott of Mississippi. In response to the political storm created by the decision, Reagan compromised and said his concern was to make sure the I.R.S. was acting within the law. On March 24, 1983, the issue was settled by the Supreme Court. It concluded the I.R.S. had acted correctly in denying tax-exemption to schools which practiced racial discrimination. See reports on the issue in The New York Times, 16 January 1982 and 25 May 1983.

68. The Philadelphia Inquirer, 3 April 1982.

69. The Detroit News, 3 April 1982. Since 1982, the State Department has adopted an inconsistent policy towards Paisley. In October 1983 he was granted a visa to preach in Virginia and was even allowed to bring his own bodyguard. Paisley's visits to America have frequently been surrounded in controversy. In 1985, residents of Londonderry, New Hampshire, tried to rename their town "Derry" in protest to a preaching visit by Paisley to the local Free Presbyterian Church. The Boston Globe, 23 September 1985.

70. The Irish People, 30 January 1982.

71. Mark Hosenball, op.cit., 11.

72. James Prior, A Balance of Power (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), 219-220. See also The San Francisco Examiner, "Irish Forum Talk Turns Into a Debate," 27 October 1983.

73. For a detailed analysis of the effects of the Morrison/Carron case see Robert E. Connolly, An Irish-American Republican Primer (Fort Wayne: Cachullian Publications, 1985), 92-95.

74. John Taylor M.E.P., interview by author.

75. The Belfast NewsLetter, 23 March 1982.

76. Harold McCusker M.P., interview by author. See also The Belfast Telegraph, "Sinister Theory," 23 March 1982.

77. The Belfast NewsLetter, 23 January 1982.

78. "The Friends of Northern Ireland," undated publicity brochure.
79. David McCalden, interview by author, 7 July 1990.
80. The Ulster-American Newsletter, Summer/Fall, 1982.
81. David McCalden, interview with author. See also McCalden's letter to The Belfast NewsLetter, 17 September 1982.
82. The Ulster-American NewsLetter, Spring, 1984.
83. The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner, 28 February 1983.
84. Harold McCusker M.P., interview by author.
85. Letter from Annette Ravinsky in Ulster, February 1983.
86. Combat 4 no. 49, 1983.

## Chapter 9

### The Rejuvenation of Irish-American Republicanism After the Hunger Strike, 1981-1985.

The failure of Operation U.S.A. greatly encouraged Irish-American republicans. Noraid lampooned the "incompetent" attempts of the unionist tour group to attract positive media coverage. It claimed that republican demonstrations in New York "hounded the Orangemen back to the North with their tails between their legs."<sup>1</sup> Noraid also successfully exploited the publicity generated by Danny Morrison and Owen Carron. The group used the trial of the two Sinn Fein leaders to embarrass the State Department over its visa denial policy.

The Carron/Morrison case and the collapse of Operation U.S.A. were just some of the positive developments for Irish-American republicanism in the post-hunger strike period. Noraid and a variety of similar republican groups maintained the high level of activism they achieved during the prison protest. The sacrifice of ten hunger strikers in the H-Blocks inspired these groups and contributed to a rejuvenation in Irish-American republicanism.

The hunger strike produced a similar renaissance in the republican movement in Ireland. When the fast was called off on October 3, 1981, the British government responded with some

conciliatory provisions allowing the prisoners to wear their own clothes and restoring half of their lost remission. These concessions fell well short of the hunger strikers' original demands and seemed a meager reward for the lives of ten men. Yet, the prison protests brought a dramatic improvement in the fortunes of Sinn Fein and re-established the I.R.A.'s heroic standing among segments of the nationalist community. As Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie point out;

It was an irony of the episode that it began with the government attempting to impose on the prisoners the status of criminals and ended with the I.R.A. restoring their credentials among sections of the Catholic community as freedom fighters.<sup>2</sup>

The most visible sign of the renewed support for republicanism came with the election victories of Bobby Sands and Owen Carron in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. These successes encouraged a movement within Sinn Fein to end the traditional policy of political abstention. The shift culminated at the 1981 Ard Fheis when delegates overwhelmingly endorsed the contesting of elections and embarked on the policy of uniting Ireland "with a ballot paper in one hand and an armalite in the other."<sup>3</sup>

The first opportunity to discover whether Sinn Fein's support would decline without the sustaining emotional charge provided by the hunger strikes occurred in October 1982 with the elections to a new regional Assembly. British Secretary of State, James Prior, launched this new political initiative, designed to secure a measure of self government in Ulster.

Sinn Fein contested the election but said its candidates would refuse to take their seats if elected. The party orchestrated a campaign based on traditional republicanism and on the party's increased community work in the nationalist ghettos.

The results were a triumph for Gerry Adams and all those who supported the new republican strategy. Sinn Fein won five of the seventy-eight seats and took 10.1% (64,191) of the first preference votes. This was an advance of 2.5% on the anti-H-Block vote in the 1981 local elections. Even more satisfying, in view of Adam's ultimate desire to present Sinn Fein as the voice of northern nationalists, their success was achieved at the expense of the S.D.L.P..

Sinn Fein's success was further consolidated in the general elections for Westminster in 1983. The party's share of the vote increased from 3.3% to 13.4% (102,601) while the S.D.L.P. total dropped by one percent to 17.9% (137,012). Gerry Adams was elected M.P. for west Belfast, defeating a S.D.L.P. candidate and Gerry Fitt, who ran as an independent. Between 1983-85, a number of political analysts felt that Sinn Fein was destined to displace the S.D.L.P. as the main nationalist political party in Ulster.<sup>4</sup>

The electoral success of Sinn Fein complemented the rejuvenation of Irish-American republicanism. Noraid used the republican vote to support its contention that the I.R.A. was not an isolated band of terrorists. It continually publicized and exploited Sinn Fein victories to claim that the Provo

campaign was a legitimate war of national liberation which had the support of a substantial section of the nationalist community.

Noraid reacted to the rise of Sinn Fein by redoubling its own publicity and fund-raising activities. The group continued the high level of activism it achieved during the hunger strikes and consolidated its increased levels of support. Michael Flannery and Martin Galvin both claimed that the prison protest touched a nerve of ethnic identity among previously uncommitted Irish-Americans. They alleged that many young Irish-Americans were inspired by the prisoners' sacrifice. Consequently, Galvin claimed that by the end of 1981 the number of American born members of Noraid exceeded those of Irish origin.<sup>5</sup>

Noraid further benefitted from the increase in Irish immigration to the United States in the early 1980s. The weakness of the Irish economy forced larger numbers of young people to enter America illegally in search of employment. While most of these new immigrants were solely concerned with surviving financially and did not get involved with Irish-American political groups, some were immediately attracted by Noraid.<sup>6</sup> Their involvement arose from a variety of factors. Some were bitter at the Irish government's inability to provide them with employment. They could readily identify with Noraid's bitter attacks against the political leaders in the twenty-six counties. Others got involved with Irish-American

republicanism simply because the social events were "lively, entertaining, and offered the opportunity of meeting fellow Irish people."<sup>7</sup>

A significant number of new Irish immigrants worked in England before they came to America. Some claimed that this experience led to their involvement with Noraid. They felt that some English people regarded the Irish as "ignorant navies." This attitude contrasted sharply to their experience in America where being Irish was an asset. One immigrant from Cork, now living in the Bronx, recalls;

I was in London for three years. After my first month an I.R.A. bomb went off. I knew nothing about it, I'd never been interested in politics, but at my local newsagent, where I bought a paper every morning, the owner asked me not to come into his shop again. After that I felt everyone suspected me just because I was Irish.<sup>8</sup>

An important element in the post-hunger strike rejuvenation of Irish-American republicanism was the radicalization of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. With around 80,000 members, the A.O.H. was the largest Irish organization in the United States. In the 1970s, it had adopted a strong nationalist political perspective but its leadership generally withheld full endorsement of the republican position and condemned I.R.A. actions on several occasions. During the hunger strikes, however, the A.O.H. issued fierce condemnations of the British government and gave strong support to the prisoners. This growing militancy was

consolidated in 1982 with the election of Joseph Roche as President of the organization.

Roche believed in the ideals of Irish republicanism and used his Presidency to endorse Sinn Fein's political program. He continually condemned the "brutality" of the British Army in Ulster and supported the I.R.A.'s right of armed resistance. Roche also encouraged a stronger republican editorial line in the A.O.H. newspaper, National Hibernian Digest, and forged closer ties between his organization and Noraid.<sup>9</sup>

In January 1983, Roche attended as guest of honor at the annual Noraid dinner against the appeal of the Irish government not to go. He warmly applauded speeches by Seamus Gibney and Martha McClelland of Sinn Fein praising the I.R.A.. When Roche spoke he congratulated Noraid for "all the works of mercy that you perform for the prisoners and their families" and told Michael Flannery he had attended the dinner because "I believe that forty percent of A.O.H. members are members of Irish Northern Aid and I am here to represent their views."<sup>10</sup>

Roche also made frequent trips to Ireland to hold consultations with Sinn Fein leaders. In February, 1984, he led an A.O.H. delegation to meet with and honor the families of the dead hunger strikers. While in Belfast, he invited Gerry Adams to speak at the A.O.H. national convention in Albany, New York. Adams accepted but was refused a visa to enter the United States. Roche was furious at this denial and became determined to out-manuever the government. He organized

an amplified telephone link-up between Belfast and Albany through which Adams was able to address the A.O.H. delegates. The Sinn Fein President gave convention delegates the following compliment:

We in Ireland are familiar with the great work of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in support of Irish national freedom. We are grateful for your financial contributions to An Cumman Carbrach and Green Cross; for your close cooperation with Irish Northern Aid; and for the invaluable efforts of President Joseph Roche.<sup>11</sup>

The efforts of Roche and the A.O.H. were complemented by various other republican groups which had greatly expanded their activities during the hunger strikes. These groups had previously been overshadowed by Noraid, but raised their level of activity to unprecedented heights during and after the H-Block campaign. The American Irish Congress, for example, had worked for the republican cause in Long Island and New Jersey from the beginning of the troubles. Its activities greatly increased in the early eighties as it established new chapters, paid for anti-British advertisements on local television and radio, and published a monthly newsletter which it distributed to all politicians in the New York area.<sup>12</sup>

Previously dormant chapters of Clan na Gael reemerged and conducted enthusiastic publicity campaigns. In Toledo, Ohio, Dr. Seamus Mettress revitalized the Clan and organized demonstrations against British officials throughout the mid-west. He also ran Irish cultural awareness forums, collected funds for An Cumman Carbrach, and pressured the Toledo media

to include the republican perspective in its reports on events in Ireland.<sup>13</sup>

One of the most colorful organizations to achieve prominence in this period was the American Irish Republican Army (A.I.R.A.). The group was formed in 1946, and since then had worked continuously for the republican cause. Its President, Colonel P.G. Duffy, claimed he participated in I.R.A. raids during the Border Campaign between 1956-62. He also took great pride in his inclusion in Ripley's Believe it or Not because of the great number of occupations he had pursued. These ranged from a shark fisherman to body guard for Bing Crosby. Duffy was also noted for his extreme conservatism, a point reflected by A.I.R.A. membership applications which emphasized "All are welcome regardless of race, sex or creed. No Communists!"<sup>14</sup>

After the hunger strikes, the A.I.R.A. began a sustained campaign to distribute its newspaper, The Shillelagh, to Irish-Americans throughout the United States. The newspaper ran militant editorials which warmly welcomed Provisional I.R.A. bombing attacks on the English mainland and called for a final violent uprising to drive the British out of Ireland. The group raised funds for An Cumman Carbrach by selling green bomber jackets with the A.I.R.A. logo printed on the back and auctioned oil paintings of Bobby Sands.<sup>15</sup>

There were also a number of new republican groups which formed specifically in response to the hunger strike. One of

these was the Irish-American Fenian Society (I.A.F.S.), founded in New Jersey in 1982. The I.A.F.S. soon established chapters in New York, California, Connecticut and Massachusetts. It hosted public lectures by members of Sinn Fein who were able to bypass the State Department's visa policy. The group also produced a weekly cable television news program which gave the republican perspective on events in Northern Ireland.<sup>16</sup>

The "Fenian Society" introduced novel ways to raise cash for Ireland. It began promoting an Irish-American Book of Freedom. For a donation of \$300, patrons could have their photographs mounted in the book accompanied by a nationalist poem of their choice. The I.A.F.S. also auctioned Irish Prisoner of War bracelets with the name of a republican engraved on it. The bracelets were accompanied with a certificate which stated:

By promising to wear this bracelet until the prisoner is released, you are pledging your support not only to the prisoner, but to their family and all those who are fighting for the freedom of Ireland.<sup>17</sup>

The rejuvenation of the republican support network in America alarmed both the British and Irish governments. Diplomats based in Washington encouraged the Reagan administration to intensify its actions against republican activities. From the beginning of the hunger strikes and into the mid-eighties, U.S. law enforcement agencies tightened their pressure on Noraid and launched a renewed campaign

against I.R.A. gunrunning. The increased efforts of the U.S. government did achieve a number of successes which hurt Irish-American republicanism. There were, however, some noted failures which had the unintended effect of inspiring republicans and producing major publicity victories.

The most noted republican victory over the U.S. government came in November, 1982, after the trial of five men who were caught red handed sending weapons to the I.R.A.. The five men included Noraid leader Michael Flannery and top I.R.A. gunrunner, George Harrison. The Justice Department felt that their inevitable conviction would be a great blow to Irish-American republicanism. Instead, Noraid and the other support groups received a tremendous publicity victory when the men were acquitted by a federal court in Brooklyn.

The case originated in April 1976 when a British Army patrol discovered a Finnish made Valmet rifle in the Ardoyne area of Belfast. Chris Ryder claims that the weapon was analyzed by R.U.C. forensic experts who determined it had been shipped from America. They gave its serial number to agents of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms who then traced the weapon to George De Meo -- the key arms supplier in George Harrison's network.<sup>18</sup>

In June 1980, De Meo was tried in North Carolina and convicted of illegal arms trafficking to Ireland. He received ten years imprisonment and a fine of \$9,000. De Meo, dreading such a jail term, began negotiating with the F.B.I.. He told

agents he would help them smash the Harrison network in exchange for a reduced sentence. Bureau officials promised De Meo that if he participated in their undercover operation his sentence would be reduced to two years. They also promised that his jail term would be served in Allenwood minimum security prison.<sup>19</sup>

With De Meo's co-operation, Justice Department agents began taping the telephones of George Harrison and Tom Falvey, another key member of the gunrunning network. In early 1981, De Meo, while free on bail, visited Harrison's apartment with a F.B.I. wire taped to his body. He told Harrison he would introduce him to a trusted arms dealer. De Meo promised that this man would maintain the flow of arms during his stint in prison.

On May 17, 1981, De Meo introduced John White to Harrison and Falvey. White, in reality F.B.I. agent John Winslow, posed as the arms dealer and began negotiating with the two I.R.A. supporters. Winslow told the men he could supply a whole range of weapons. He promised to deliver Uzi sub-machine guns, a flamethrower, and a 20mm cannon to shoot down British Army helicopters.

The F.B.I. trap, code named "Operation Bushmills," reached its climax on June 17, 1981. Agent Winslow originally told Harrison and Falvey the cost of his first arms shipment was \$15,000. Later he telephoned Harrison and said the price had to be raised to \$16,000. F.B.I. agents listening to the

wire tap then heard Harrison call Michael Flannery and ask for more cash. The Noraid leader replied that the money would be supplied immediately.

On June 18, Harrison called at Flannery's house in Jackson Heights, New York. Federal agents observed him leaving with a white envelope, which was later found to contain \$17,000. Harrison then went to Tom Falvey's house and waited for Winslow to arrive with the weapons. The phoney arms dealer soon drove up to the house in a van loaded with sub-machine guns and AK-47 assault rifles. The men loaded these weapons into Falvey's garage. Harrison then paid Winslow with the cash he received from Flannery.

F.B.I. agents observed and recorded the whole transaction. After Winslow left they saw Harrison and Falvey leave the house with a bag containing a heavy object. The agents feared it was one of the machine guns and decided to spring their trap prematurely. Those in charge of the operation did not want to let one weapon escape their grasp with the possibility it might be used in Northern Ireland. Harrison and Falvey were therefore stopped by agents wielding hand guns and taken into custody. Their plastic bag contained two cans of beer.

Federal agents then raided Harrison's house and confiscated records detailing his years of gunrunning to the I.R.A.. Shortly after this, they arrested Patrick Mullin who had stored thirteen of the weapons in his basement. It was not

until October 1981 that Bureau officials apprehended Michael Flannery and charged him with being the paymaster in the arms conspiracy. Daniel Gormley, the final member of the group, was arrested in April 1982 after investigations discovered he had also supplied cash for the operation.

The five men were brought to trial in the autumn of 1982, charged with conspiracy to ship weapons to the I.R.A.. Paul O'Dwyer and a group of associates conducted the defense but soon realized the amount of evidence against the men was overwhelming. The lawyers devised a strategy which claimed their clients believed that George De Meo was a C.I.A. agent. The C.I.A. has a license to export weapons, therefore the men claimed they were not only acting within the law but also had the endorsement of the U.S. government. George Harrison testified that he suspected the C.I.A. were involved in his operations as a means of monitoring the flow of weapons to Ireland and to remove the necessity of the I.R.A. turning to communist countries for arms.<sup>20</sup>

Throughout George De Meo's long career in arms sales, he continually boasted to George Harrison that he was an operative for the C.I.A.. The defense emphasized this boasting to build credibility for their case. De Meo was subpoenaed from prison and subjected to intense questioning about his C.I.A. involvement. These questions seemed to unnerve De Meo and he continually pleaded the Fifth Amendment. He did, however, categorically deny any association with the C.I.A..

Defense lawyers skillfully manipulated De Meo's denial to raise the jury's suspicions of his credibility. They employed former Attorney General Ramsay Clark as a key witness. He told the jury how the F.B.I. always had a deep distrust of the C.I.A. and never believed their denials of membership. Clark gave the impression that the C.I.A. consistently lied to protect its operatives and were continually involved in covert operations similar to Harrison's. These statements were supported by Ralph McGehee, a retired C.I.A. official, who further testified that it was perfectly logical for the defendants to believe the agency was involved in their gunrunning scheme.<sup>21</sup> Attorneys for the five men therefore succeeded in undermining De Meo's vehement denials of C.I.A. connections.

The accused men also impressed the jury with their testimonies. They pointed out that none had criminal records and had collectively served their country in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. As character witnesses, the men used people like Sam O'Reilly, an 86 year old I.R.A. veteran of the Easter Rising, who told the jury of the men's great patriotism for both America and Ireland. Bernadette Devlin described the defendants as "the finest human beings I have ever known" and there were reports that her emotional statement brought two jurors to tears!<sup>22</sup>

The courthouse was packed daily with Irish-American republicans giving encouragement to the defendants. George

Harrison delighted them when his lawyer issued a statement expressing insult that he was only charged with supplying weapons for a six month period in 1980. Harrison proudly told the judge he had been exporting guns to the I.R.A. for over twenty five-years.<sup>23</sup> Michael Flannery, with equal audacity, stated that the money he gave Harrison for the weapons was not from Noraid. He claimed it was from a secret I.R.A. fund which donors had specifically asked to be used for guns.<sup>24</sup>

The trial ended on November 2, 1982, with a not guilty verdict. Several jurors said they could not believe that Harrison's arms supply network could have operated for over twenty-five years without the knowledge of the C.I.A.. The courtroom fell into pandemonium when the decision was announced. Groups of Irish-American republicans cheered and waived tricolors as Harrison and Flannery shouted "Up the I.R.A.." The defendants were carried shoulder high from the courtroom.<sup>25</sup>

The verdict was a major set-back to the American government's efforts against I.R.A. supporters in America. The Justice Department had hoped the involvement of Michael Flannery would provide undisputed evidence Noraid was involved in purchasing weapons. British government officials tried to respond to the defeat positively by emphasizing that the operation did smash Harrison's network. They could not, however, disguise their intense disappointment at the verdict.

The British press reacted with horror at the court decision. The Sunday Express described the verdict as an "obscene charade" and alleged British intelligence officers had absolutely no confidence in the ability of American law enforcement agencies to "plug the arms loophole."<sup>26</sup> The London Times reported that Federal Judge Joseph McLoughlin had saluted the not guilty verdict as a great victory for justice and further alleged some of the jurors took part in a victory celebration after the trial.<sup>27</sup> The Daily Mirror told how one rich Irish-American businessman was so impressed by the court victory that he gave Noraid a blank cheque to use as they thought fit.<sup>28</sup>

In Northern Ireland, the reaction from unionists was predictably even stronger. The Belfast NewsLetter and The Belfast Telegraph both described the trial as a farce and demanded a greater commitment from U.S. authorities to smash I.R.A. gunrunning. Some extremists telephoned death threats to the American Consul in Belfast. Unionist M.P. Harold McCusker typified the anger when he stated:

I am appalled. I can't help but believe the jury were totally prejudiced or intimidated, or feared the consequences of making any other decision. It is a disgusting verdict when one thinks that seven people have been murdered here in the past four weeks -- and some were almost certainly killed by guns smuggled from the United States.<sup>29</sup>

The controversy created by the arms trial verdict caused Secretary of State James Prior to fly to the U.S. in an attempt to counter the positive publicity Noraid was

receiving. As the U.S. government was equally alarmed at the acquittal, it made every attempt to support Prior. Internal memoranda within the State Department showed its embarrassment with the verdict and its commitment to maintain good relations with the British. On November 16, 1982, Prior met with Kenneth Dam, Deputy Secretary of State. Policy coordinators instructed Dam to assure the British Secretary that the U.S. was committed to prosecuting I.R.A. gunrunners. They advised Dam that;

In view of public controversy over alleged C.I.A. involvement with the I.R.A. following the acquittal of five suspected I.R.A. gunrunners in New York and the consequent death threat against our Consul General in Belfast, public acknowledgement of our continued assurances to the British would be helpful in dispelling any doubts about our policy.<sup>30</sup>

Despite this assurance of continued U.S. government support, Prior's visit failed to undermine the positive publicity engendered for republicans by the Flannery trial. His media appearances were canceled because of the prominence given to the death of Leonoid Brezhnev and his public appearances were disrupted by Owen Carron and Danny Harrison. Noraid actually contended that Prior's visit helped their publicity efforts and encouraged republicans. The Irish People commented:

For centuries the British have reserved their loudest condemnations for those groups that are most effective in opposing their rule. Attacks by British officials thus become accolades signalling Irish nationalists that their efforts are having an impact. In coming to American to attack I.N.A.,

Prior has paid the highest tribute to which republicans might aspire.<sup>31</sup>

Republican groups in America rejoiced at the controversy surrounding the arms trial and used their victory to attack the British and American governments. They concentrated on publicizing the information disclosed during the trial which showed the continuous flow of information on Irish-American republicans between the F.B.I. and R.U.C.. Noraid used these revelations to allege there was a network of British agents operating in America who were working against republican sympathizers. The Irish Echo called for massive demonstrations from all Irish-Americans "to make it known that they are against the illegal activities of British intelligence operatives as regarding American citizens and the cynical activities of our own intelligence agents in this whole grey area of dirty tricks."<sup>32</sup>

New York's Irish community received George Harrison and his compatriots as great heroes and christened them the "Freedom Five." The five made guest appearances at a continuous round of banquets, socials and fund-raisers in their honor. Michael Flannery received particular praise for his conduct during the trial. Despite being in his eighties and relying on a walking stick, Flannery delivered impassioned republican statements and won considerable admiration outside republican circles. He even became the subject of a documentary produced by public television entitled, "The Old Man and the Gun."

Republican groups looked for ways to exploit Flannery's new found celebrity status to win even more publicity. A movement began within New York's Irish Societies to forward him as the Grand Marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade. Irish-American republicans emphasized that it would be a fitting tribute to a man who had devoted so much of his energies in charitable work within the Irish-American community.

Irish-American republicans were optimistic that their campaign for Flannery could succeed. They had considerable influence within the St. Patrick Day organizing committee. In 1982, they succeeded in naming Bobby Sands as Honorary Grand Marshall despite strong opposition from constitutional nationalists. The most powerful group within the committee was the Ancient Order of Hibernians. With Joseph Roche at its head, they naturally supported Michael Flannery. At a vote held in February 1983, the Noraid leader was overwhelmingly endorsed as Grand Marshall.<sup>33</sup>

The election of Flannery caused an immediate political controversy as constitutional nationalists vented their outrage. Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald and Ambassador Tadhg O'Sullivan described the republican exploitation of Ireland's patron saint as, "bitterly diverse and deplorable." Aer Lingus, the Irish national airline, withdrew its financial sponsorship of the parade and the U.S. Defense Department prohibited the participation of military bands.<sup>34</sup>

As the controversy mounted, the Friends of Ireland joined in the attacks on Flannery. Senator Daniel Moynihan and former Governor Hugh Carey, who had always been prominent guests at the parade, announced they would not participate. Flannery responded in his typically uncompromising manner and told reporters, "everyone who comes to New York on March 17 is in favor of Irish unity. Most are I.R.A. supporters in one way or another. Its definitely going to be a pro-I.R.A. parade."<sup>35</sup>

The conflict over the St. Patrick's Day parade received wide coverage in the American media. Countless articles appeared describing the various aspects of the controversy, while Flannery made frequent appearances on television explaining his republican views. Editorial comment in the mainstream American press tended to be critical of Flannery and condemn the New York Irish as "gullible" and "shameless."<sup>36</sup> The Irish-American press held the opposite opinion and fully endorsed Flannery for the years of work he had devoted to working for Irish-American charities in New York. John Thornton, editor of The Irish Echo, reported his newspaper was inundated with letters of support for Flannery.<sup>37</sup>

Irish-American republicans claimed the parade itself was a great propaganda coup. Mayor Edward Koch, Governor Mario Cuomo, Senator Alphonse D'Amato and Representative Geraldine Ferraro, all marched despite pressure from the Irish government and Friends of Ireland to boycott the parade.<sup>38</sup>

The parade attracted a record crowd. Flannery stole the center of attention. He was cheered all along Fifth Avenue by groups waiving pro-I.R.A. placards and flags. When the Noraid leader approached St. Patrick's Cathedral, Cardinal Terence Cooke refused to give his traditional blessing. The Cardinal appeared twenty minutes after Flannery passed and was greeted by a hostile crowd chanting "Up the Provos."<sup>39</sup>

The British media reaction to the parade controversy was all Noraid and the other republican groups could have hoped for. The general impression conveyed was that the whole incident showed substantial support for the I.R.A. from Irish-Americans. The Daily Express, for example, described the parade as "the biggest anti-British demonstration ever held in America."<sup>40</sup> Television news reports by the British Broadcasting Corporation relayed pictures of Flannery being cheered by the crowd and scenes of republican celebrations in Irish pubs in the Bronx .

The publicity generated in 1983 encouraged Irish-American republicans to exploit the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade in subsequent years. In 1984, Teddy Gleason, President of the Longshoremen's Union and noted for his strong attacks on British policy in Ulster, was elected as Grand Marshall. The 1985 Grand Marshal was Nassau County comptroller Peter King, a strong supporter of Noraid who had recently met with Sinn Fein officials in Belfast. Although both these Grand Marshals did not attract as much media attention as Flannery,

their election continued the controversy and was exploited for maximum publicity by republicans.<sup>41</sup>

The rejuvenation of republican groups in America and the success in achieving publicity coups, led to calls for greater cooperation and coordination of their activities. The leaders of Noraid and other Irish-American organizations began suggesting ways to maximize their efforts through joint political and publicity ventures. In 1982, a movement grew in support of the formation of a central coordinating group to synchronize the diverse activities of republican supporters. This eventually culminated in the creation of the Irish American Unity Conference (I.A.U.C.) in 1983.

One of the principal figures in the formation of the I.A.U.C. was James Delaney, a millionaire real estate developer based in San Antonio, Texas. He was deeply interested in his Irish roots and rose to become a National Director in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Delaney's concern over the Ulster conflict intensified during and after the hunger strikes when the deaths of Bobby Sands and his comrades led him to adopt a more militant republican perspective. Delaney was also infuriated by the use of plastic bullets in Ulster by the security forces. After the death of Carol Anne Kelly from injuries received by one of these projectiles, he told The San Antonio Express:

I don't support the I.R.A., but I have a twelve year old daughter. If we lived in Ireland and they carried my daughter home with a British plastic bullet in her head and her only crime had been

going to the store to get a carton of milk, I'd sure join the I.R.A.. And if there wasn't one, I'd start one!<sup>42</sup>

Delaney wanted to bring Irish-America influence to bear in achieving an end to the conflict in Ulster. He was frustrated, however, by the factionalism and infighting and began to plead for greater co-ordination and unity of purpose. At a series of A.O.H. conventions and Irish-American conferences in 1982, Delaney built support for the formation of a new organization. Eventually, the heads of the main groups decided to discuss the details of Delaney's suggestion at a conference in Chicago.

From July 15th-17th, 1983, over two-hundred delegates representing 617 Irish-American groups convened at Chicago's Hyatt Regency Hotel. They began discussing ways to increase the impact of their activities and achieved a remarkable degree of consensus. They agreed to the creation of a new coordinating group called the Irish American Unity Conference which would work for an agreed list of political objectives.

The delegates divided into seven sub-committees which produced a thirty-five point manifesto. Noraid leaders Martin Galvin and Michael Flannery played an important role in these proceedings and, consequently, the document was strongly republican. It called on the British to leave Ulster within three years and demanded that the American government "withhold all military and economic assistance from the U.K. until all repressive measures that deny human rights and

political rights to Irish people are eliminated."<sup>43</sup> The manifesto also demanded an end to the use of plastic bullets, visas for all members of Sinn Fein to visit America, and an end to U.S. governmental "harassment and entrapment of Irish-American nationalists."<sup>44</sup>

The conference voted that the I.A.U.C. should produce a monthly magazine, The Irish Newsline, to publicize its activities and provide a republican perspective on Ulster. In keeping with the theme of uniting all Irish-Americans, the delegates agreed that the I.A.U.C. should work in Congress with both the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee and also the Friends of Ireland. Many still hoped that Tip O'Neill and his supporters would yet be persuaded to return to the traditional republican fold. One of the manifesto's final provisions was to organize a senior citizens branch of the I.A.U.C. under the unlikely title of "The Green Panthers". Surveys constantly showed high levels of political participation among the older sections of American society. The aim of The Green Panthers was to tap this activism for the benefit of the new organization.

After the Chicago conference, the delegates began forming I.A.U.C. chapters throughout America. They held regional recruitment gatherings and the group soon claimed it had a combined membership of 1 to 5 million individuals by 1984.<sup>45</sup> It established an office in Washington and began assisting the lobbying efforts of the Irish National Caucus.<sup>46</sup> James

Delaney also led a much publicized visit to Belfast of I.A.U.C. officials in the autumn of 1983. They met with Sinn Fein leaders and issued a subsequent report severely criticizing every aspect of British rule in Northern Ireland.<sup>47</sup>

The formation of the I.A.U.C. raised great enthusiasm and expectations among the Irish-American republican groups. They hoped the organization would encourage a new unity among Irish-Americans which would wield great influence in the U.S. and in Ireland. In its first years of existence, the group helped to coordinate activities and sustain the high level of activism which had been maintained since the hunger strike. The emergence of the I.A.U.C. was also a considerable publicity victory for republicans and they presented it as a sign of the determination of Irish-Americans to end British rule in Ireland once and for all.

Despite the formation of the I.A.U.C. and the publicity successes in the years following the hunger strike, it was the Noraid tours of Northern Ireland, beginning in August 1983, which engendered the greatest controversy and propaganda victories. Noraid organized the tours as a means of counteracting the U.S. government policy of denying visas to top republicans. The group concluded that if Sinn Fein officials were denied the opportunity to present their views in the United States, then Irish-Americans could hear them first hand by traveling to Ulster. Noraid also believed that

such tours would inspire participants and motivate them to increased support for the republican movement in America.

The first tour group arrived in Dublin on August 2, 1983, consisting of eighty members from Noraid, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, Clan na Gael, and the I.A.U.C. They were welcomed by Joe Cahill and Fra McCann of Sinn Fein and then taken on a tour of republican areas in the North. The group visited Crossmaglen, Carickmore, West Belfast and Derry. For the tour fee of \$200, they stayed each night at the houses of republican families and were conducted on a hectic schedule of political meetings, film shows, and successive rounds of drinking and Irish dancing.

One of the highlights of the trip occurred in Cullyhanna, South Armagh, when a group of I.R.A. volunteers in full combat gear stopped the Noraid bus at a staged road block. One of the men, carrying a M-60 machine gun, read a statement from the Army Council praising the delegation and thanking them for their tireless fund-raising efforts. When he finished, the bus erupted into cheers of support.<sup>48</sup>

Some members of the Noraid delegation got directly involved in the conflict and joined riots against the security forces. On August 9, Stephen Lich from Indianapolis was arrested for riotous behavior in Belfast. An R.U.C. man observed him lobbying rocks at a British Army land rover. On August 11, he appeared at Belfast Magistrates Court, was fined \$100 and told to leave Northern Ireland immediately.<sup>49</sup>

Another American, James Hennesey from Pittsburgh, received a similar sentence after his conviction for stoning a British Army patrol in Derry.<sup>50</sup>

Noraid Publicity Director Martin Galvin was the chief spokesman for the tour and from this time became the most recognized figure in the republican movement in America.<sup>51</sup> He exploited the media attention given to the Noraid delegation and gave a continual round of press and television interviews in which he strongly supported the I.R.A.. Galvin created a hail of criticism from unionist leaders after an interview in which he was asked how Noraid justified financing murder and terrorism. He snapped back at the reporter, "We don't give any of our money to the British Army."<sup>52</sup>

Other members of the tour party praised the I.R.A. during the internment anniversary rally in west Belfast. British officials were particularly angered at a statement issued by State Representative Charles Doyle of Massachusetts who commented:

Every country that England has ever been in they have exploited and persecuted the people. They persecuted the brown race in India and, for 800 years, exploited and persecuted the Irish. On the streets of Belfast, I have seen British soldiers pointing guns at children.<sup>53</sup>

Despite these statements, the Northern Ireland Minister of State, Nicholas Scott, invited the delegation to discussions at Stormont. Scott gave a radio interview in which he said he wanted the group to hear the British perspective and show that they had "nothing to hide and Northern Ireland

was a just and fair society."<sup>54</sup> Apparently, Scott reacted without specific instructions from James Prior or Margaret Thatcher. When his superiors heard of the offer they felt it was a bad idea. Prior believed that to invite Noraid to talks would compromise the government's policy of not negotiating with republicans and, therefore, confer legitimacy on the group.

Consequently, when Galvin telephoned Stormont to organize the meeting with Scott, he was told the invitation had been canceled. British officials said their offer was rescinded because of the arrest of Stephen Lich. They claimed the incident showed Noraid was not concerned with finding out the facts or in constructive dialogue. Galvin immediately exploited the situation by giving interviews on B.B.C. television in which he accused the British of refusing to talk because they were ashamed of the "oppressive policies conducted against the nationalist community."<sup>55</sup>

There was wide coverage given to the Noraid tour in both the Irish and British media but most editorials and commentaries tended to be critical. Predictably, British newspapers characterized the group as "buffoons" and "ignorant, sentimental Irish-Americans."<sup>56</sup> Some of the strongest condemnations, however, came from constitutional nationalist newspapers in Ireland. They criticized Noraid for listening only to Sinn Fein and not hearing the views of the Irish government and S.D.L.P.. An editorial in The Irish

Independent told readers "It is a matter of record that Noraid collects money which is used to buy guns in America. These guns then pass into the hands of men and women who are nothing more than self-appointed killers."<sup>57</sup> The Irish News, Northern Ireland's largest circulating constitutional nationalist daily, commented:

Their so-called "fact-finding" mission was an extremely curious one. Their failure to meet constitutional nationalists, who still represent most anti-Unionists, reveals the type of closed mind that has bedeviled Ireland for too long. Noraid appears to have been more interested in confirming their prejudices than in finding out anything new.<sup>58</sup>

Despite these critical comments, Martin Galvin regarded the tour as a great success. He felt the group had succeeded in its objective of attracting large coverage in the media. This publicized the fact that the I.R.A. had committed supporters in America. Galvin was pleased with the opportunity to infuriate Unionists by his statements and embarrass the N.I.O. over its decision not to have talks. He also felt that the presence of Irish-Americans in Northern Ireland had given a great boost to the republican movement by showing solidarity with their struggle and ensuring continued financial assistance.<sup>59</sup>

Noraid soon began preparations for a second tour of Northern Ireland in 1984. The group placed notices in the Irish-American press calling for people to enroll in the trip of a lifetime, to personally experience the great hospitality of northern republicans and the reality of British oppression.

Noraid headquarters in the Bronx was inundated with applications. The tour party ultimately had to be limited to one-hundred and thirty for logistical reasons.

The British Information Service in New York monitored the preparations for the second tour and kept the Thatcher administration informed of its itinerary and objectives. News of the intended visit caused divisions within the British government. James Prior had been alarmed at the publicity Galvin attracted in 1983 and felt he should be prohibited from entering Northern Ireland. Oliver Wright, the British Ambassador in Washington, felt that such action would be counter-productive and impossible to enforce. The Ambassador won support from Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe, who believed Galvin would exploit his exclusion for propaganda purposes.

Prior and Howe tried to persuade Home Secretary Leon Brittan of the merits of their contrasting perspectives. Correspondence, later leaked to The Guardian, show Brittan was more impressed by Prior's arguments. He eventually signed an exclusion order against Galvin on July 28, 1983. The Home Secretary had been most persuaded by the argument that the 1983 Noraid visit had increase sectarian tensions and led to increased levels of violence in Ulster.<sup>60</sup>

In New York, Galvin casually dismissed the exclusion order and announced he would fulfil his plans to attend the internment commemoration in Belfast. He led the Noraid group to Dublin on July 31 and remained there while they travelled

to Northern Ireland. British Army and R.U.C. patrols along the border were increased to prevent any attempt by Galvin to enter the province.

The presence of the Noraid delegation again attracted continuous media coverage and controversy. When the group visited republican graves in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, Owen Carron told them that the greatest need within the I.R.A. was for modern weapons and implied they could be sent from America.<sup>61</sup> British and unionist politicians were outraged when one Noraid official said "I would not discourage people from sending guns here...its probably the moral duty of every Irish-American to get them U.S. weapons to ensure democracy."<sup>62</sup> Another member of the delegation when asked about Noraid funds replied "If they want to buy weapons with it, I say good luck to them!"<sup>63</sup>

Members of the delegation again joined republican riots. On August 9, Brendan Judge from Gary, Indiana, was arrested while wearing a ski-mask and carrying a petrol bomb during disturbances in the Bogside area of Derry. At the court hearing he appeared wearing an I.R.A. T-shirt. Judge proudly displayed the garment to press photographers outside after he was sentenced to a fine and deportation.<sup>64</sup>

In the meantime, Martin Galvin had successfully breached border security. He entered Derry on August 9. As a provocation to the British Army and R.U.C., he posed for press photographers beside an I.R.A. commemorative plaque in the

Bogside and gave an interview to The Derry Journal. He said it had been easy to evade the security forces and again said he would attend republican demonstrations in Belfast.<sup>65</sup>

The cumulative effect of the Noraid tour and Galvin's evasion of security forces was to heighten tensions during the August 12, 1984, internment march in west Belfast. The R.U.C., intent not on being humiliated by Galvin, waited expectantly for his appearance. Police officers screened the Noraid delegation as it marched along the Falls Road but saw no sign of their man. When the procession assembled outside Sinn Fein headquarters to hear speeches, the R.U.C. began moving closer to the podium. They were determined to grab Galvin if he dared to appear.

A large crowd assembled around the podium forming a barrier between the R.U.C. and the speakers. As they listened to Gerry Adams conclude his speech, the Sinn Fein President called Martin Galvin to the microphone. The Noraid leader emerged from republican headquarters but before he could utter a word, the R.U.C. charged. A bloody riot developed in which police officers battoned and fired plastic bullets into the crowd. Ed Blanche of The Washington Post described to his readers how "police in jeeps fired repeated volleys into the crowd while club-wielding officers leapt from their vehicles and charged, trampling screaming protestors."<sup>66</sup>

During the confrontation many people were hit with plastic bullets, including members of the Noraid group. One

protestor, Sean Downes, was hit in the chest by a bullet fired at point blank range. He collapsed on the roadside and, despite successive attempts to revive him, died from the injury. The whole incident was captured by photographers and television camera crews. On the night of August 13, footage of the dying Sean Downes was broadcast on news reports on both sides of the Atlantic. It immediately created a political storm and generated intense controversy which lasted for weeks.

Republicans immediately described the death of Sean Downes as a savage act of murder. They were joined in strong condemnations of the R.U.C. by the S.D.L.P. while the Irish government called for an official investigation. Nationalist reaction was epitomized by an editorial in The Irish News which stated:

Even the most moderate and genuinely peace loving nationalists, as well as far minded members of the unionist community, will have felt justifiably outraged at the wild and fatally brutal attempts by the R.U.C. to arrest Galvin. To be blunt, the police action was an unmitigated disgrace as well as being disastrously unproductive. In pursuit of Mr. Galvin they fired plastic bullets indiscriminately into a peaceful crowd, killing one man and injuring many others. They also wielded their batons without mercy on innocent demonstrations, as well as press photographers.<sup>67</sup>

The Downes affair was widely reported in America. The main television networks carried footage of the incident. They also ran interviews with Michael Flannery in which he castigated the R.U.C., described Galvin as a "brave and courageous young man," and said the incident showed why it was

right to ship American weapons to the I.R.A..<sup>68</sup> In the massive editorial response to the incident, some newspapers took the opportunity to condemn Noraid and blame Martin Galvin for the death and injuries. For example, The Tulsa World commented:

Galvin and others like him fuel delusions of bravery by fermenting violence from the safety of America. Galvin doesn't have to live in the mess he helps create. And his actions are all the more despicable for the fact he is an attorney, sworn to uphold the rule of law.<sup>69</sup>

The more typical reaction from large metropolitan newspapers was to severely attack the actions of the R.U.C., while de-emphasizing Galvin's role. The Chicago Tribune compared the incident to Bloody Sunday, while The Richmond Times-Dispatch said the R.U.C.'s use of plastic bullets was "abominable."<sup>70</sup> Many newspapers reached similar conclusions to the following editorial in The New York Daily News:

Ignoring the fact that the street was packed with women and children, the cops waded into the crowd indiscriminately swinging clubs and opening fire with so called humane plastic bullets. The Thatcher government has a lot to answer for in this incident. It has made a bad situation worse. Those responsible must be punished with the same kind of vigor that is applied to the I.R.A.. Thatcher cannot condemn the I.R.A. as a bunch of vicious killers with one voice and condone with another voice brutal behavior by her own policemen who ran roughshod over innocent people.<sup>71</sup>

In Britain, the death of Sean Downes produced a flurry of criticisms from politicians and the press. David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party, called the incident "an unacceptable police riot," while Clive Soley, Labor Party spokesman on

Northern Ireland, condemned James Prior's decision to ban Galvin. Many newspapers echoed Soley's comments and said the ban was impossible to enforce and only offered republicans a golden opportunity to secure a propaganda victory.<sup>72</sup> The Daily Mirror even suggested the incident was a clear indication that the British should make plans for withdrawal from Ulster.

James Prior initially responded to the criticisms of his handling of the affair by defending the decision to place an exclusion order on Galvin. As condemnations of the policy increased, however, Prior eventually admitted he had made a "bad mistake." He described the death of Sean Downes as, "an enormous setback for me personally in my efforts to try to improve relations between the two communities."<sup>73</sup>

Prior's candid statement admitting responsibility for the Downes affair produced a heated reaction from unionists. James Molyneaux called his statement a great blow to the confidence of the security forces, while Jim Allister said Prior's action was "gutless" and "a demeaning and vain attempt to appease the I.R.A.'s anger through groveling regret."<sup>74</sup> Unionists called for an emergency debate in the Northern Ireland Assembly, passed a vote of confidence in the R.U.C., and overwhelmingly voted against an Alliance Party proposal calling for an official inquiry.

Noraid and Sinn Fein exploited the controversy surrounding Downes' death for maximum benefit. Galvin later

resurfaced in Dublin to hold a press conference before returning to America. Flanked by Joe Cahill and Danny Morrison, the Noraid leader appeared with his hair dyed reddish brown. He said this was a disguise to get across the border and related how during his escape an R.U.C. officer had pointed a gun at him but failed to recognize his identify. Galvin promised he would tell Americans about the brutality of the R.U.C. when he returned and said that if he had a gun at the time he would have shot the officers involved.<sup>75</sup>

When Galvin returned to New York, he was greeted at Kennedy Airport by a pipe band and a large crowd of supporters. Within republican circles he was given a cult status as tales circulated about his daring escapes from the R.U.C.. Stories told how he was passed over peoples' heads to freedom during the R.U.C. attack and how he wore a policeman's uniform and used two look alike to fool his pursuers.<sup>76</sup> Galvin exploited this image and used the lavish attention of the American media to extol the republican cause.

British press reports lamented that the American reaction to the Downes killing greatly benefitted republican groups. The London Times said it had, "provided Noraid with a stunning propaganda victory which would be successfully used to loosen Irish-American purses from Los Angeles to Long Island."<sup>77</sup> The Economist complained that;

The attack has brought a flood of favorable publicity for Noraid. It has also resulted in celebrity status for Martin Galvin, who could not have done more for the cause if he had planned

things himself... He is now a hero to Irish-Americans for defying the ban and slipping into Ulster undetected.<sup>78</sup>

The political controversy caused in Northern Ireland by Irish-Americans did not end with Galvin's departure. On September 1, 1984, twenty-four members of the New York City Police Department pipe band led a hunger strike commemoration parade in Bundoran, Co. Donegal. The officers belonged to the Police Department Emerald Society and had been in Ireland for the Rose of Tralee festival and G.A.A. centenary celebrations. They marched in the hunger strike parade after requests from Sinn Fein and Noraid.

The action of the New York policemen caused another political storm. Garret FitzGerald said their participation in the parade was "grossly insensitive." He was supported by senior Irish policemen. Afterwards, when members of the pipe band went to Dublin for a scheduled reception with Lord Mayor Michael O'Halloran, he refused to meet them and condemned their action as an insult to the Irish people. Ulster unionists issued outraged condemnations of the policemen for endorsing terrorism. Harold McCusker said their action was as insulting to unionists as the R.U.C. attending a function of the Ku Klux Klan would be to Americans.<sup>79</sup>

The American government was extremely embarrassed by this fresh political controversy. It issued a statement pointing out that the Emerald Society was a private fraternal organization and did not represent the New York Police

Department. Robert Kane, the U.S. Ambassador in Dublin, also wrote to New York police commissioner Benjamin Ward and Mayor Koch strongly condemning the band members.<sup>80</sup> Pat Murphy, spokesmen for the Emerald Society, dismissed these criticisms and defended the band's right to participate. He claimed they wanted to register their concern over brutalities committed by the police force in Ulster.

Despite the republican publicity coup caused by the Downes incident and the actions of the Emerald Society, the British government decided to continue its exclusion order on Martin Galvin. New Northern Ireland Secretary, Douglas Hurd, maintained the ban after intense pressure from Unionists and right-wing Conservative M.P.s. The decision gave the Noraid leader yet another opportunity to embarrass the government and win further publicity.

Galvin again defied his prohibition from Ulster and led a Noraid delegation of one-hundred and twenty-five members to Ireland in 1985. On August 9, he appeared in Derry to act as pall bearer at the funeral of Charles English, an I.R.A. volunteer who died in a premature grenade explosion. Galvin was only 100 yards away from R.U.C. constables observing the funeral and his photograph appeared on the front pages of most British and Irish newspapers the following day.

Galvin said that he would not appear at the internment rally in Belfast because he didn't want to give the R.U.C. an excuse to kill more innocent civilians. His mere presence

again attracted continued controversy. In the Republic of Ireland, R.T.E. journalists held a one day work stoppage because the network refused to broadcast a series of interviews with the Noraid leader. Those involved in the protest alleged the R.T.E. action was a flagrant censorship of information and claimed the ban was taken in response to government pressure.<sup>81</sup>

Following the 1985 Noraid tour, the Emerald Society pipe band again marched in the hunger strike commemoration in Bundoran, despite intense pressure from both the Irish government and U.S. State Department not to participate. Martin Galvin and Joseph Roche praised the police officers for their solidarity with the republican movement during speeches after the parade. Officer Daniel Danaher characterized the attitude of his comrades when he told reports;

We're playing for the ten young men who died on hunger strike. I've been told that they were terrorists, that they were murderers, but so were the leaders of 1916 until they were shot. I've been dealing with murderers all my life. I've never seen one of them who would put himself through that agony, through that kind of death, for what he believed in.<sup>82</sup>

The Noraid tours between 1983-1985 were very successful in achieving their desired objectives and in benefiting the republican movement on both sides of the Atlantic. They attracted massive amounts of media coverage in Britain and Ireland which tended to elevate the significance of Irish-American power and influence in aiding the I.R.A.. Noraid capitalized on the American media attacks against the R.U.C.

after the Downes affair and used the incident to bolster its fund-raising appeals. The group brought Downes' wife over to the United States for even more publicity and to describe first hand the police brutality against the demonstrators.<sup>83</sup>

Republicans took further delight from the embarrassment the Downes incident caused James Prior. They relished the severe criticisms leveled against the Secretary of State and contend the affair hastened his replacement by Douglas Hurd.<sup>84</sup> Noraid and Sinn Fein also welcomed the damage caused to the R.U.C.'s image. For some years, the Northern Ireland Office had proudly claimed that there was a growing respect for the police in the nationalist community. After the events of August 11, 1984, British officials acknowledged that community relations had been seriously affected and confidence in the force had been shattered.

Noraid continually emphasized that its visits gave a great morale boost to the I.R.A. and Sinn Fein. Most republicans in the North welcomed Noraid and acknowledged the positive results of its efforts. Members of the delegation always got loud cheers of support when they marched in the annual internment rally and were usually well received at the social functions held for their benefit in republican areas.<sup>85</sup>

There are some republicans, however, who remain ambiguous about the annual Irish-American visitors. They claim that Noraid's presence forces the I.R.A. into ill prepared attacks

on the security forces. There is a feeling that Provo volunteers, lives are jeopardized by attacks designed to impress the Americans. In one such instance, volunteer Kevin Watters died when a nail bomb exploded prematurely during the 1983 Noraid tour. Charles English died in a similarly botched attack during the 1985 visit.

There were some residents of West Belfast who condemned Martin Galvin's actions in 1984. They felt that if he had kept away from the internment rally, Sean Downes would still be alive.<sup>86</sup> Others resented members of the Noraid group spouting support for the armed struggle, yet not having to live with its consequences. Some also lampooned the Irish-Americans' political naivete after incidents in which they wandered into Belfast city center clad in T-shirts and baseball caps with pro-republican slogans on the front.<sup>87</sup>

These resentments were not extensive and participants on the Noraid tours universally praised the way they were received in republican areas. Noraid claims that the experiences their group had in the North served to strengthen commitment to the republican movement in America. Sinn Fein organized the itinerary of the tours to ensure participants would be presented with the republican political perspective. The results of this were predictable. Lillian Roche from Baltimore, who went on the 1985 tour, told The Washington Post on her return that "the things I've read didn't tell nearly the whole story I've seen how the Catholic community is

totally oppressed and suffers constant harassment from the British."<sup>88</sup> Another member of the tour, Jeanne Clarizio from Connecticut, told The Hartford Courant, "Before I went I almost had to apologize for the I.R.A.. After this I'm not going to do that anymore."<sup>89</sup>

Many of those who went on the Noraid tours redoubled their republican activities when they returned to America. They spoke before Irish-American audiences to describe their experiences, wrote anti-British articles in the press, organized new fund-raising ventures for Noraid, and pressured their political representatives to support republican causes in Washington. The feelings expressed by Seamus Metress seem typical of those who travelled to Northern Ireland with Noraid:

After staying in the six counties, my colleagues have a greater sense of the social and political obscenity that is British occupied Ireland. Many, including myself, have drawn a new sense of strength and dedication from the nationalist people they have come to know. Further, they have come away resolved to continue to work for the movement they now know more intimately. The revolution that continues daily in the six counties will not be forgotten by those who experienced it.<sup>90</sup>

The Noraid tours brought many benefits to the republican network in America and provided Sinn Fein with positive publicity for its political campaigns. These successes were matched by a number of important publicity victories in America. The Harrison/Flannery trial and the subsequent St. Patrick's Day controversies sustained a republican revival which was inspired by the success of the hunger strike

campaign. Older republican groups were revitalized while new ones emerged to conduct fresh publicity efforts.<sup>91</sup>

Despite all the positive developments for Irish-American republicanism in this period, its opponents also achieved significant successes. The U.S. Justice Department continued to pressure Noraid and secured a number of important convictions for gunrunning. Constitutional nationalists also achieved a new political initiative in Ireland, which received financial support from the Reagan administration and eventually blocked the political advances of Sinn Fein.

## NOTES

1. The Irish People, 18 February 1982.
2. Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, The Provisional I.R.A. (London: Heinemann, 1987), 299.
3. For an excellent analysis of the process whereby this change in Sinn Fein tactics was reached see Henry Patterson, "Gerry Adams and the Modernization of Republicanism," Conflict Quarterly 10 no.3 (Summer 1990): 5-24.
4. Bishop and Mallie, op.cit., 302.
5. Martin Galvin's editorial in The Irish People, 5 September 1981, and Jack Holland, The American Connection (New York: Viking, 1987), 57. For an analysis of the revival of Irish groups on Long Island see Hugh O'Haire, "Pride in Irish Culture and Struggle Resurging on the Island," The New York Times, 27 December 1981.
6. Robert McKay, "The Earnin' O' the Green Again Beckons Irish Immigrants to America," The Los Angeles Times, 8 June 1986. Some recent immigrants whom I have interviewed are fiercely hostile to Noraid, believing its members are completely ignorant of the political realities in modern Ireland.
7. Views expressed by one recent immigrant who regularly attends and contributes to Noraid social events in Chicago. Interview by author, 21 December 1990.
8. Quote from "Jamesy" interviewed by Mary Holland in The Sunday Observer, 30 October 1988. Other immigrants I have interviewed say they did not experience this anti-Irish bias and hope to return again to England to live.
9. "Interview with Joseph Roche," Magill, February 1984.
10. The Irishman, January 1973. See also "Joseph Roche" in Donal O'Donovan, Dreamers of Dreams : Portraits of the Irish in America (Bray: Kilbride Books, 1984), 175.
11. "Gerry Adams Addresses A.O.H. Convention," The Irish People, 21 July 1984.

12. For information on the American Irish Congress see collections of its Newsletter in the LinnenHall library, Belfast. Another organization which increased its efforts at publicizing British "misrule" in Ulster was the American Irish Political Education Committee (P.E.C.). It was founded in 1975 but rose to prominence in the post-hunger strike era. Its National President, John Finucane, emphasized a greater awareness of Irish-American history and culture. The group concentrated on attacking television shows which presented negative images of the Irish. It was also particularly incensed by the depictions of drunkenness on St. Patrick's Day cards and ran a publicity campaign against the Hallmark company.

13. For details on the activities of this chapter see The American Gael : Newsletter of Toledo Clan na Gael in the LinnenHall library, Belfast.

14. American Irish Republican Army membership application printed in The Shillelagh, July/August 1983. See also P.G. Duffy, My Struggle for Irish Freedom (Tacoma: A.I.R.A. Publications, 1986).

15. Information from collection of The Shillelagh, LinnenHall library, Belfast.

16. Information on the Irish American Fenian Society provided by Alison Howell of the B.I.S..

17. Undated I.A.F.S. certificate accompanying bracelet of Jean Hamil, republican inmate of Armagh Women's Prison.

18. Chris Ryder, The R.U.C. : A Force Under Fire (London: Methuen, 1989), 208. A number of weapons were traced back to De Meo, including an armalite rifle used by the Balcombe Street gang in December 1975. Despite the fact De Meo tried to erase the serial numbers on the weapons he sold, the R.U.C. developed new techniques of analysis. Using infra-red, magnets, and certain acids, they were able to trace weapons even with obliterated numbers.

19. For an excellent analysis of the whole case see Shana Alexander, "The Patriot Game," New York Magazine, (November 22, 1982).

20. Robert McFadden, "Five are Acquitted in Brooklyn of Plot to Run Guns to I.R.A.," The New York Times, 6 November 1982.

21. Defense attorneys also used the testimony of Earl Redick, a former member of U.S. Army Intelligence. Redick testified how he had sold arms to De Meo in the 1960s and

remembered his claims to be sending weapons to the I.R.A. on behalf of the C.I.A..

In 1969 the two men were arrested for illegally selling rifles. Redick said that De Meo told him not to worry and that the C.I.A. would help them. On the morning of the trial the federal prosecutor inexplicably withdrew all charges. Redick suggested this action came as a result of pressure from the C.I.A..

22. Shana Alexander, *op.cit.*, 68.

23. George Harrison and Tom Falvey were untypical of members of the Irish-American republican network. The two men were noted for their left-wing political views and their support for the Sandinistas. In 1984 they issued an open letter to "Irish Solidarity Activists" to support Socialist Workers Party candidates Mel Mason and Andrea Gonzalez in the U.S. Presidential election. They pointed out to their conservative colleagues that Mason had expressed solidarity with the I.R.A. and met Sinn Fein representatives in Belfast. The Irish Echo, 27 October 1984.

24. Warren Richey, "On the Trail of U.S. Funds for the I.R.A.," The Christian Science Monitor, 14 January 1985.

25. "Jury Frees Five I.R.A. Men," The Chicago Tribune, 6 November 1982.

26. Michael Toner, "Britain Fumes at U.S. Over I.R.A. Guns," The Sunday Express, 7 November 1982.

27. The Times (London), 6 November 1982.

28. John Jackson, "Blank Check for the I.R.A.," The Daily Mirror, 8 November 1982.

29. The Belfast NewsLetter, 8 November 1982.

30. State Department memo from Robert Blackwill to Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Dam, dated 15 November 1982.

31. The Irish People, 30 November 1982.

32. The Irish Echo, "A Remarkable Verdict," 13 November 1982.

33. Elsewhere, Francis Hughes, the second hunger striker to die in the H-Blocks, was elected Honorary Grand Marshal of the San Francisco parade. I.R.A. fugitive, Michael O'Rourke, was voted to the same position in Philadelphia and Kansas City.

34. James Perry, "These Irish Eyes Aint Smiling on St. Patrick's Day," The Wall St. Journal, 15 February 1983.

35. Tom Morganthau , "The Irish Connection," Newsweek, 21 March 1983.

36. The Detroit News, "Shameless Hibernians," 24 February 1983.

37. Martin Gottlieb, "Moynihan's Views on Parade Stir Ire of the Irish," The New York Times, 10 March 1983.

38. For an analysis of why these politicians decided to participate see Pete Hamill, "Marching to Sorrento," The Irish Voice, 19 March 1988.

39. The American Gael, March/April 1983. The Cardinal and Flannery did meet before the parade during the morning mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral. He told Flannery he was opposed to violence and therefore could not give his blessing. See Rita Christopher, "Bitter Rain on St. Patrick's Day," MacLeans (March 28, 1983).

40. The Daily Express, 18 March 1983.

41. As Grand Marshall, Teddy Gleason called on American Labor to make an all out effort to aid Irish unification. Peter King issued a series of statements attacking British policy and endorsed the objectives of the republican movement. In 1985 the new Archbishop of New York, Cardinal John O'Connor, resumed the practice of blessing the Grand Marshall. He also condemned British policy in Ulster. His statements created yet another controversy in England. The Daily Mail commented, "With his lips he condemns terror. With his hand he slaps it on the back. New York's Roman Catholic Archbishop is a disgrace to the church he serves!" 18 March 1985.

42. Donal O'Donovan, op. cit., 30.

43. Irish American Unity Conference. Manifesto and Program Political Action Resolution "C".

44. Ibid., Resolution "F".

45. I.A.U.C. Press Release from James Delaney dated 31 July 1983.

46. James Delaney and Fr. Sean McManus met on September 19, 1983, and agreed on a variety of ways they could coordinate political activities on Capitol Hill. The Irish Newsline, 2 September 1983. The I.A.U.C. concentrated its efforts on the 1984 Presidential nomination campaign of the

Democratic Party. It did achieve some minor successes in getting Jesse Jackson to call for a British withdrawal from Ulster and Gary Hart to support a special envoy for Ireland.

47. Report on I.A.U.C. Trip to Ireland. Produced by Professor Charles Rice of Notre Dame Law School, 16 November 1983.

48. The Irish Times, 9 August 1983. The Noraid delegation were given a similar I.R.A. display during their visit to the Ardoyne area of Belfast.

49. The Guardian, 12 August 1983.

50. The Times (London), 11 August 1983. Hennesey was injured during the arrest and had to receive medical treatment for a head wound.

51. Galvin's association with the republican movement began after his first trip to Ireland when he was twenty. His grandparents were from Co. Offally and he also married an Irish native. He joined Noraid in 1975 after graduating from Fordham Law School. By 1979 he had risen to the position of Publicity Director and was also editor of The Irish People.

52. Paul Johnson, "Alms and Armalite Men," The Guardian, 8 August 1983.

53. William Graham, "Americans Get down to Nitty Gritty," The Irish News, 6 August 1983.

54. The Irish News, 9 August 1983.

55. Fabian Boyle, "Noraid Blasts Minister on Meeting Double-Think," The Irish News, 10 August 1983.

56. The Daily Express, 8 August 1983.

57. The Irish Independent, 4 August 1983.

58. The Irish News, "Noraid," 10 August 1983.

59. Correspondence from Martin Galvin to Veronica Fraya of Noraid, dated 5 September 1983.

60. James Prior, A Balance of Power (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), 234.

61. "Help Us Buy Guns, Sinn Fein Man Tells Noraid Visitors," The Irish News, 11 August 1984.

62. Statement of Richard Lawlor in The Irish Press, 14 August 1984.

63. The New York Times, 19 August 1984.

64. Judge's arrest was widely reported in the Chicago area. His uncle probably characterized the incident correctly when he told reporters "I thought they were going over there to kiss the Blarney Stone. He is not a rebellious lad. In my opinion he probably got too much of the Guinness!," The Chicago Tribune, 10 August 1984.

65. "Interview With Martin Galvin," The Derry Journal, 10 August 1984.

66. Ed Blanche, "Man Killed as R.U.C. Seek American," The Washington Post, 13 August 1984.

67. The Irish News, "Utter Disgrace," 13 August 1984.

68. Charles Rose interview with Michael Flannery, C.B.S. Morning News, 16 August 1984.

69. The Tulsa World, 23 August 1984. See also "Americans Who Aid I.R.A. Aid Terrorists," U.S.A. Today, 23 August 1984.

70. The Chicago Tribune, 25 August and The Richmond Times-Dispatch, 17 August 1984.

71. The New York Daily News, 14 August 1984.

72. The Economist, "Killing on Camera," 18 August 1984.

73. The Baltimore Sun, "Mistake Admitted in Ulster Shooting," 15 August 1984.

74. The New York Times, 16 August 1984.

75. An Phoblacht/Republican News, "Galvinized Reaction," 23 August 1984.

76. The U.S.A. Today, 14 August 1984.

77. The Times (London), 14 August 1984.

78. The Economist, 18 August 1984.

79. The Belfast NewsLetter, 3 September 1984.

80. Mentioned in memo from State Department to Consul General in Belfast, September 1984.

81. The Irish Press, 12 August 1985.

82. Interview with Officer Dan Danaher reported in The Irish Nation, "Are the Pipers Coming?," June, 1985.

83. Various Irish-American republican groups still use photographs of the R.U.C. constable shooting Downes, in their appeals for financial donations.

84. It was widely known that Prior would be leaving the Northern Ireland post even before the Downes affair. Noraid and Sinn Fein, however, claim that the incident left him a "lame duck" in Stormont and hastened his removal.

85. The support for Noraid which I have found in interviews ranges considerably. Many see their fund-raising as invaluable to the republican cause. Others merely welcome the visitors as a good source for a few free drinks during their social functions in west Belfast social clubs.

86. One republican whom I interviewed recalled a conversation in Sinn Fein headquarters in Dublin in which I.R.A. men expressed their dislike for Galvin. He says that one half heartedly suggested the Provos would benefit most from shooting the Noraid leader and blaming it on loyalists.

87. Information from interviews by author with west Belfast residents.

88. The Washington Post, 12 August 1985.

89. James Eisner, "Noraid Tour Converts Americans to I.R.A. Cause," The Hartford Courant, 11 August 1985.

90. Seamus Metress, "Witness to Oppression," An Phoblacht/Republican News, 22 August 1985.

91. For two reports on the activities of Noraid chapters in Chicago and Baltimore in this period see Doug Frantz, "American Charity and the Irish War : For Guns or Butter?," The Chicago Tribune, 2 December 1984 and "Supporting the I.R.A. in its Struggle," The Baltimore News-American, 7 October 1985.

Martin Galvin continued to lead the Noraid tours to Belfast from 1985 onwards. In 1989 the R.U.C. eventually caught him and deported him back to the United States. Finally, in 1990 the British lifted its ban. Since then Galvin has entered Northern Ireland legally but still creates controversy. On December 7, 1990 he caused outrage among unionists when he was photographed sitting in the Lord Mayor's chair in Belfast City Hall. When asked by reporters to comment

on the building he said, "The place would look much better if they removed the foreign flags (Union Jacks) and replaced them with tricolors." The Irish Echo, 19 December 1990.

## CHAPTER 10

### The Activities of the Friends of Ireland and U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies, 1981-1985.

Irish-American republicans achieved a number of important successes in the years following the hunger strike. The U.S. government was particularly alarmed at the verdict in the Flannery/Harrison trial while the Friends of Ireland were dismayed by Noraid's publicity victories. Despite these noted set-backs, the forces working against the republican network did achieve their own successes. American law enforcement agencies continually harassed republican groups and eventually smashed a number of important gunrunning conspiracies. The Friends of Ireland continued to play an important role in Ulster politics and made a significant contribution to the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.

From 1981, the Reagan administration increased its activities against Irish-American republicanism. The Justice Department, in particular, intensified the F.A.R.A. court case against Noraid. Federal attorneys worked relentlessly to force the group to acknowledge the Provisional I.R.A. as its foreign principal. This legal action also had the objective of forcing Noraid to provide greater details about its fund-raising activities. The government hoped that success in the case

would bolster its contention that Noraid was bankrolling I.R.A. violence in Northern Ireland.

Paul O'Dwyer and Frank Durkan provided free legal assistance to Noraid and fought the Justice Department for four years. But on May 1, 1981, Judge Charles Haight Jr. finally agreed with the government and declared the I.N.A.C. must register as an agent of the Provos. O'Dwyer immediately challenged this decision but again lost when a Federal Court of Appeals upheld the Haight verdict in January 1982.

Noraid continued the legal controversy by refusing to file its returns under the F.A.R.A. The act stipulates that financial statements are made under penalty of perjury. Defense lawyers claimed that the I.N.A.C. was not an agent of the I.R.A. and if it filed as such it would be committing a criminal offense. The Justice Department then sued Noraid for contempt of court. In early 1984, the group was given ninety days to comply with the Haight ruling or risk a hefty fine.

In this situation, Noraid lawyers began working a compromise. They agreed to register as an agent of the I.R.A. on condition that financial reports carried a disclaimer stating that the link to the Provos was forced by court order. Federal attorneys agreed to this and Noraid resumed filing its financial returns in July 1984. Michael Flannery included the following statement accompanying the report:

Pursuant to a court ruling in 1981, made without plenary trial or evidentiary hearing, it has been judicially determined that the I.R.A. is a foreign principal of I.N.A.C.. Consequently, the I.R.A. is

listed here as a foreign principal of I.N.A.C. only as a matter of legal compulsion and pursuant to court order. Its listing here does not reflect the views or beliefs of I.N.A.C. or its members, who do not subscribe to, believe in, or affirm the correctness of this judicially compelled declaration.<sup>1</sup>

With the enforcement of the Haight ruling, the Justice Department could show that Noraid was officially registered as an agent of the I.R.A.. This was useful in adding emphasis to U.S. government claims that the I.N.A.C. supported violence. There is little evidence to show that this formal legal connection had any detrimental effects on the group.<sup>2</sup>

In conjunction with the F.A.R.A. case, the U.S. State Department also tried to weaken the republican network by tightening its visa denial policy. The most noted example of this was the continued refusal to permit Gerry Adams to enter the United States, despite his election to the British Parliament in 1983. Adams received numerous invitations to speak in America but each visa application was refused on the basis of his support of violence. His case became a cause celebre for Irish-American republicans. A Committee for Free Speech in Northern Ireland formed specifically to win a visa for Adams, while members of the Ad Hoc Committee continually appealed to the State Department to lift their ban. One of the most noted supporters of Adams' right to be heard was Geraldine Ferraro, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate in 1984.<sup>3</sup>

The visa denial policy undermined republican publicity because it blocked prominent members of Sinn Fein from presenting their views and raising funds in America. Yet republicans did reap some benefits from the fact that many prominent newspapers, especially The New York Times, strongly attacked the visa denials for "damaging America's reputation as an open society of intelligent, free citizens, capable of deciding for themselves whether to hear or ignore a speaker." American republican groups also exploited the British government's role in visa denials. Noraid won support for its contention that the State Department was denying freedom of information to the American public because of pressure from Whitehall.

Numerous republicans chose to ignore the visa denial policy and entered the United States illegally. Republican sympathizers in Canada organized an elaborate system through which members of Sinn Fein and the I.R.A. would be provided with forged documents and escorted across the American border. Once in the U.S., they participated in clandestine fund-raising and weapons procurement ventures. Immigration officers began investigating this Canadian pipeline and conducted surveillance of republican suspects under "Operation Shamrock." Information received during this investigation that enabled the I.N.S. to apprehend Owen Carron and Danny Morrison in January of 1982. Shortly afterwards, agents also arrested Edward Howell and Desmond Ellis. The authorities described

both men as top I.R.A. explosives experts. They were taken into custody while trying to enter the United States illegally at the Whirlpool Bridge near Niagara Falls.<sup>5</sup>

These arrests temporarily blocked the Canadian route for illegal entry but did not stop republicans from getting to America. For example, Joe Cahill and Jimmy Drumm were caught in New York City in May 1984 after using false immigration documents. The two men were suspected of organizing an arms shipment for the I.R.A.. While they were not formally charged with this conspiracy, they were quickly deported back to Ireland.<sup>6</sup>

Legal actions against Noraid and a tightening of the visa denial policy increased pressure on the Irish-American republican network. The most effective measures taken by U.S. law enforcement agencies were against I.R.A. gunrunning. Despite the failure and embarrassment of the Harrison/Flannery case, F.B.I. agents continued their undercover operations. These eventually brought important successes for the F.B.I. and significantly impaired I.R.A. arms procurement in America. One of the first successful convictions in the period was the "Barney McKeown case."

In 1979 George Harrison acquired a large consignment of arms, including two M-60 machine guns, stolen from Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina. Before shipment to Ireland, the weapons were stored in a garage belonging to Barney McKeown -- an American citizen originally from Northern Ireland whom British

newspapers alleged that he was very active in Noraid. Before the arms shipment left New York, one of the conspirators telephoned I.R.A. contacts in Dublin and gave details of its arrival. Irish detectives recorded the call from a wire tap and immediately informed their counterparts in America of the gunrunning scheme.<sup>7</sup>

The weapons arrived in Dublin in late October 1979. Irish authorities then laid a trap for the I.R.A.. The Provos learned of the trap and no one appeared to collect the weapons. The Garda were forced to seize the arms on November 2, 1979. Some of the weapons had serial numbers which were still intact. They were later traced back to George De Meo. Police also found a shipping document with the weapons linked to Barney McKeown. Because of this inadvertent mistake, McKeown was convicted on June 24, 1983, of arms smuggling for the I.R.A.. He received three years imprisonment and a fine of \$10,000.<sup>8</sup>

Although McKeown was jailed and the arms supply broken, the court case produced a huge controversy which greatly embarrassed American law enforcement agencies. During the first trial in December 1982, Stephen Rogers, a senior U.S. Customs official who had supervised gunrunning investigations in New York, testified on behalf of McKeown. Rogers said he did this because of illegal actions taken by the prosecuting agencies. He testified that Joe King, a U.S. Customs official, had perjured himself by telling the court he did not know of

the Garda telephone tap in Dublin. Rogers claimed that King's testimony was a lie and that in fact he was informed.'

This first trial ended because the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict. The second trial was aborted after prosecuting lawyers called for a lengthy adjournment. This was to contest the defense's request for confidential British and Irish government documents. The documents were to be used as evidence that Joe King perjured himself in the first trial.

The prosecution eventually succeeded in convicting McKeown in the third trial but the conflict over Rogers' testimony continued. British and Irish officials were infuriated by Rogers' revelations. They were particularly incensed because he revealed the identity of a M.I.5 agent in open court. Newspaper reports claimed that both the British and Irish authorities began withholding information because they lacked confidence in the U.S. Customs Service. They believed the agency was riddled with I.R.A. informers.

In light of the breakdown in trust, U.S. Customs officials recommended that Rogers be prosecuted for obstruction of justice. They only backed down from this action because some officers felt a court case would disclose too much about British and American intelligence operations. There was also an internal investigation of the customs service in New York to uncover alleged I.R.A. sympathizers. Later, William von Raab, U.S. Commissioner for Customs, traveled to

London and Dublin to reassure both governments that there were no republican informers within his service.<sup>10</sup>

On November 1984, Stephen Rogers was fired from the customs service because of his conduct at the McKeown trial. He immediately contested the action and brought unfair dismissal proceedings before the Federal Merit Systems Protection Board. British newspapers alleged the case created sharp divisions within the New York Customs Office with an anti-Rogers faction accusing Rogers of sabotaging I.R.A. investigations while a pro-Rogers group claimed he was defending the integrity of the service. Many of the officers were of Irish ancestry and began calling each other denigrating nicknames used during the Irish Civil War.<sup>11</sup>

The Federal Merit Systems Protection Board met in May 1985. Rogers demanded that secret documents outlining the role of British and Irish agents in the McKeown case be made available for his defense. Reports allege that British intelligence made it clear to the U.S. authorities it did not want any more confidential information disclosed to the public. Without this information, which Rogers claimed was essential, the Board reinstated him with back pay. It also concluded Rogers' naming of the M.I.5 agent was "inadvertent rather than a result of I.R.A. sympathy."<sup>12</sup>

Some U.S. law enforcement officials felt that the conviction of Barney McKeown was in some ways offset by the adverse consequences of the Rogers case. Government agents,

however, were conducting investigations of numerous other gunrunning operations to the I.R.A. which brought much more conclusive victories. One of these was the conviction of an arms conspiracy scheme led by Gabriel Megahey and involving up to eleven other republican sympathizers.

Gabriel Megahey was born in Belfast and had a long connection with the republican movement. He worked in England for many years at the Southampton docks. In the mid-seventies he was expelled from the country because of his involvement in a scheme to import explosives and weapons from New York. Megahey then went to America and worked as a bartender in Queens. He maintained his republican connections and was alleged to be leader of the I.R.A. in the United States. Megahey was also involved in gunrunning and soon became the focus of F.B.I. surveillance.<sup>13</sup>

When Desmond Ellis and Edward Howell were arrested crossing the Canadian border in February 1982, Gabriel Megahey's name was found on their shopping list for weapons. Following this, the F.B.I. put a tap on Megahey's phone. They recorded his alarm at the arrest of the two men but were unable to get hard evidence linking him to I.R.A. gunrunning.

The F.B.I. investigation of Megahey took an unexpected turn when Michael Hanratty approached government agents and offered to help smash the arms conspiracy. Hanratty, an electronics surveillance expert, was contacted by Andrew Duggan in June 1981 for help in purchasing sophisticated

technical devices for remote control bombs. Duggan, an Irish-American active in Noraid, was a main figure in the Megahey network. He told Hanratty they wanted to send a large consignment of military material to the I.R.A.

Hanratty claimed he turned informer for "patriotic reasons" and immediately began cooperating in an F.B.I. sting operation called "Hit and Miss." He and agent Enrique Ghimenti, who posed as an arms dealer, arranged a meeting with Duggan in New York. The F.B.I. had the room bugged and also installed a video camera. The operation was only partly successful because Duggan sat down in the wrong place so only his voice was recorded.

Duggan was interested in the arms sale Enrique proposed and they arranged a second meeting in New Orleans. The F.B.I. successfully recorded this meeting. Agents filmed Duggan and two I.R.A. fugitives agreeing to buy five Redeye missiles at \$10,000 each. The I.R.A. men also asked for a whole range of automatic rifles, machine guns, and even a mini-submarine.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout these negotiations, the F.B.I. was frustrated because it could not get direct evidence against Megahey. At a third meeting he did appear and the agents got the incriminating material. They filmed Megahey affirming the order for Redeyes and proposing mutual hostage taking until the arms deal was complete.<sup>15</sup>

The F.B.I. operation reached a climax in June 1982 when Megahey and his co-conspirators tried to send a consignment of

fifty-one rifles and remote control devices to Ireland. The weapons were packed into a container labeled, "roller skates and comforters." United States agents began working in close cooperation with their British and Irish counterparts. They seized the arms at Port Newark but allowed a small consignment to travel on to Limerick on board a cargo ship. When the weapons arrived in Ireland, Garda agents engaged in a brief gun battle with two I.R.A. men sent to pick up the container. The men, Patrick McVeigh and John Moloney, were later jailed for seven and three years respectively for possession of Armalite rifles and I.R.A. membership.<sup>16</sup>

On June 21, 1982, the F.B.I. arrested Megahey and Duggan at a construction site in Manhattan. They also apprehended two brothers from Northern Ireland, Colm and Eamonn Meehan, who were also involved in the conspiracy. The four immediately received legal aid from the Irish-American republican groups and a panel of lawyers began investigating ways to thwart the prosecution.

Lawyers for the Meehans based their defense on the fact the brothers had been held as internees in Long Kesh. They claimed that the two suffered from post-trauma distress disorder because of their experience in prison, and entered a plea of not guilty because of insanity. The Meehans were then examined by a psychiatrist who concluded their claim to insanity was "only a diagnostic possibility." Following this diagnosis, Judge Charles Sifton denied their defense.<sup>17</sup>

When this line of defense collapsed, the lawyers for the four men copied the tactic used in the Flannery trial. They claimed the defendants thought Michael Hanratty was a C.I.A. agent and therefore that their gunrunning scheme had U.S. government approval. Assistant U.S. Attorney Carol Amon counteracted this move by producing C.I.A. affidavits stating that Hanratty was not one of their operatives.<sup>18</sup> Defense lawyers then tried to break the prosecution by focusing on the involvement of British intelligence in the case and forcing F.B.I. witnesses to divulge classified information.

The trial lasted for nine weeks. On May 13, 1983, after five days of deliberation, the jury found the men guilty on most charges. As Gabriel Megahey was the leader of the arms conspiracy, he received seven years imprisonment. Andrew Duggan and Eamonn Meehan both got three. Colm Meehan received two, following his acquittal on some of the conspiracy charges.

The F.B.I. was delighted at the verdict. Many American newspapers also hailed the conviction and claimed it was a shattering blow for I.R.A. gunrunners. The Chicago Tribune typified the general reaction in the following editorial praising the jury:

The courtroom was packed with friends and sympathizers of the accused. They interrupted proceedings with tearful outbursts and shouted I.R.A. slogans and anti-British propaganda. But the jury ignored these spurious distractions and concentrated on the basic issue ... The burned and mutilated bodies of scores of innocent Irish victims of the I.R.A. over the years - many women

and children among them - provide more eloquent testimony than do shouted slogans.<sup>19</sup>

Just two weeks after the Megahey conviction, the F.B.I. won a second victory when a Federal Court in Brooklyn found Vincent Toner and Colm Murphy guilty of gunrunning. The two men were both from South Armagh and were involved in a scheme to send armalite rifles to the I.N.L.A.. Federal agents infiltrated the operation by posing as mafia arms dealers. They arrested the two men after the weapons were exchanged outside a White Castle hamburger shop in Queens, New York. Colm Murphy, the mastermind of the conspiracy, received a five year sentence and a fine of \$10,000. Vincent Toner, who was involved in transporting the weapons, got eighteen months and was fined \$7,500.<sup>20</sup>

Following their victory in the Murphy/Toner case, federal agents continued to investigate others who were suspected of involvement in the Megahey conspiracy. Their attempts to secure further convictions had mixed results. Patrick McParland, an associate of Megahey, fled to Ireland when he heard of the F.B.I. sting. After months on the run he decided to give himself up at the U.S. Embassy in Dublin and voluntarily return for trial. McParland's lawyers successfully argued that although he had transported boxes of weapons for the Meehan brothers, he did not know their contents. In November 1983, he was acquitted on all charges.<sup>21</sup>

In April 1985, the F.B.I. arrested Liam Ryan and charged him with using false documents to purchase three armalite

rifles which were part of the Megahey consignment. Ryan was a naturalized American citizen originally from County Tyrone. He had associations with Irish-American republican groups and was a close personal friend of Martin Galvin. Agents matched Ryan's fingerprints with those found on the armalites and obtained purchase certificates in which he used the name of Robert Power as an alias. In September 1985, he pled guilty to making fraudulent statements in buying the weapons and received a suspended sentence.<sup>22</sup>

By far the largest and most intriguing gunrunning operation to be uncovered in this period was organized by John Crawley in Boston. Crawley was born in New York in 1957 but later moved to Dublin with his family as a teenager. In 1975, he returned to the United States to join the Marines. After four years of service, Crawley went back to Dublin and became involved with the I.R.A.. In 1984, he traveled to Boston and began assembling a huge arms cache for the Provos which consisted of one-hundred and thirty-six heavy Browning machine guns, grenades, night sights, and flack jackets.

On September 23, 1984, Crawley loaded the arsenal on board a fishing vessel called the Valhalla and sailed out of Boston bound for Ireland. Unknown to him and his associates, an informer had alerted the authorities about the conspiracy. This initiated a surveillance operation involving full-scale cooperation between American, British and Irish authorities. As the Valhalla sailed across the Atlantic, it was tracked by

an American satellite which closely monitored the ships progress. Some reports allege that the trawler was also followed by a British submarine.<sup>23</sup> A crack force of Garda detectives joined to monitor the Irish end of the operation. Two Irish navy corvettes, the Emer and Aisling, followed a rendezvous ship, the Marita Anne, as it left port in Kerry. As the arms were transferred between the two trawlers in mid-Atlantic, a Royal Navy Nimrod aircraft photographed the operation with special magnified cameras.<sup>24</sup>

Irish authorities intercepted the Marita Anne as it sailed back to its home port laden with weapons. On board, they found five crew members including Crawley and Martin Ferris, a prominent Kerry republican and suspected member of the I.R.A. Army Council. The men were tried and convicted in the Special Criminal Court on December 11, 1984. Crawley, Ferris, and Nick Browne, the ship's captain, were each given ten-years imprisonment. John McCarthy and Gavin Mortimer, who testified they were only crew members and didn't know about the operation, received five-year suspended sentences.<sup>25</sup>

The entrapment operation was a great success due to the high level of cooperation between authorities on both sides of the Atlantic. Patrick Noonan, Irish Minister for Justice, took the opportunity to attack Noraid by claiming its money was used to purchase the arms. He also said the interception of weapons was a massive blow to the I.R.A. which intended to use them in a new offensive designed to undermine Anglo-Irish

negotiations. In America, government officials similarly claimed a significant victory over the gunrunning network and many major newspapers used the incident to attack Irish-American republicans. The Baltimore News-American commented:

The I.R.A., which is in league with such scum as the P.L.O. and the killers employed by Libya's nutty Colonel Khadafy, are terrorists pure and simple - and some factions are hot to replace the British with a Marxist government. How long will it take for all this to sink in to those Americans whose dollars helped buy the North Korean hand grenades stashed aboard the Marita Anne?<sup>26</sup>

The Valhalla slipped past U.S. authorities on its homeward voyage and docked in Boston. The trawler was in port for three days before its discovery by Customs officers on October 16, 1984. Federal agents began an investigation which eventually linked the gunrunning operation to organized crime in Boston and to drug trafficking. It was not until April 1986, however, that a grand jury indicted a group of men accused of involvement in the conspiracy.

The leading figure in the indictment was Joseph Murray, an Irish-American from Charleston M.A., who had worked for years as a compositor with The Boston Globe. Murray had strong links with organized crime and was associated with a group of Irish mobsters called the Winter Hill Gang.<sup>27</sup> When police raided Murray's home, they found a consignment of weapons and over 10,000 rounds of ammunition. He was charged with conspiracy to supply guns to the I.R.A. and with smuggling thirty-six tons of marijuana into Boston to pay for them.<sup>28</sup>

Among others indicted were Patrick Nee, who was accused of playing a major role in acquiring the weapons. Nee was born in Ireland and, like Murray, had strong links to organized crime in Boston.<sup>29</sup> Robert Anderson, captain of the Valhalla, was also charged with gunrunning and was allegedly paid \$10,000 by Murray for undertaking the voyage. Anderson was noted for his swashbuckling lifestyle and heavy drinking and had used the Valhalla for a number of illegal ventures.<sup>30</sup>

During the trial in May 1987, the three men pleaded guilty to gunrunning. This confession was part of a plea bargain with prosecutors who dropped the drug charges and recommended sentences for lower than the twenty-two year maximum. Murray was sentenced to ten years while Patrick Nee and Robert Anderson got four years each.

The trial was widely reported on both sides of the Atlantic because of its exposure of links between I.R.A. gunrunning and organized crime in Boston. It also uncovered links between Murray and Dr. William Herbert, an Ambassador to the United Nations for the Caribbean islands of St. Kitts and Nevis. The trial revealed that Murray used Herbert to launder money he made from drug deals. The Ambassador resigned in April 1987 when the F.B.I. produced documents showing his connections with Murray.<sup>31</sup>

A controversy also developed over the case of John McIntyre, one of the crewmen on the Valhalla. He was questioned by police after the ship's seizure in Boston.

McIntyre disappeared soon afterwards and has never been found. At the beginning of the grand jury investigation, John Loftus, the McIntyre family lawyer, implied the man had cooperated with authorities and that he was the one who informed the F.B.I. of the gunrunning scheme. Loftus claimed McIntyre was murdered by the I.R.A. because of his actions.<sup>32</sup>

John Loftus later wrote a book entitled, Valhalla's Wake in which he reversed his earlier allegation against the I.R.A. and claimed McIntyre was assassinated by the Special Air Service of the British Army. He says that they murdered McIntyre because he was about to discover the real informer within the gunrunning network. Loftus also claimed members of the U.S. Coast Guard passed information to the gunrunners on how to avoid coastal patrols. The British Embassy and U.S. Coast Guard both say these charges are completely false.<sup>33</sup>

A controversy also developed surrounding the involvement of Boston police officers in the Marita Anne affair. When the ship was seized, Garda detectives discovered eleven bullet-proof vests. Ten of these vest were subsequently traced to Charles Tourkantonis and Michael Hanley, both officers with the Boston Police Department. An internal investigation revealed that the two officers had bought the vests for John Crowley. No disciplinary proceedings were taken, however, because the officers claimed they did not know the flack jackets were to be used illegally. One jacket was also traced to officer Michael Flemmi, a member of the bomb squad. He

claimed the vest was stolen from his car and that he didn't know how it ended up on the Marita Anne. Flemmi was similarly cleared of any charges of misconduct.<sup>34</sup>

The series of successes achieved by U.S. law enforcement agencies against the gunrunning network in the mid-1980s represented a serious problem for the I.R.A.. Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie contend that after the seizure of the Marita Anne, the Provos began to concentrate their arms procurement ventures on Europe. Although the I.R.A. continued to ship weapons from America, U.S. authorities successfully reduced the trans-Atlantic arms pipeline. The continued conviction of Noraid members for gunrunning further diluted the credibility of the group's claim to be solely involved with humanitarian aid.<sup>35</sup>

In addition to these problems, Irish-American republicanism continued to suffer from the adverse publicity generated by I.R.A. bomb attacks. One of the worst of these explosions occurred in July of 1982. The I.R.A. detonated two remote control devices in London's Hyde Park and Regents Park, killing eight bandsmen from the Royal Green Jackets Regiment. The military musicians were giving an open air concert and many civilians were injured by flying nails which had been packed around the bombs.

In December 1982, the I.N.L.A. exploded a bomb in the Droppin' Well Inn near Ballykelly, Co. Derry. Eleven British soldiers and six civilians were killed. In October of 1984, an

I.R.A. bomb killed five people at the Conservative Party Conference at Brighton. The explosion only narrowly missed killing Prime Minister Thatcher.

All these attacks were given prominent coverage in the United States and initiated a wave of criticism against the I.R.A.. The strongest reaction against the Provos, however, came after the bombing of Harrods department store in London on December 19, 1983. An I.R.A. unit drove two cars packed with explosives and parked them outside the store. They phoned a warning which was hopelessly late for police to clear the streets. The bombs ripped through Christmas shoppers, killing eight and severely injuring many others. Kenneth Salvesen, a businessman from Chicago, was among the dead and three other Americans were injured.

The bombing caused outraged reactions in Britain and Ireland while the death of Salvesen brought some of the strongest attacks on Noraid ever launched in the American press. Numerous editorials alleged Noraid money had directly financed the bombs, and, therefore, brought death and injury to Americans. Martin Galvin, recognizing the disastrous effect the bomb had in America, issued statements that the action was taken without the Army Council's authority and that a warning beforehand "showed a principled morality that divides the freedom fighter from the terrorist."<sup>36</sup>

Galvin's defense of the I.R.A. only led to greater condemnations of Noraid in the American press. The shallowness

of his statement was exposed later when evidence showed that the I.R.A. team were on an official mission which had indeed been approved by the Army Council.<sup>37</sup> The American Ambassador in London attacked the I.R.A.'s "savage bestiality" while the Friends of Ireland called the attack "despicable and deranged." The Chicago Tribune's reaction to the Regent's Park attack was representative of most American editorial opinion on I.R.A. bombings:

Americans who, out of sentiment or ignorance, give money to Noraid and other I.R.A. front organizations should take a good look at what their contributions can do... Look at the blood spattered young bandsmen in Regents Park, look at the carcasses of horses strewn in bloody heaps across a London road. And they should read the eyewitness accounts of arms and legs and musical instruments flying through the air; of horses' screams and the pop of pistols putting them out of their misery; of the young soldier with the bottom half of his body blown away, reaching out in a futile dying gesture... That is where the I.R.A. and its front groups spend their money. They claim that they are raising funds for the families of slain or imprisoned I.R.A. men. They lie. The money goes for arms, ammunition, and bombs. It buys the high explosives and the remote control detonators that blew up in London. The money bank rolls the sort of sub-humans who can pack six inch nails around a bomb and put it in a place where women and children and tourists will gather."<sup>38</sup>

Constitutional nationalists used every I.R.A. atrocity to convince Irish-Americans of the futility of violence. The Friends of Ireland also fought hard to contain the publicity successes achieved by republicans after the hunger strike. They continued to use their influence on Capitol Hill. Eventually, through close cooperation with the S.D.L.P. and Irish government, the Friends played an important role in the

Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985. Pressure and influence from these Irish-American political leaders was, at certain stages, vital in bringing the Agreement to fruition. It marks the most significant achievement of the Friends of Ireland.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement was very much a consequence of the political changes in Ulster after the hunger strike. Sinn Fein electoral victories, during and after the prison dispute, created intense pressure on the S.D.L.P.. John Hume realized that his party needed to achieve some political success if it was to resist the challenge from republicanism. He hoped to secure political concessions from the British government through direct Anglo-Irish negotiations. Yet the likelihood of this objective seemed extremely remote. In 1982, the British were intent in pursuing an internal solution by devolved government through the establishment of James Prior's Assembly. They were consequently ignoring the Anglo-Irish dimension.

Hume's hope of achieving a political breakthrough was further eroded by the serious deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations. This diplomatic chill began after Charles Haughey's electoral victory in March 1982. The new Taoiseach antagonized Margaret Thatcher with his nationalistic rhetoric and strong attacks against the Prior Assembly.

Anglo-Irish relations reached their lowest ebb during the Falklands War. Haughey gave the Thatcher government only limited and grudging support to economic sanctions enforced by

the E.E.C. on Argentina. After a British submarine sank the Argentinean battleship Belgrano, Irish Defense Minister, Patrick Powers, said that "Obviously the British are the aggressors now." In Maggie : An Intimate Portrait of a Woman in Power, Chris Ogden claims that the British Prime Minister considered Irish actions as an "unforgivable betrayal." He says it reinforced her, "natural antipathy towards the Irish, whom she considered, in large part, shiftless, sniveling, and spineless."<sup>39</sup>

These Anglo-Irish antagonisms greatly concerned the Friends of Ireland. The group was alarmed at positive republican publicity over the Flannery trial and the St. Patrick's Day parade controversy. Senator Edward Kennedy and Tip O'Neill were frustrated that they could not counteract Irish-American republicanism by pointing to some political advances by constitutional nationalists in Ireland. Their frustration was compounded by the deterioration in relations between London and Dublin which seemed to block fresh political initiatives in Ulster.<sup>40</sup>

In this unpromising situation, the Friends of Ireland worked for a political breakthrough. In their 1982 St. Patrick's Day statement they appealed for greater dialogue between the Haughey and Thatcher administrations. In May, the Friends sent a delegation to Ireland led by Congressman Tom Foley and Senator Chris Dodd. They helped form a counterpart to the Friends of Ireland in the Dail called the Irish-U.S.

Parliamentary Group. This new organization aimed at strengthening trans-Atlantic communications between constitutional nationalists in order to coordinate political action on Capitol Hill.<sup>41</sup>

The Friends of Ireland delegation also traveled to Belfast and met Lord Gowrie of the Northern Ireland Office. Tom Foley and Chris Dodd told him they were concerned about the lack of political progress in Ulster and endorsed the Anglo-Irish approach as the best way forward. In order to show the British their commitment, key members of the Friends tabled joint-congressional resolutions calling for a ban on the use of plastic bullets and the outlawing of the Ulster Defense Association.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the efforts of the Friends of Ireland, constitutional nationalism suffered a major blow following Sinn Fein's success in the October 1982 Assembly elections. The results confirmed John Hume's view that a new initiative was imperative to consolidate the S.D.L.P.'s position and counteract the rising republican threat. He began to press Garret FitzGerald, elected Taoiseach in December of 1982, to embark on a new political drive aimed at defining the objectives of constitutional nationalists. FitzGerald was intensely aware of the threat posed by Sinn Fein and quickly announced the formation of a New Ireland Forum.

The New Ireland Forum began discussions in May 1983. All constitutional nationalist parties submitted proposals on how

to unify Ireland while still protecting the Protestant/unionist identity. Sinn Fein was not asked to participate because of its support of violence while all Unionist parties rejected the exercise as "obviously biased" against their interests. Despite frequent disagreements between the parties involved, the Forum continued to take testimony and discuss political alternatives throughout the year.

John Hume and the FitzGerald administration were committed to getting support for the Forum from the Friends of Ireland. Before the discussions began, Hume contacted all his associates on Capitol Hill and asked for a firm endorsement of the new initiative. Together they formulated a "United Ireland" resolution which was sponsored by twenty-eight Senators and fifty-three Congressmen. The resolution was issued on St. Patrick's Day 1983 and gave strong support to the New Ireland Forum, describing it as a great sign of hope for the peaceful unification of Ireland. The Friends re-emphasized their attack on James Prior's "unworkable" Assembly and maintained that a real solution would require, "the bold cooperation of both the British and Irish governments jointly pursuing, at the highest levels, a new strategy of reconciliation."<sup>43</sup>

The Irish Times described the resolution as, "the most important Irish initiative to be put to Congress since 1920."<sup>44</sup> John Hume and Irish Foreign Minister, Peter Barry,

traveled to Washington to support the resolution. Barry also held extensive discussions with Ronald Reagan and asked for support for the New Ireland Forum. The President was impressed by the new initiative. Although he emphasized that the United States would not chart a course for Ulster, he acknowledged that "we do have an obligation to urge our long-time friends in that part of the world to seek reconciliation."<sup>45</sup>

As the New Ireland Forum discussions progressed, the Friends of Ireland were kept informed of the latest developments. On July 27, 1983, a delegation from Dail Eireann traveled to Washington and met with their American counterparts. Members of the Friends considered the visit so important they suspended confirmation hearings for Paul Volcker, as Federal Reserve Chairman, to meet the Irish politicians.

The discussions concentrated on a growing conflict within the Forum between Charles Haughey and Garret FitzGerald. Press reports in Ireland and America suggested Haughey was using the Forum as a means to embarrass the Taoiseach. This political maneuvering alarmed the Friends. Journalist Michael Kilian contends that they asked the Dail delegation to advise Haughey not to disrupt the discussions. Tip O'Neill emphasized that the Forum needed to present a united front in order to win the support of the United States government and to enhance constitutional nationalist efforts on Capitol Hill.<sup>46</sup>

The Friends of Ireland tried to aid the Forum by continuing to encourage meaningful dialogue between the Irish and British governments. In October 1983 they sponsored a resolution calling on President Reagan to appoint a special U.S. envoy to Northern Ireland. In an accompanying statement, Senator Edward Kennedy said an American envoy could play an important role in encouraging Anglo-Irish talks. Although the proposal was rejected by the Reagan administration, it did give the British yet another indication of Irish-American concern in seeing a new political move in Ulster.<sup>47</sup>

Following the special envoy resolution, the Friends were greatly encouraged by the resumption of Anglo-Irish summits. In November 1983, Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald met in London. These were the first major discussions since the dispute with Haughey over the Falklands War. FitzGerald was optimistic that the proposals being formulated in the New Ireland Forum would lay the basis for a bold new political initiative in Ulster.<sup>48</sup>

The Forum Report was finally released in May 1984 and offered three political options as possible solutions to the Ulster conflict. After strong pressure from Charles Haughey, it proposed that "the most favored solution" was a united Ireland, safeguarding unionist rights. The report also suggested a highly complicated federal-confederal system. Under this formula, both parts of Ireland would have their own assembly, presided over by a national government. The final

option proposed that Northern Ireland could be ruled jointly by both the Dublin and Westminster governments.<sup>49</sup>

The Friends of Ireland immediately supported the Forum Report and began working for the endorsement of the Reagan administration. To enhance this effort, Peter Barry flew to Washington on May 4, 1984, and held top level discussions with State Department officials. The talks proved successful and the U.S. government later issued a statement praising "the Irish statesmen for their courageous and forthright efforts embodied in the New Ireland Forum."<sup>50</sup>

The American press also welcomed the Forum Report. The Christian Science Monitor described it as a "measured step forward in efforts to end the political deadlock." The New York Times and The Washington Post similarly praised the Report and urged the British government to make a positive response.<sup>51</sup>

The British Parliament debated the Forum Report on July 2, 1984. There was considerable praise for its attempt to accommodate Unionist aspirations and its strong condemnation of terrorism. The Thatcher government refused to give an official reaction until the next scheduled Anglo-Irish summit in November. There was wide scale anticipation on both sides of the Atlantic that the British Prime Minister would make a magnanimous gesture towards constitutional nationalism.

The Anglo-Irish summit was held at Thatcher's retreat, Chequers, on November 15, 1984. Since the release of the Forum

Report, both governments had conducted private discussions which achieved considerable progress. At Chequers, Garret FitzGerald tried to move these talks to a higher level. He suggested a political formula under which his government would amend articles two and three of the Irish constitution -- which claim sovereignty over Northern Ireland. The Taoiseach hoped that in exchange Britain would agree to a formal political role for Dublin in Ulster affairs.<sup>52</sup>

Douglas Hurd, the recently appointed Secretary of State, opposed FitzGerald's offer. He felt the constitutional amendment was too much of a gamble and would be extremely counter-productive if it failed. Consequently, the British delegation tried to retard the pace of discussions. Although both governments continued to work toward an Anglo-Irish agreement, FitzGerald recalled that "The British were tending to pull back from what had been discussed already. It was a somewhat disappointing meeting because the negotiations were moved to a lower and subtractive level."<sup>53</sup>

Following the meeting at Chequers, Margaret Thatcher held a press conference. For the first forty-five minutes she gave a very positive appraisal of Anglo-Irish negotiations. When she was asked about the three political options advanced in the Forum Report, however, she dismissed them all in her now infamous "Out, Out, Out" remarks.

Thatcher's seemingly insensitive dismissal of the efforts of constitutional nationalists caused an immediate political

storm in Ireland. The normally restrained Irish Times said the Prime Minister was "as off-hand and patronizing as she is callous and imperious." The Irish Press said Thatcher's vehement delivery had an element of rudeness usually reserved for bitter enemies and that she made "Out" sound like a four-letter word. The newspaper concluded her statement was a devastating rejection of all the hopes and efforts that went into the Forum.

Thatcher also received strong condemnation in the American press. There were over fifty editorials on her remarks which generally reaffirmed support for the Forum and attacked the British government's failure to make political progress in Ulster. The Boston Globe said Thatcher had "a mind choked with prejudice," while commentaries in The Washington Post attacked her "stone cold intransigence" and "graceless self-indulgence."<sup>54</sup>

Relations between the London and Dublin governments entered a period of confusion and misunderstanding following Thatcher's press conference. Many Irish politicians believed the British Prime Minister was deliberately trying to humiliate Garret FitzGerald and scuttle Anglo-Irish talks. They persuaded the Taoiseach to issue a counter statement describing Thatcher's reaction as "gratuitously offensive."

Constitutional nationalists were greatly concerned that the deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations would destroy the prospects for a new political move in Ulster. The S.D.L.P. was

particularly alarmed at this development because they would have no political breakthrough with which to counteract Sinn Fein. Faced with this situation, John Hume and Irish government officials began to enlist the services of their Irish-American supporters. They contacted the Friends of Ireland and urged them to get Ronald Reagan's assistance. Constitutional nationalists hoped they could persuade the President to pressure Thatcher into a more conciliatory position.<sup>55</sup>

Among the key figures in this attempt to get Reagan's support was William Clark, U.S. Secretary of the Interior. Clark was a long-time friend and confidant of the President. He also had a close relationship with the Irish diplomatic corps in Washington, especially Sean Donlon. Clark became very supportive of the constitutional nationalist position. While he was Deputy Secretary of State in 1981, Clark conducted a tour of Ireland. He caused a political storm among Unionists when he admitted his membership of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and told a reporter that "it is the hope and prayer of all Americans" that Ireland will be united."<sup>56</sup>

Irish government officials contacted Clark following Thatcher's "Out, Out, Out" remarks. He agreed to use his influence with Reagan to assist the constitutional nationalist cause. The President was scheduled to meet the British Prime Minister at Camp David on December 22, 1984. Before the meeting, Clark asked Reagan to discuss Anglo-Irish relations

with the Prime Minister and express his desire for political progress. The Friends of Ireland backed Clark in a telegram to the President on December 21. They also told Reagan of their "disappointment at Mrs. Thatcher's public peremptory dismissal of the reasonable alternatives put forward in the Forum Report."<sup>57</sup>

American press reports which appeared after the Camp David meeting said the two leaders only discussed Western European reaction to the Star Wars Defense Initiative. It was not until January 17, 1985, that the Reagan administration officially acknowledged that Anglo-Irish affairs was one of the topics on the agenda. In a letter to Mario Biaggi, the White House stated the President and Mrs. Thatcher "exchanged views on Northern Ireland" during which he "stressed the need for progress and the need for all parties concerned to take steps which will contribute to a peaceful resolution."<sup>58</sup>

Garret FitzGerald believes William Clark's intervention was the crucial factor in persuading Reagan to discuss Irish affairs. The President raised the issue against specific advice from the State Department. During the meeting, it seems that Reagan expressed a desire to see progress in the Anglo-Irish talks. He also said he would like to discuss the issue further with Thatcher when she was due back in the U.S. in February 1985.<sup>59</sup>

Reagan's concern with Anglo-Irish relations, and his desire for further discussions, put Thatcher under a certain

amount of pressure. She was encouraged to make some new proposals to the Irish government before her return to Washington in February. Garret FitzGerald believes that it was partly due to this American pressure that Thatcher offered a new Anglo-Irish package on January 21, 1985. This new deal was a significant advance on what had been discussed at Chequers and opened the way for the Anglo-Irish Agreement in November.<sup>60</sup>

Although American pressure was a significant factor in Thatcher's more positive proposal of January 21, she was also influenced by her political colleagues in Britain. Members of her cabinet and staff emphasized that her "Out, Out, Out" remarks had damaged Garret FitzGerald's political position in Ireland and would give encouragement to Sinn Fein. They advised Thatcher to compromise and offer more significant concessions to the Irish.<sup>61</sup>

Despite Thatcher's new proposal, the FitzGerald administration continued to use its influence in America. Sean Donlon and John Hume contacted Tip O'Neill before the British Prime Minister was due to address a joint session of Congress on February 20, 1985. They asked the House Speaker to ensure that Thatcher discuss the Northern Ireland problem in her speech. O'Neill conveyed this request to Sir Oliver Wright, the British Ambassador. To emphasize his concern, O'Neill also met Thatcher when she arrived in Washington and again asked her to include the Ulster conflict in her address.<sup>62</sup>

O'Neill's pressure produced results. When Thatcher addressed Congress, she not only discussed Northern Ireland, but was also extremely conciliatory towards the Irish government. She said that relations between her and Garrett FitzGerald were "excellent" and that she would cooperate with his administration to find a political solution in Ulster. She also expressed hope that joint efforts to launch new political dialogue would receive full support from America.<sup>63</sup>

As a complement to using its influence with Tip O'Neill, the Irish government also tried to get support from the State Department. On February 15, 1985, Garret FitzGerald and Sean Donlon met with Rick Burke, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. They asked the State Department to include the Ulster problem in talks with Thatcher following her Congressional address.

Burke agreed to the Irish request and succeeded in reversing the State Department's traditional avoidance of the Northern Ireland conflict. He met with Secretary of State George Shultz and convinced him to raise the question with Thatcher. At a meeting in California, Shultz and Reagan told the Prime Minister of their desire to see progress in Anglo-Irish discussions and offered American financial support in the event of an agreed political initiative.<sup>64</sup>

There was considerable speculation over the nature of American governmental involvement in the Anglo-Irish process. Some unionists alleged it was all part of a sinister

conspiracy under which the British would withdraw from Northern Ireland. Enoch Powell M.P. believed the U.S. was encouraging an Anglo-Irish agreement in order to establish a united Ireland. This new state would end its neutrality, enter the N.A.T.O. alliance, and permit the establishment of American military bases. Powell claimed this would greatly enhance the strategic defense of Western Europe.<sup>65</sup>

Enoch Powell never produced any solid evidence for this conspiracy theory yet it was supported by a number of prominent Unionists. The fact that the Republic of Ireland still remains neutral seems to confirm that the theory was a misinterpretation of U.S. intentions and was based on incorrect assumptions.

Perhaps a more plausible explanation of U.S. involvement was Ronald Reagan's personal interest in Irish affairs. The President continually emphasized his Irish roots and was informed of the latest political developments by William Clark and other Irish-Americans in his administration. These included Robert McFarlane in the National Security Council, Secretary of the Treasury Donald Regan, Secretary of Labor Donovan, and C.I.A. Director William Casey.

Irish government ministers took every opportunity to convince the Reagan administration of the threat posed by the rise of Sinn Fein. When Vice-President George Bush stopped in Dublin for talks with Garrett FitzGerald in July 1983, the Taoiseach warned him that Sinn Fein political success could

destroy democracy in Ireland.<sup>66</sup> Irish officials reemphasized this point when Reagan himself visited Ireland in June 1984. They tried to convince the President that the only way to stop Sinn Fein was through a new political agreement achieved through Anglo-Irish discussions.

Reagan, as a self-proclaimed champion against world terrorism, sympathized with the Irish government and strongly opposed the I.R.A.. Each St. Patrick's Day he issued vehement attacks against the organization and urged Irish-Americans not to fund violence in Ulster. He therefore had a concrete reason for supporting an agreement which offered the prospect of stifling the republican movement.

From these various influences, Reagan encouraged Anglo-Irish talks. His contribution was considerable. Following the February 20 meeting with Thatcher, the British government intensified negotiations with the FitzGerald administration. Chris Ogden implies that Reagan offered to increase activities against the Irish-American republican network if the British were more conciliatory towards the Irish. He says that Thatcher partly accepted the Anglo-Irish Agreement because "If she did not, she knew she would get precious little help stopping the flow of guns and money from America to the I.R.A. or in getting I.R.A. suspects extradited from the U.S..<sup>67</sup>"

Throughout the final stages of the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Irish continued to enlist the assistance of their American supporters. In early March 1985, Tip O'Neill led a delegation

of the "Friends" to Dublin. The held discussions with Garrett FitzGerald and Peter Barry on the progress of Anglo-Irish talks. O'Neill also went to London and assured British officials he would use all his influence to secure American financial support for a political agreement. He convinced them that, as Speaker of the House, he was in a unique position to guide a financial assistance bill through Congress.<sup>68</sup>

On March 25, Northern Ireland Secretary Douglas Hurd traveled to America to discuss the financial aid package in greater detail. He met Kenneth Dam, Deputy Secretary of State, and held extensive discussions with Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy. Hurd gave them full details of the Anglo-Irish discussions and received further assurance of America's commitment to back a political agreement in Ulster.<sup>69</sup>

In early May 1985, Garret FitzGerald traveled to Washington for further talks about the United States aid to Ireland. He discussed the practicalities of getting the bill through Congress with Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy. FitzGerald also went to Ottawa for a meeting with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The Taoiseach told him the Anglo-Irish agreement was near completion. Mulroney was so delighted he promised Canadian financial assistance.<sup>70</sup>

On May 17, 1985, Anglo-Irish discussions were given an added sense of urgency. Sinn Fein consolidated its political success by taking twelve percent of the vote in local government elections. The vote showed British officials that

the S.D.L.P. needed some sign of political success to resist the challenge from Sinn Fein. Consequently, talks between both governments were intensified in the summer of 1985 in an attempt to achieve an early agreement.

As the Anglo-Irish discussions reached their final stages, there was a flurry of activity to arrange the American financial contribution. On August 9, Tip O'Neill again met with Peter Barry and Garret FitzGerald in Dublin. He attempted to smooth out final issues of contention between the Irish and British governments. In September, William Clark also traveled to Ireland. He learned that the agreement was near completion. When Clark returned to Washington he began to work with Robert McFarlane to finalize details of the American aid package.<sup>71</sup>

The final hurdle to the Agreement came in late October 1985. Charles Haughey was dissatisfied with the Anglo-Irish discussions, believing that they were a "sell-out" to British interests. He dispatched Brian Lenihan to Washington in an attempt to convince the Friends to oppose the Agreement. Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy immediately rejected Haughey's contentions. The Irish-American political leaders, therefore, saved the Agreement from a potentially serious challenge and muted Haughey's opposition.<sup>72</sup>

The contacts between American politicians and those involved in the Anglo-Irish talks were widely reported in the media. There was intense speculation over the extent of Reagan's financial contribution. The Sunday Times reported the

American aid package would be \$1 billion.<sup>73</sup> Unionist newspapers ran reports that the Republic of Ireland had agreed to enter N.A.T.O. and that U.S. missile bases would soon be established.

All the press speculation finally ended on November 15, 1985, when Margaret Thatcher and Garret FitzGerald met in Hillsborough Castle and finally signed the Anglo-Irish Agreement. The key element of the new accord was the establishment of an Intergovernmental Conference at which British and Irish officials would meet regularly to discuss matters relating to the government of Northern Ireland. An Anglo-Irish secretariat was also established at Maryfield, in Belfast, to support the work of the Intergovernmental Conference. These provisions meant that the Republic of Ireland was given a formal role in Ulster for the first time since the formation of the state in 1921.<sup>74</sup>

Under the Agreement, Dublin formally acknowledged the right of the unionist community to remain within the United Kingdom. This was affirmed under Article One which stated, "any change in the status of Northern Ireland would only come about with the consent of a majority of the people of Northern Ireland." Other provisions expressed a desire "to protect human rights and to prevent discrimination." The Accord also promised much greater levels of cross-border security cooperation. This would be coordinated by the Chief Constable of the R.U.C. and the Commissioner of the Garda Siochana.

The unionist reaction to the Anglo-Irish Agreement was immediate and hostile. No unionist politician had been consulted during the negotiations and they saw it as an attempt by the British to sell them out. The leaders of the Official Unionist Party and Democratic Unionist Party embarked on a series of mass rallies and days of protest. All unionist M.P.s withdrew from their seats at Westminster and eventually forced an election over the Hillsborough accord.

The American reaction, in contrast, was extremely positive. The Agreement received massive political and editorial support. All the major newspapers characterized it as a major step towards reconciliation in Ulster and praised Thatcher and FitzGerald for their political courage. The New York Times described the Accord as "creative and ingenious" and warned unionists that the only group which would benefit from their opposition was the I.R.A..<sup>75</sup> The Washington Post suggested that the strong American support for the Agreement would lead to a significant erosion of Irish-American support for the Provisionals.<sup>76</sup>

The major Irish-American newspapers were more reserved in their reaction. All welcomed the fact that Dublin was given a formal role in Northern Ireland but questioned the unionist right to remain in the United Kingdom.<sup>77</sup> Mario Biaggi and the Ad Hoc Committee were also ambivalent. While their statements seemed to support the Agreement, they were phrased in such a

way as to open the possibility of disagreement in the future.<sup>78</sup>

There was no such indecision in Noraid's reaction. The group followed Sinn Fein's lead in describing the Agreement as a sham and a betrayal of Irish national sovereignty. Martin Galvin emphasized that the only way peace would be achieved was through British withdrawal.<sup>79</sup>

On the day the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed, Ronald Reagan and Tip O'Neill held a press reception in the Oval Office. They praised the new initiative and gave a concrete assurance that the United States would provide financial aid. Reagan also condemned I.R.A. supporters in America.<sup>80</sup> On December 9, the House of Representatives passed a resolution supporting the Agreement by a vote of 380 to 1. The resolution received a similar endorsement in the Senate one day later.<sup>81</sup> Following these votes, the Reagan administration began working on a "Northern Ireland and Ireland Assistance Bill." It promised to provide \$250 million over five years for economic development in the form of loans and guarantees.

In January 1986, Sean Donlon and Ken Bloomfield, head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, held intense discussions with Rozanne Ridgeway, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. The talks involved details of how United States financial aid would be used. Press reports said the meeting was "highly successful" and that U.S. Ambassador to

Ireland, Margaret Heckler, would be traveling to Ulster to assess the best way to spend the cash contribution.

Despite the early optimism, the aid package became embroiled in a series of internal political disputes within Congress. Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, began to use the aid bill as a lever to pass an updated extradition treaty between the United States and Britain. The Reagan administration also threatened that the Irish Bill would suffer if Congress resisted a new assistance program to aid the Nicaraguan Contras.<sup>82</sup> Some politicians also questioned the logic of sending aid to Ireland at a time when the United States deficit was reaching astronomical proportions. Newspapers also suggested U.S. foreign aid would be better spent in the Third World. The Los Angeles Times, for example, commented:

Even as Reagan speaks of a five year Irish aid program at \$50 million per year, he has proposed cutting the worldwide contribution to the immensely effective United Nations Children's Program from \$46 million to \$34 million per year. Reagan's priorities of need are as skewed as his Third World geography!<sup>83</sup>

In response to this deadlock, the Friends of Ireland drafted their own Bill. It proposed the United States should give \$50 million to boost the Ulster economy, in consecutive payments over five years. There was overwhelming support for the measure in the House. Yet it was not until August 1986 that a bill was finally passed with the approval of the Reagan administration. The final measure approved \$120 million in aid

over a three-year period. It granted \$50 million for 1986 and two payments of \$35 million for each subsequent year.<sup>84</sup>

The Canadian government joined America and donated \$10 million to the Agreement. New Zealand later sent \$300,000. The British and Irish governments quickly established an International Fund to administer and distribute this cash. Both governments appointed a seven member Board of managers while the donor countries were represented by observers nominated by their respective governments.

In 1987 the International Fund began supporting a wide range of economic and social programs. In accordance with the wishes of donor countries, the Fund spent three-quarters of its cash in Northern Ireland and the remainder in border countries of the Irish Republic. Supporters of the International Fund claim that its efforts have generated significant economic growth and provided thousands of new jobs.<sup>85</sup>

The signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement brought great hope to constitutional nationalists. The political benefits promised by Dublin's role in Ulster affairs seemed to suggest a new era in which Sinn Fein's influence would be minimized. The Agreement could be used by the S.D.L.P. to win support and reestablish its leadership of the nationalist community. Furthermore, the provisions for extensive cross-border security cooperation seemed to imply a new commitment which would severely hamper I.R.A. operations.

In America, the Friends of Ireland considered the Agreement as their most significant intervention in Irish politics. Tip O'Neill and Edward Kennedy firmly believe their efforts played an extremely important role in securing the Accord. Without their sustained pressure and influence the British government would have been much less inclined to engage in serious discussions.

Most significantly, the Friends and the Irish government persuaded President Reagan to add his support to the Agreement. The U.S. contribution to the Ireland Fund marked the first time the American government became officially involved in the Ulster conflict. Reagan also used his "special relationship" with Margaret Thatcher to further the process of Anglo-Irish discussions. Journalist Alex Brummer therefore concludes:

Without the encouragement and prodding of the Reagan administration and the sustained pressure for political reform from the United States Congress, Mrs. Thatcher and Garrett FitzGerald may never have made it to Hillsborough.<sup>86</sup>

The Friends of Ireland emphasized that all the breakthroughs of the Agreement were achieved through political discussion. They hoped that this example would persuade Irish-Americans of the futility of supporting violence and that constitutional action was the only way to bring change in Ireland. The Friends were filled with optimism that, as the benefits of the Anglo-Irish Agreement became increasingly

apparent, the republican network in America would decline into insignificance.

## NOTES

1. Noraid Statement (Registration No.2239) under the F.A.R.A. dated 29 July 1984.

2. As part of the U.S. government campaign to cripple Noraid, the American Ambassador to Britain, Charles Price, told reporters in Belfast that American customs officers would begin using a currency reporting act to confiscate the group's funds. The act is used to impound money earmarked by the Mafia to purchase guns. Price claimed it would be expanded to include cash used to buy weapons for the I.R.A.. The New York Times, 25 February 1984.

3. See report on Adams' visa case in The Irish People, 16 February 1985. Bernadette Devlin has conducted frequent tours of the U.S. speaking on behalf of the Committee for Free Speech in Northern Ireland. In 1983, she was also denied a visa to raise funds for Nickey Kelly of the I.R.S.P.. Kelly was then on hunger strike in protest at his conviction for train robbery.

4. The New York Times "Nanny at the Gates," 9 June 1983.

5. Howell and Ellis were caught along with three Canadians. They had a shopping list for weapons and \$10,000 in British currency. Among the items on the list were detonators for remote control bombs and small model aircraft capable of carrying 20lbs. of explosives. Howell was quickly deported across the Canadian border and then taken under police escort to Ireland. On March 4, while changing planes in Paris, he managed to escape by climbing out of a toilet window and hailing a taxi. The Christian Science Monitor 18 January 1985.

Ellis applied for political asylum but, after spending one year in jail, was deported to Ireland on March 3, 1983. In 1990 he became the first person to be extradited from the Republic of Ireland to England under a treaty signed in 1987. He was accused of participation in an I.R.A. bombing campaign in Britain during the early eighties. His case has created considerable controversy and is still pending.

6. J.L. Stone, "Irish Terrorism Investigations," F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin 56 (October 1987):21. In 1988 Seamus Twomey obtained a visa to attend the annual Noraid dinner. The presence of such a high ranking Provisional in the U.S. was a considerable embarrassment for the State Department. Republicans believed he was admitted because he used the

anglicized version of his name, James Twomey. The Sunday Times, 17 January 1988.

7. David Blundy, "U.S. Lawmen Uncover Provo Arms Pipeline," The Sunday Times, 18 May 1980

8. The Irish People, 2 July 1983.

9. Mark Hosenball, "Fear of I.R.A. Men in U.S. Intelligence," The Sunday Times, 2 September 1984.

10. John Witherow, "I.R.A. Sought Arms From the Mafia," The Times (London), 9 September 1983. Von Raab claimed that there had been an increase in U.S. government efforts to smash I.R.A. gunrunning since the beginning of 1982. He said this was partly an outgrowth of "Operation Exodus", a project designed to stop the illegal export of high-tech U.S. equipment to Soviet Block countries.

11. The Times (London), 5 May 1985.

12. Mark Hosenball, "U.S. Leak Blows British Secrets," The Times (London), 26 January 1985.

13. See James Adams, The Financing of Terror (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986), 149.

14. Ibid., 151.

15. Chris Thomas, "Irish Arms Buyers Shadowed by F.B.I.," The Times (London), 31 March 1983.

16. The Irish Times, 28 January 1983. The Garda also arrested the brother of John Maloney who was a Melikite priest in New York, home for two weeks holiday. He was charged with possession of an armalite rifle but later released due to lack of evidence.

17. The Boston Globe, 13 February 1983.

18. The New York Times, 1 March 1983.

19. The Chicago Tribune, "A Blow for I.R.A. Gunrunners," 19 May 1983.

20. The Irish People, 11 June 1983. The key witness in the Toner/Murphy case was Sidney Kail, a transport company owner who had spread the word he could get guns from the mafia. Murphy contacted Kail after recommendation from Michael Hanratty -- the F.B.I. informant in the Megahey conspiracy. During the trial defense lawyers again tried to link Kail with the C.I.A.. Their case was greatly weakened by Judge Tom

Platt's decision not to permit Michael Hanratty to testify. The judge also passed a ruling which denied jurors the right to hear testimony about the political situation in Ireland.

21. The Irish People, "McParland's Victory," 26 November 1983.

22. J. L. Stone, op.cit., 22. During the trial, Martin galvin posted \$750,000 bail for Ryan which was partly secured by Michael Flannery's house in Jackson Heights, New York. Liam Ryan later returned to Ireland to manage a bar in Ardboe, County Tyrone. In December 1989 he was killed when a group of Loyalists sprayed the bar with gunfire. Reported in The Irish Echo, 9 December 1989.

23. The Times (London), 1 October 1984.

24. The Irish Times, 2 October 1984.

25. In 1985 Crawley and Ferris were among twelve I.R.A. prisoners who tried to blast their way out of Portlaoise Jail. Both were given extended sentences for their attempt.

26. The Baltimore News-American, "Irish-American Aid," 3 October 1984.

27. The Winter Hill Gang frequented the Celtic Tavern in Charleston and wore cloth shamrocks in their coats. Murray was a prominent member and always carried a Mach 10 pistol with a silencer to intimidate his enemies and protect his drug schemes.

28. The New York Times, 17 April 1986. The marijuana was seized on board a British freighter in Boston on November 16, 1984. It was later traced to Murray.

29. In December 1990, Nee was arrested for his part in a bank robbery in Boston. One of his accomplices was Michael McNaught, described as a former member of the I.R.A.. Their trial is pending. See The Irish Echo, "Six Held in Boston Robbery Case," 23 January 1991.

30. The Boston Globe, 17 April 1986. In 1981 Anderson received one year suspended sentence for illegally importing Canadian swordfish to Boston. William Winn and Michael Nigro were indicted for their part in the drug smuggling venture and were also linked to organized crime. Both were reported as fugitives at the time charges were made.

31. The Times (London), 22 May 1987.

32. The Boston Globe, 17 April 1986.

33. John Loftus, Valhalla's Wake (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988).

34. The Irish Echo, 2 September 1989.

35. Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, The Provisional I.R.A. (London: Heinemann, 1987), 130-131.

36. The Irish People, 24 December 1983.

37. Bishop and Mallie, op.cit., 307. See also Trevor Fishlock, "How the I.R.A. Bombs Backfire in America," The Times (London), December 22, 1983.

38. The Chicago Tribune, "Where Aid to the I.R.A. Goes," 22 July 1982.

39. Chris Ogden, Maggie : The Portrait of a Woman in Power (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 189.

40. Senator Edward Kennedy, correspondence with author, 17 April 1989.

41. Dr. Garret FitzGerald, interview with author, December 19, 1990. See also "The Friends of Ireland," Government of Ireland Press Release, 2 June 1982.

42. Congressional Resolutions 104 and 105, Calling on the British Government to Ban Plastic Bullets and the U.D.A.. Senators Kennedy, Dodd, and Moynihan sponsored the resolutions in the Senate while Congressmen William Shannon and Charles Dougherty forwarded them in the House.

43. "Statement of the Friends of Ireland," Congressional Record 98th. Cong., 1st. sess., 129 no.34 (March 17, 1983).

44. The Irish Times, 18 March 1983.

45. Statement of the Presidents : The Reagan Administration, 17 March 1983.

46. Michael Kilian, "Look Who's Interested In Ulster," The Chicago Tribune, 23 August 1983.

47. Statement by Senator Kennedy Urging Reagan to Appoint a Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, 5 October 1983. The special envoy idea had first been forwarded in August 1983 by New York Assemblyman, John Dearie. It won widespread support from major Irish-American groups, including Noraid.

48. FitzGerald, interview by author.

49. Anthony Kenny, The Road to Hillsborough (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1986), chapters nine and ten.
50. Sean Cronin, Washington's Irish Policy (Kerry : Anvil Books, 1988).
51. The Christian Science Monitor, "Irish Peace," 14 May 1984, The Washington Post, "Ireland's Future," 7 May 1984 and The New York Times, "Two Flags Over Belfast," 10 May 1984. The only sign of opposition to the Forum Report in Washington came from Peter Robinson and Rev. William McCrea of the Democratic Unionist Party. The two unionists undertook a brief tour of the capitol to present the reasons for their opposition.
52. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author.
53. Ibid.
54. The Boston Globe, 27 November 1984 and Coleman McCarthy, "Thatcher's Boost For The I.R.A.," The Washington Post, 9 December 1984.
55. John Hume, interview by author, 3 January 1989.
56. From interview of William Clark on R.T.E.'s Today Tonight program, 7 December 1981.
57. Sean Cronin, "Reagan Urged to Raise Northern Ireland With Thatcher," The Irish Times, 22 December 1984. Mario Biaggi and the Ad Hoc Committee also sent a similar request to Reagan before the Camp David meeting.
58. Letter from State department to Mario Biaggi, 17 January 1985. The full text of this letter was published in the Guardian newspaper in England.
59. Garret FitzGerald and John Hume, interviews by author.
60. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author.
61. One of Thatcher's top advisors responded to her "Out, Out, Out" remarks by saying "I couldn't believe my ears. It was bloody horrible!" Officials at the British Information Service reacted in a similar vein. They sent frantic messages back to London saying the remarks would greatly damage their publicity efforts in America. Thatcher was also convinced that something had to be done to bolster the S.D.L.P. and prevent the rise of Sinn Fein.
62. John Hume, interview by author.

63. "Margaret Thatcher Addresses Congress," British Information Service, 21 February 1985.

64. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author. Tip O'Neill met with Reagan before this conference with Thatcher and also pushed the idea of American financial support for an agreement.

65. Paul Arthur, Northern Ireland Since 1968 (Belfast: Blackstaff, 1988), 87.

66. The Times (London), 6 July 1983,

67. Chris Ogden, op.cit., 223.

68. Senator Edward Kennedy, correspondence with author, 17 April 1989.

69. The Times (London), 27 March 1985.

70. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author.

71. Jack Holland, The American Connection (New York: Viking, 1987), 147.

72. "Brian Lenihan : The Party Linesman," The Sunday Tribune, 21 October 1990.

73. The Sunday Times, 29 September 1985.

74. Anthony Kenny, op.cit., chapter 16.

75. The New York Times, "A Brave Bid For Ulster Peace," 16 November 1985.

76. The Washington Post, "Towards Peace in Ulster," 17 November 1985.

77. For example, see The Advocate, "Who Can Complain?," 9 November 1985.

78. Jack Holland, op.cit., 150. See also letter from Biaggi to The New York Times, 1 December 1985.

79. The Irish People, "Anglo-Irish Sellout," 29 November 1985.

80. "Presidential Statement on U.K.-Ireland Agreement Concerning Northern Ireland," Department of State Bulletin (January, 1986): 56.

81. The Irish Echo, 14 December 1985.

82. Jack Holland, op.cit., 149.

83. The Los Angeles Times, "Lord Bountiful," 10 March 1986.

84. Garret FitzGerald says there was considerable disappointment over Tip O'Neill's activities during this period. The House Speaker wanted to pass a Bill providing financial assistance to Massachusetts. He saw this as a final "gift" before his retirement. O'Neill consequently did not give the Irish Bill all the support the FitzGerald administration would have hoped for.

85. The International Fund for Ireland : Annual Report, 1987/88.

86. Alex Brummer, "The Greening of the White House," The Guardian, 26 November 1985.

## CONCLUSION

In the nineteenth century Irish-Americans played a key role in providing political and material support for both constitutional and physical force nationalists in Ireland. They also made a significant contribution to the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence from 1919 to 1921. Despite this long history, Irish-American nationalism diminished after the establishment of the Irish Free State. The degree of independence achieved by the twenty-six counties satisfied most of the diaspora. Others were sickened by the bloodletting and fratricide during the Irish Civil War.

The decline of Irish-American nationalism further accelerated after World War II. Increasing socio-economic success produced a flight to the suburbs and an erosion of ethnic solidarity. Most Irish-Americans became more concerned with their position in the United States than with political events in Ireland. The election of President John F. Kennedy in 1961 symbolized their assimilation into mainstream American society. Consequently, when the current Ulster troubles erupted in 1968, the vast majority of Irish-Americans remained passive and uninvolved.<sup>1</sup>

In The Irish in America, William Griffin claims that despite the movement towards assimilation, a small minority of Irish-Americans retained an interest in their cultural heritage. They contributed to the growing popularity of college courses in Irish literature and history in the 1970s. Groups of these Irish-Americans also encouraged a revival of interest in traditional music and the Gaelic language.<sup>2</sup>

For some Irish-Americans, concern with their ethnic roots stimulated an interest in the Ulster conflict. Most supported Irish unification and the goals of constitutional nationalism. In the mid to late seventies their views were represented by the "Four Horsemen" of Irish-American politics -- Senators Edward Kennedy and Daniel Moynihan, Speaker of the House Thomas "Tip" O'Neill, and Governor Hugh Carey of New York.

During the initial stages of the Ulster crisis these leading Irish-American politicians inclined towards the militant nationalist perspective. In 1971, for example, Senator Kennedy caused considerable political controversy by demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops. Such statements concerned not only the British government, but also constitutional nationalists in Ireland who felt Irish-American political leaders were giving encouragement to the I.R.A.. John Hume of the S.D.L.P. and high ranking Irish government officials contacted Kennedy and convinced him to adopt a more moderate approach. Eventually, the Four Horsemen became an

important source of support for constitutional nationalism on Capitol Hill.

On St. Patrick's Day in 1977, the Four Horsemen issued their first joint annual statement. They endorsed political dialogue as the only way to achieve a solution to the Northern Ireland problem and strongly condemned Americans who supported the I.R.A.. Many political analysts contend that this action contributed to a general decline in Irish-American Republicanism during the late seventies. The "Big Four" also showed the extent of their political influence by persuading President Jimmy Carter to promise U.S. financial and economic support in the event of a political agreement in Ulster.<sup>3</sup>

In subsequent St. Patrick's Day statements the Four Horsemen combined their denunciations of violence with strong attacks on British government policy. They used their influence in Washington to increase pressure on the British to launch a new political initiative in Ulster. Edward Kennedy and Tip O'Neill specifically called for a movement towards power-sharing under which the S.D.L.P. would have considerable leverage. Analysts such as Adrian Guelke maintain that this American political pressure was the main reason for the Atkins Conference in early 1980. Although this initiative produced no agreement between the S.D.L.P. and unionists, it was the first major example of Irish-American political pressure effecting British policy in Northern Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

In March 1981 the Four Horsemen consolidated their position on Capitol Hill by forming the Friends of Ireland. This Congressional group contained some of the most influential politicians in America. They greatly overshadowed the activities of Mario Biaggi's Ad-Hoc Committee on Irish Affairs, which was more inclined towards the militant nationalist position.

The Friends of Ireland soon had an opportunity to test the extent of their political influence. In May 1981, after the death of Bobby Sands, they sent a telegram to Margaret Thatcher urging a compromise with the hunger strikers. While the British Prime Minister tried not to offend the Irish-American politicians, she rejected their appeal and blamed the continuing death of prisoners on I.R.A. leaders outside the H-Blocks.

Following this failure with Margaret Thatcher, the Friends of Ireland tried to secure the involvement of Ronald Reagan. In July 1981 they backed an appeal from the Irish government to the President which asked for American support in pressuring Britain. Taoiseach Garret FitzGerald wanted Reagan to persuade Thatcher to negotiate directly with the hunger strikers. Although the President did discuss the prison protest at the Ottawa Economic Summit on July 20, he flatly refused to get involved.

The failure to get Reagan's intervention in the hunger strike was a blow to the prestige of the Friends of Ireland.

Yet despite this setback, they continued to support the initiatives of constitutional nationalism in Ireland. The "Friends" gave strong encouragement to the New Ireland Forum and appealed to the British government to make a positive response. Their efforts achieved their greatest success with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in 1985.

The contribution of the Friends of Ireland to the Agreement was most influential following the summit between Margaret Thatcher and Garrett FitzGerald in November 1984. The British Prime Minister's blunt rejection of the Forum Report seemed to signal a deterioration in Anglo-Irish relations. Faced with this possibility, the FitzGerald government appealed to the Friends for assistance. On this occasion the Irish-American politicians succeeded in getting Ronald Reagan's support.

During a December 1984 meeting at Camp David, Reagan discussed Anglo-Irish relations with Margaret Thatcher. He took this initiative on the advice of Secretary of the Interior William Clark, against the wishes of the State Department. Clark, in turn, had been influenced by the Friends of Ireland and the Irish government.

Garret FitzGerald, although acknowledging the influence of other factors, believes that this American pressure encouraged Thatcher to be more conciliatory. She therefore presented the Irish government with a comprehensive political proposal in January 1985. When Thatcher came to the United

States in February to address a joint session of Congress, Tip O'Neill insisted that she discuss Northern Ireland. In her speech the British Prime Minister described her relationship with Garret FitzGerald as excellent and implied there would be renewed Anglo-Irish efforts aimed at solving the Ulster conflict.<sup>5</sup>

After January 1985 the pace of Anglo-Irish discussions greatly intensified. During these talks leaders of the Friends of Ireland traveled to Dublin and gave assurances of substantial U.S. financial support for a political settlement. They also blocked a potentially serious challenge to the provisions of the Agreement from Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey. When the accord was finally signed at Hillsborough Castle on November 15, 1985, it represented not only a major achievement for Garret FitzGerald and the S.D.L.P. but also for the Friends of Ireland. The role played by these Irish-American political leaders in the agreement enhanced the prestige of constitutional nationalism in the United States. It marks their most significant intervention in the Northern Ireland problem to date.

Most Irish-Americans who were interested in the Ulster conflict supported the Friends of Ireland. Some gave financial donations to reconciliation groups such as the American-Ireland Fund and Co-Operation North. Others organized summer holiday programs in America for children from Belfast and Derry. There was, however, a small minority of Irish-Americans

who supported violence as a means to achieve political change. They formed organizations to assist the Provisional I.R.A.'s armed struggle and developed an extremely militant strain of Irish nationalism.

Since its formation in 1970, the Irish Northern Aid Committee (Noraid) has been the most prominent and controversial group in the Irish-American republican network. One of its principal objectives was to win positive publicity for the republican cause and highlight British injustice in Ulster. This Noraid campaign constantly suffered from the negative American public reaction to I.R.A. atrocities in Ireland. The group's publicity efforts were further impaired by the State Department's denial of U.S. visas to Sinn Fein leaders. Noraid also claimed there was a pro-British bias in the American media.

Despite the various factors working against the Irish-American republican network, Noraid did achieve a number of important publicity victories. In 1972 it capitalized on American revulsion at the killing of thirteen Catholic demonstrators during Bloody Sunday. Noraid membership increased and financial receipts rose to their highest level of the entire 1970s.

The greatest breakthrough for Noraid's publicity efforts came during the hunger strikes of 1980-81. Irish-American republican activists organized large public demonstrations after the death of Bobby Sands. Influential American

newspapers characterized Margaret Thatcher's attitude as intransigent and called for concessions on the prisoners' five demands. Noraid fund-raising reached unprecedented heights and it formed twelve new chapters nationwide.

Noraid's rejuvenation during the hunger strikes convinced its leaders to organize annual tours of Northern Ireland. Beginning in 1983, Irish-American activists traveled to the province to directly experience life under "British oppression." They stayed with republican families, participated in pro-I.R.A. demonstrations, listened to political speeches from Sinn Fein leaders, and some even took part in riots against the British security forces.

These annual Noraid tours became important publicity events for the Republican Movement in Ireland. Sinn Fein claimed they showed widespread Irish-American support for the I.R.A. and exposed British oppression. Martin Galvin, the leader of the tours, caused considerable embarrassment to the British government by his continual evasion of the exclusion order against him. When Northern Ireland authorities tried to arrest him in 1984, a police officer killed Sean Downes. This incident brought extensive international condemnations of the R.U.C. and further undermined its image within the nationalist community.

Although Noraid has achieved some notable publicity successes, its principal function is fund-raising. From 1971 to 1981, Justice Department records indicate that the

organization sent \$1,889,607 to the Republican Movement in Ireland. This figure does not include Noraid's disbursements between July 1981 and 1984. The group refused to file financial records in this period because of a legal dispute over its relationship to the I.R.A..<sup>6</sup>

Noraid has continually claimed its funds go to the families of imprisoned I.R.A. members for welfare purposes. British, Irish, and American authorities dispute this and allege that most donations are used to buy weapons. All three governments further claim that Noraid financial reports under the Foreign Agents Registration Act are significantly understated.

American law enforcement officials have never uncovered a direct link between Noraid funds and the purchase of weapons. The group's disbursements are almost impossible to trace because they are delivered to Ireland in cash amounts by trusted couriers. There is, however, strong circumstantial evidence supporting the claims of U.S. authorities. In 1982 the F.B.I. foiled a major gunrunning conspiracy which was partly funded by Michael Flannery. The Noraid leader, rather unconvincingly, claimed that his organization had not provided the money but that it was part of a separate I.R.A. fund.

In The American Connection Jack Holland correctly points out that the dispute over the use of funds is purely academic. The money Noraid sends is extremely important to the I.R.A. "simply because it frees other funds which are in turn used in

the purchase of arms."7 It is also true that even if all Noraid cash does go to republican families, it still performs a vital role in sustaining morale. I.N.A.C. leader Matthew Higgins once remarked "We have to take care of the needs of the dependents. If that fails, everything fails. If the dependents become dissatisfied then the whole thing collapses like a house of cards."8 Michael Flannery put this more simply when he commented, "An I.R.A. soldier freed from financial worries for his family is a much better fighter!"9

The most direct way in which Irish-American republicans have helped the I.R.A. is through trans-Atlantic gunrunning. In the early 1970s, George Harrison was one of the principal arms suppliers. He sent the first consignment of American rifles to Ireland in 1968. They arrived in Belfast in the summer of 1969 and proved vital to the I.R.A.'s defense of republican areas during the bloody sectarian riots of that year.

In 1969 the Provisionals sent Sean Keenan to America to co-ordinate the gunrunning network. He contacted a group of Irish-Americans in Philadelphia who supplied the first batch of Armalite rifles. This weapon was ideal for the I.R.A.'s guerilla campaign. Continual supplies of the Armalite modernized the Provo's firepower and provided the means to conduct their military operations throughout the seventies.

By 1977, the British government claimed that 80% of the I.R.A.'s weapons came from the United States. The Royal Ulster

Constabulary released figures showing that American guns were used in 70% of Provo killings. American authorities also acknowledged the importance of trans-Atlantic gunrunning but denied it was as extensive as British estimates.

In the 1980s the I.R.A. extended its arms procurement ventures in Europe and also received military supplies from Libya. Despite this trend, Irish-American gunrunners continued to play an important role. They supplied the Provisionals with more sophisticated weapons including remote control bombs and heavy M-60 machine guns.

Irish-American republicans also tried to provide the I.R.A. with surface to air missiles to shoot down British Army helicopters. Since 1981 the F.B.I. has uncovered four of these conspiracies. Federal agents infiltrated the latest scheme in Florida. In 1989 three I.R.A. weapons experts were arrested while trying to ship a consignment of Stinger missiles to Ireland. The men were convicted by a federal court in Fort Lauderdale and their sentencing hearing is currently pending.

Although the F.B.I. has broken a large number of gunrunning conspiracies, most analysts agree that the I.R.A. only needs a small supply of weapons to continue its operations. Irish-American republicans still claim that more guns get through to the Provos than are detected. It therefore seems certain that the trans-Atlantic arms pipeline will continue to be significant for the foreseeable future. Michael Flannery once made the prophetic remark, "It will go on

forever. As long as the Brits are in Belfast, there will be someone like me in America!"<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. L.J. McCaffrey, The Irish Diaspora in America (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1976), chapter nine. The development of an exclusivist Gaelic Irish-Ireland element in post-Treaty Irish nationalism also tended to weaken Irish-American nationalism.

2. W.D. Griffin, The Irish in America : A Chronology and Fact Book (New York: Oceana, 1972). See also Sean Cronin "Irish-America : Vast Majority Now Assimilated," The Irish Times, 10 October 1984.

3. See Mary Holland, "Carter, Kennedy, and Ireland : The Inside Story," Magill, (October 1, 1977). The 1977 St. Patrick's Day statement probably influenced those Irish-Americans who were less committed to the militant nationalist cause. It is unlikely that it had much effect on the hard-core activists within the Irish-American republican network. This group generally viewed the actions of the Four Horsemen as yet another example of the abandonment of the oppressed nationalist community in Ulster by the "lace curtain Irish" in America.

4. Adrian Guelke, "The American Connection to the Northern Ireland Conflict," Irish Studies in International Affairs, 1 no.4 (Spring, 1984).

5. Garret FitzGerald, interview by author, 19 December 1990. Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Schultz also discussed the Northern Ireland problem during an official meeting with Thatcher following her Congressional address.

6. All Noraid figures from reports made under the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

7. Jack Holland, The American Connection : U.S. Guns, Money, and Influence in Northern Ireland (New York: Viking, 1987), 60.

8. Matthew Higgins quoted in Bernard Weinraub, "I.R.A. Aid Unit in the Bronx Linked to Flow of Arms," The New York Times, 16 December 1975.

9. Flannery quoted in Linda Charlton, "Fund-Raising by a Group in U.S. Called Vital to I.R.A. Operations," The New York Times, 23 September 1979.

10. Flannery quoted in Jimmy Breslin, "The Fighting Irish," The Los Angeles Times, 13 February 1983.

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II. NEWSPAPERS1. American newspapers, 1968-1988:

<u>The Atlanta Constitution</u>	<u>The Tulsa World</u>
<u>The Baltimore News-American</u>	<u>The Wall St. Journal</u>
<u>The Baltimore Sun</u>	<u>The Washington Post</u>
<u>The Boston Globe</u>	<u>The Washington Star</u>
<u>The Buffalo Courier-Express</u>	<u>U.S.A. Today</u>
<u>The Chicago Daily News</u>	
<u>The Chicago Tribune</u>	
<u>The Chicago Sun-Times</u>	
<u>The Christian Science Monitor</u>	
<u>The Dallas Morning News</u>	
<u>The Detroit Free Press</u>	
<u>The Detroit News</u>	
<u>The Hartford Courant</u>	
<u>The Los Angeles Herald-Examiner</u>	
<u>The New Orleans Times-Picayune</u>	
<u>The New York Daily News</u>	
<u>The New York Post</u>	
<u>The New York Times</u>	
<u>The Philadelphia Daily News</u>	
<u>The Philadelphia Inquirer</u>	
<u>The San Francisco Chronicle</u>	
<u>The San Francisco Examiner</u>	
<u>The St. Louis Globe-Democrat</u>	
<u>The St. Louis Post-Dispatch</u>	

## 2. Irish-American newspapers, 1967-1988

A.C.U.J. Newsletter - Monthly journal of American Committee for Ulster Justice, New York.

American Irish Congress - Monthly newspaper of American Irish Congress, Long Island.

The Advocate - Weekly Irish-American newspaper, New York.

The American Gael - Monthly newspaper of Clan na Gael, Toledo.

The A.P.E.C. Newsletter - Monthly journal of the American Political Education Committee, Stonybrook, New York.

The Boston Irish News - Weekly Irish-American newspaper, Boston.

The Irish Activist - Monthly journal of the National Association for Irish Justice, New York.

The Irish-American News - Weekly newspaper, Chicago.

Irish-America Magazine - Monthly journal, New York.

The Irish-American Reporter - Bi-Weekly newspaper of the American Congress for Irish Freedom, Buffalo.

The Irish-American Review - Monthly journal, New York.

The Irish Echo - Weekly Irish-American newspaper, New York.

The Irish Edition - Weekly Irish-American newspaper, Philadelphia.

The I.N.C. Newsletter - Monthly journal of the Irish National Caucus, Washington.

The Irish Newslite - Bi-monthly journal of the Irish-American Unity Conference, Washington D.C..

The Irish People - Weekly newspaper of the Irish-American Republican Movement, New York.

The Irish Voice - Weekly Irish-American newspaper, New York.

The N.A.I.F. Fact Sheet - Periodic newspaper of the National Association for Irish Freedom, New York.

The National Hibernian Digest - Monthly newspaper of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, New York.

The Rising of the Moon - Periodic newspaper of the Campaign for Ulster Justice, Boston.

The Sash - Periodic newspaper of the Loyal Orange Institution of America, Philadelphia.

The Shillelagh - Monthly newspaper of the American Irish Republican Army, Philadelphia.

The Ulster-American Newsletter - Periodic journal of the Ulster American Heritage Foundation, Manhattan Beach.

### 3. British and Irish newspapers, 1968-1988

An Phoblacht/Republican News - Weekly newspaper of Sinn Fein, Belfast.

The Andersonstown News - Belfast, weekly.

The Belfast NewsLetter - Belfast, daily.

The Belfast Telegraph - Belfast, evening newspaper.

Combat - Monthly journal of the Ulster Volunteer Force, Belfast.

The Daily Mail - London, daily.

The Daily Telegraph - London, daily.

The Economist - London, weekly.

Fortnight - Belfast, monthly.

The Guardian - Manchester, daily.

Hibernia - Dublin, weekly.

The Irish Independent - Dublin, daily.

The Irish Press - Dublin, daily.

The Irish Times - Dublin, daily.

Magill - Dublin, monthly.

The Observer - London, daily.

The Protestant Telegraph - Weekly newspaper of Ian Paisley's Free Presbyterian Church, Belfast.

The Sunday Tribune - Dublin, Weekly.

The Times - London, daily.

The Ulster - Monthly journal of the Ulster Defence  
Association, Belfast.

## VITA

The author, Andrew Joseph Wilson, is the son of Joseph Wilson and Anne (Murray) Wilson. He was born February 8, 1962, in Portadown, Northern Ireland.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/15/91  
Date

Lawrence J. McCaffrey  
Director's Signature.