

## NATIONAL ARCHIVES

### IRELAND



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## Irish Northern Aid Committee

The Irish Northern Aid Committee (NORAIID) is the main front organisation for the Provisional IRA in the United States and its principal source of funds abroad. NORAIID was established in New York City in April 1970 and now has some 80 branches throughout the United States with an active membership of upwards of 2,000. The largest concentration of members is in New York, where NORAIID's national headquarters is, the most important centres otherwise being in Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Baltimore and in New Jersey and Connecticut. According to returns furnished to the US Justice Department, NORAIID remittances to Ireland during the period July 1971 to January 1975 amounted to \$1,026,404. The actual amount involved is probably considerably greater.

### Fund-raising

The main means of fund-raising are NORAIID-sponsored dances and dinners and direct subscriptions. The organisation's first fund-raising tour was by Seán Keenan of Derry in March/April 1970 (Daithí Ó Conaill took part in at least one event), with the aim of providing "financial assistance to the local defence committees who maintain defence patrols that protect innocent people against British imperialism". Keenan and Joe Cahill made a further tour of the United States in October/December 1970 and numerous visits have since been made by prominent members and supporters of the Provisional IRA. In the aftermath of Bloody Sunday in Derry, NORAIID returned a half-yearly figure of over \$300,000. Since then, the half-yearly figure has averaged about \$100,000.

### Control and Use of Funds

NORAIID is registered under the US Foreign Agents Registration Act and is obliged to disclose details regarding contributors and the amount of funds raised. Among named recipients of NORAIID funds are Joe Cahill, Joe Clarke, Kathleen White, An Cumann Cabhrach, or simply Northern Aid Committee. The money is transferred both in cash (by courier) and by bank draft.

While NORAIID spokesmen regularly contend that funds raised are for relief purposes, the following statements are more representative of the understanding of most members of the organisation:



"We were formed for the purpose of supporting the Irish freedom movement. We still support the Provisional IRA, no if's, and's or but's about that".

(Matthew Higgins, NORAID Vice-President, quoted in New York Times 16/12/75 - attached)

Asked whether money raised by NORAID goes for guns, Mr. Higgins is reported as saying: "It frees up our people on the other side to spend their money for arms. At least, I hope it's so".

(Interview in Newsweek, 1/12/75)

"We support the Provisional IRA - I support their policy, the Provisional IRA policy ... I support their use of violence to achieve that end, yes".

(Brendan McCusker, NORAID National Chairman, in ITV interview "This Week", 8/5/75)

### Political Activities

NORAID is also the main policy mouthpiece of the Provisionals in the United States. In addition to distributing propaganda at NORAID functions, activities include public demonstrations, picketing, meetings, distribution of handbills, etc. NORAID's weekly newspaper, "The Irish People", has a weekly circulation of about 8,000 copies and follows a virulently anti-Government and pro-Provisional IRA line. NORAID also organises the lobbying of public figures, including Congressmen, through its sister organisation the Irish National Caucus.

### Irish National Caucus

INC is a pressure group founded in October 1974 in New York. While ostensibly formed to represent disparate Irish-American groups, its stated aims are identical to those of the Provisional IRA. INC's founder, Jack Keane (currently President of AOH in the US), Information Officer, Fred Burns O'Brien and Secretary, Seán Walsh are prominent members of NORAID and propagandists for the Provisionals. Walsh is registered with the US Justice Department as the Foreign Agent in the US of Provisional Sinn Féin. Congressmen Wolff and Biaggi, both of New York City and with significant Irish-American electorates, have been involved in and have supported NORAID and INC activities. As Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Future Foreign Policy, Congressman Wolff has tried unsuccessfully during the past year to arrange



Congressional Hearings on Northern Ireland. He chaired "Pre-Hearings" in New York in October 1975 which were attended by IRA sympathisers and supporters. Other prominent INC supporters include Teddy Gleason, President of the Longshoremans' Association, Denis Guinan, President of the 'Transport Workers' Union and Paul O'Dwyer (whose law firm has provided all legal services to NORAID free of charge). INC has been successful in claiming the support (however spurious) of 30 Irish-American organisations, individual members of which are involved in INC. These organisations include AOH, ACUJ, Connradh na Gaeilge, Celtic Cultural Society and the Irish Arts Centre.

#### Gun-running

NORAID's main activities are fund-raising and propaganda and there is no evidence that the organisation is directly involved in gun-running to Ireland. On the other hand, some members of NORAID have been charged with gun-running offences in the United States. The most publicised case involved the "Fort Worth Five", five New Yorkers who refused to testify before a grand jury in connection with gun-running to Northern Ireland. The case was eventually dropped and the five were freed. In 1974, four men were convicted in Baltimore of illegally buying arms and ammunition for the IRA and were each sentenced to six years' imprisonment. In connection with this case, the Federal prosecutor said "In our investigations, it was clear that some of the money for guns came directly or indirectly from the Irish Northern Aid Committee". NORAID members have also been involved in other cases in New York, San Francisco, etc., and in most cases the defendants have refused offers of immunity, preferring to remain silent.

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