

THE IRA AND NORTH AMERICA

The Provisional IRA is a terrorist organisation dealing in violence. Much of its passive support among Roman Catholics in Northern Ireland results from intimidation. It raises money in Northern Ireland and in the Irish Republic from criminal activities such as armed robbery, blackmail, extortion, protection rackets and fraud.

Support for the IRA among the 43.7 million US citizens who claim Irish descent (1981 census) follows a long tradition. The American branch of the Fenian Brotherhood, founded in New York in 1858, played a leading role in financing the struggle for Irish independence and its support reached a climax in the insurrectionary and civil war periods of over 50 years ago. The small minority of present-day Irish Americans who support the Provisional IRA are still inspired largely by that period and ignore or discount later developments.

NORAID

The Irish Northern Aid Committee, known as NORAID, is the Provisionals' main fund-raising organisation in the United States and thought to be the major source of IRA funds from abroad. Federal investigations have also established links between NORAID officials and illegal weapons dealers in the United States.

NORAID was founded in 1970 by Michael Flannery and two other IRA veterans of the 1919-21 period. NORAID's publicity director, Martin Galvin, an Assistant District Attorney for the Bronx, New York City, claims that there are 92 chapters in 70 cities, that national membership is about 5000, with a periphery of 30,000, and that the organisation has raised \$3 million.

/"Welfare"

PIRA Welfare Organisations

Flannery has always claimed that "The Irish Northern Aid Committee was organised for the sole purpose of feeding and clothing the homeless, the hungry and the naked" (letter dated 11 March 1975). Money collected by NORAID is said to be remitted through the "welfare" organisation: An Cumann Cabrach in Dublin for transmission to Green Cross in Belfast.

An Cumann Cabrach (ACC), a continuation of the Prisoners' Dependents' Fund of the 1920s, was set up in 1953 "to alleviate hardship on republican prisoners and their dependents". It shares the Dublin address of Provisional Sinn Fein (PSF - the political wing of the Provisional IRA). Some of its officials have been convicted for paramilitary type crimes: Joe Cahill, a trustee of ACC and Joint General Secretary of PSF, was sentenced to death, but reprieved, for the murder of a policeman in 1942, and in 1973 was sentenced by a Dublin court on a charge of conspiracy to smuggle arms from Libya; Desmond Ferguson, the first elected chairman of ACC, was convicted in 1974 for IRA membership, and Sean Keenan, a former Provisional IRA leader in Londonderry, addressed a general meeting of ACC in 1975. ACC claims that it "subsidises the 'Green Cross' organisation which carries out the same work in the Six Counties".

Dependants of prisoners in the United Kingdom receive adequate social welfare provision and supplementary payments from "welfare" organisations should not be necessary. Green Cross does not advertise its correct address or telephone number, and does not publish audited accounts of any kind. It is not recognised as a charitable organisation by the tax authorities, partly because it is unable to provide any accounts and records but also because its objectives do not meet the tax authorities criteria for granting charitable status.

The Provisional IRA and PSF move money freely between their different activities. There is no clear accounting (most of their funds are obtained illegally anyway) and money obtained ostensibly for prisoners' dependents is

quite likely to be used directly to fund a terrorist atrocity. NORAIID leaders have often admitted that they have no ultimate control over the use made by their Irish "trustees" of funds collected in the United States. The late Matthew Higgins, a director of NORAIID said:

"We have no objection to it if they have money to spare. They've got to get them weapons from somewhere. If the overall kitty is big enough to buy weapons that's their business. We were formed for the purpose of supporting the Irish freedom movement. We still support the Provisional IRA - no ifs and buts about that ..." (*New York Times*, 16 December 1975).

In 1976, there was a large discrepancy between declared NORAIID remittances to Ireland and amounts actually distributed as relief. For example, Green Cross reported receiving £4 - 6,000 from NORAIID in 1976 (*Irish Press*, Dublin, 16 February 1976) at a time when declared NORAIID remittances were said to be running at more than ten times that amount.

IRA connexions

In April 1982, during a court case brought against NORAID under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, the Department of Justice showed that "Since its inception NORAID has acted as the agent in this country of the Provisional wing of the Irish Republican Army, its political arm, the Sinn Fein and their affiliates". Among the correspondence made public at the trial were letters from NORAID saying:

- "Our support goes exclusively to the Provisional IRA and those who are working with them" (27 October 1971).
- "Our sympathies are with the so-called 'Provisional' IRA and that branch of the Sinn Fein movement which supports them ... The Committee was set up by the Trustees in Ireland about two years ago ... Our funds are channelled through Joe Cahill of Belfast to be used for the advancement of the campaign in Ireland" (8 March 1972).
- "Any money you wish to donate to Northern Aid should be sent through the New York office. Joe Cahill has asked us to cooperate here as it will be a tremendous help to those at the other side. They would like to have every person there engaged directly in the struggle. This is an authentic committee, chartered by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (and the only one) to collect money for their cause. We guarantee that all monies collected will be used for that purpose" (28 February 1972).

The court found that NORAID had violated the provisions of the Act by failing to identify as a foreign principal "the Irish Republic Army, Provisional Wing". Other findings included: that NORAID had not fully identified its officers and other groups acting for it; that it had not given the true address of its foreign principal; that it had not described properly its activities;

/and

and that it had not provided an accurate accounting of its receipts and disbursements (Federal prosecutors had argued that some money was retained to make illicit weapons purchases and the amounts transmitted to Belfast and Dublin were disputable). During the Federal investigations, Michael Flannery and two other NORAIID officials invoked the Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination.

A US Justice Department official said that for the last ten years the Department "has been trying to get people here who represent the IRA to tell the truth. They're raising money to create widows³ and orphans, and not to help widows and orphans". (US International Communication Agency, 19 August 1982).

/Supply

Supply of Arms

After 1970, the United States emerged as the most important single source of arms supply to the Provisional IRA. The evidence points to more than 1,000 weapons (including automatic rifles, cannon and flamethrowers) and large quantities of ammunition having been purchased in the last decade. The US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) alone "has directly traced 307 guns, primarily rifles and machine guns, to the IRA" (ATF spokesman; August 1982). Ballistic and other evidence has shown that weapons obtained from the United States have been used in some of the worst terrorist incidents in Northern Ireland.

Almost since its inception NORAID and its officers have been mentioned in connexion with trials in the United States and Canada for arms offences and gun-running to the Republic. James O'Gara, given a five-year suspended sentence in 1973 for using a false identification to purchase arms, was an active NORAID official and co-chairman of the NORAID annual New York dinner-dance in 1976. Joseph Myles, sentenced to two years' jail in Toronto in June 1974 for conspiracy to export arms to the Republic, was described by police as "an executive officer of a US organisation, Northern Irish Aid" (Irish Times, Dublin, 7 June 1975). Daniel Cahalane, who spent over 5 months in jail in 1973 for refusing to testify to a Federal Grand Jury investigating gun-running and was convicted in June 1976 for illegally exporting arms, was the head of NORAID's Delaware County chapter. Neil Byrne, a NORAID member, was also convicted in June 1976 with Cahalane for gun-running. In hearing an appeal against conviction by Cahalane and Byrne, the Pennsylvania appeal court found that "NORAID engaged in various fund-raising activities and was also the centre of the armament purchase and transportation efforts". Francis Grady, convicted in New York on 12 March 1976 for illegally exporting arms and falsifying documents, was said in court to have formed with others a chapter of NORAID in Yonkers, New York State, in May 1970. In October 1979, 151 weapons originating

in the United States were found in Dublin docks. The shipment was traced to an accommodation address in New York belonging to Bernard McKeon, an office holder in NORAID. The trial of McKeon on a 9-count indictment ended in December 1982 with a hung jury; there is to be a re-trial.

In November 1982, after a trial in New York lasting seven weeks, Michael Flannery and four co-defendants were acquitted on charges relating to the shipment of arms to the Provisional IRA. They had been arrested in 1981 following a significant arms haul in New York which included a 20mm cannon with shells, a flamethrower, 21 shoulder and handguns (together with 12,500 rounds of ammunition) and booby trap components. In Court, the issue was whether the defendants had breached US law governing the possession of unregistered weapons and their export. The Defence argued that their clients believed that they had been acting with and through a 'CIA agent' and convicted arms dealer, George DeMeo, and that accordingly the accused had not violated any US law since the US Government is exempt from the requirement to obtain permission to export weapons. The US Authorities stated in Court that DeMeo did not have anything to do with the CIA.

The defendants had admitted their roles in the operation and the case showed, beyond further doubt, that money raised by NORAID buys weapons for the Provisional IRA. Flannery admitted in open court that he had been involved for many years in the financing of arms deals for the IRA:

"I came to the US directly from Ireland. I was a member of the Irish Republican Army until I left Ireland. When I came here, there had been a general exodus of young Irishmen and women from Ireland from 1924 to 1927 and I came here purposely to organise these people so they would be a help to the militant movement, to the IRA at home, to complete the freedom of Ireland".

/In

In the issue of 10 February 1983, An Phoblacht/Republican News, the main publication of Provisional Sinn Fein, referred to Flannery as "an admitted arms supplier to the IRA". The opening statement by the Defence on behalf of another defendant, George Harrison, included:

"Mr Harrison, I will tell you, feels somewhat insulted because as the Government well knows and as Mr Kirby has said they will prove and if they don't prove it, well, Mr Harrison has aided and abetted and supplied arms to the rebels in Northern Ireland for a quarter of a century".

In June 1982 the FBI had announced that it had broken up a million-dollar arms operation by the Provisional IRA in New York. Two men, Gabriel Megahey and Andrew Duggan, were charged with conspiracy to purchase and export weapons and munitions including five Sam missiles (at a cost of \$10,000 each), and AK15, M14 and M18 rifles. The missiles were to be used against British helicopters in Northern Ireland. The FBI said that Megahey had told an undercover FBI agent that he was the Provisional IRA's leader in the United States and that his organisation had \$1 million to spend on the purchase of weapons. At the time of his arrest Megahey, an Irish citizen, was in the United States illegally and was subject to a deportation order. Duggan, a US citizen, is a member of NORAIID. The FBI also arrested two Irish American brothers, Colin and Eamonn Meehan. The trial of Megahey, Duggan and the Meehan's opened in New York in February 1983.

In a case pending before the US Courts, Colm Murphy, from Northern Ireland, and who claims to be a representative of the Irish National Liberation Army, and Vincent Toner, from New York, are accused of attempting to buy a variety of weapons including 20 M16 automatic rifles, communications equipment and SAM missiles for use against both British and Irish security forces.

/St Patrick's

St Patrick's Day

The annual St Patrick's Day parade held in New York is traditionally one of the largest held anywhere in the world. But in March 1983 the appointment by the organisers of Michael Flannery as the parade's Grand Marshal together with Andrew Duggan (charged in New York in June 1982 with conspiracy to purchase and export arms to the Provisional IRA) as an aid caused bitter controversy. Flannery announced: "It's definitely going to be a pro-IRA parade" (The New York Times, 14 February 1983); "Nothing would make me prouder than for it to be an IRA parade" (Washington Post, 17 March 1983).

Following the appointment of Flannery, the Irish Government immediately announced that its representatives would boycott the parade. A spokesman said Flannery is:

"a person who has an avowed personal involvement in sponsoring violence in Ireland and who heads an organisation which the United States courts have declared to be agents of the IRA. The IRA, which is an illegal organisation in both parts of Ireland, has been responsible for a majority of the killings which have occurred in Northern Ireland since the troubles began".

Leading Irish-American politicians also condemned Flannery's appointment and disassociated themselves from the parade. Senator Moynihan, the senior senator from New York said:

"With sorrow, but without regret, I will not march in this year's St Patrick's Day parade. The parade's Grand Marshal has said that this will be a pro-IRA parade. As I reject without qualification the violence of the Provisional IRA which does such great disservice to the cause of Irish unity, I cannot participate".

/The

The Federal authorities banned serving military personnel from participation in the parade (the US Army band and other units traditionally take part) and 23 High Schools withdrew their marching bands. On the day of the parade, one of the most significant demonstrations of distaste for NORAID, the IRA and what they stand for, occurred when the leader of New York's Roman Catholics, Terence Cardinal Cooke, failed to observe tradition and did not appear on the steps of St Patrick's Cathedral for the start of the 221st parade: the Cardinal and his bishops deliberately did not emerge from the cathedral until after Flannery and others at the head of the parade had passed. Earlier, the Cardinal had condemned violence by the IRA:

"...This parade is being interpreted as a sign of support for the Provisional IRA and its campaign to achieve political and social effects through indiscriminate violence.

"Indiscriminate violence - no matter what motivates it or to what end it is directed - is both futile and immoral".

In a statement made while the parade was taking place, President Reagan said:

"We deeply regret that some would use this day to enlist support for more violence and conflict on that small island which is so much in our hearts today.

"We ask all Americans to refrain from supporting, with financial or other aid, organisations involved directly or indirectly in perpetuating violence"

Later, at a reception at the Embassy of Ireland, the President added:

"Some few but vocal Americans believe that differences between Irishment can only be solved by violence and intimidation. They are no friends of

Ireland. They disgrace the principles for which both Ireland and America stand. I would urge my fellow Americans not to listen to such people".

The Government of the Republic of Ireland

The stand taken by the Irish Government regarding the 1983 parade in New York followed a consistent policy towards those who support terrorism.

Successive Dublin governments have condemned fund-raising for the Provisional IRA in the United States:-

- July 1980. ^{was then T²} The leader of the Fianna Fail Party who later became Taoiseach, Mr Haughey, said in Cork: "... there is clear and conclusive evidence that NORAID has provided support for the campaign of violence and, indeed, direct assistance in its pursuit ... It stands condemned and I appeal to all in America who have the interests of Ireland at heart, not to give this body any support, financial or moral".
- March 1983. The present Taoiseach, Mr Garret Fitzgerald, said in an interview with the Wall Street Journal:
"There is nothing romantic about NORAID. It collects money for the IRA. The IRA buys guns with the money. The guns murder our people. Why would Americans want to destroy our society?
"... we have a vicious problem on this island. We have 2,000 dead. We have 20,000 people with permanent injuries.
"The onslaught is against the Irish people themselves. Ninety per cent of the victims have been Irish".

OTHER GROUPS

The Ancient Order of Hibernians

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), formed in 1836 at a time of strong anti-Catholic feeling in North America, is the largest of the Irish-American organisations in the United States with about 80,000 members. Although strongly Republican, it claims to be non-political. There has however been a small minority of political opportunists in the organisation. Its journal, National Hibernian Digest supports the Provisional IRA.

In June 1978 the Irish Government was not represented at the biennial conference of the Order in Killarney because the organisers could not give an assurance that statements would not be made from the platform criticising the Irish Government's policy on Northern Ireland. In the event, the then President, Jack Keane, said that the Order had ceased to be merely a charitable organisation and intended to use its influence to "achieve results" in Northern Ireland. The Order claims to stand for a 32-county Ireland, to be achieved by peaceful means.

Because Mr Lynch had already condemned the Irish National Caucus in a letter to Congressman Biaggi earlier in the year, AOH delegates were at pains at their conference to deny that the Order was also a front for the Provisional IRA in the USA. After the conference, a former President of the Order, Mr Edward Fay, said: "... The AOH is a non-political organisation and we are completely against violence". But in 1982 another former President, Kenneth C Clinton, wrote "The army of the 26 counties should be standing side by side with the Provisional Irish Republican Army." (letter dated 17 August 1982).

/Senior

Senior members of the Order in the United States are known to have warned top American industrialists not to invest in Northern Ireland:

"... a deliberate attempt to sabotage development in Northern Ireland" (Mr Gerry Fitt, then leader of the SDLP, Irish News, Belfast, 3 July 1978).

Later in 1978 the "Political Education Committee" of the Order was advising chairmen of American companies: "... additional investment in Northern Ireland would only perpetuate (this) grim, unbalanced employment and discrimination picture ... if you wish to invest in Ireland, investigate as an alternative the opportunities in the Irish Republic".

In January 1983, Joe Roche, President of the AOH, was guest of honour at the annual NORAIID dinner in New York. Defending his decision to attend Mr Roche said "I believe that up to 40% of my membership are members of Irish Northern Aid. I felt duty bound to accept the invitation from Irish Northern Aid in order to represent those who are in favour of them" (The Irishman, January 1983). The AOH supported the appointment of Michael Flannery as Grand Marshall of the St Patrick's Day parade in New York in 1983.

Irish National Caucus

In February 1974, the Irish National Caucus (INC) was established as an "information outlet to the media" and "a lobbying force at Congress". According to its statement of purpose, it intends:

"... to ignite our elected representatives to bring moral pressure upon Britain to withdraw from Ireland.... We will influence elections and no politician will take the millions of Irish voters for granted, especially those who trade on an Irish name, but are mute on the Irish National Question. We will establish Irish Freedom as an American moral issue through every possible legal avenue at our disposal...."

The Caucus points to its alleged endorsement by more representative bodies such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) and the AFL-CIO (the American trade union federation). But the only major figures in these organisations who publicly give it their support are the handful of close sympathisers, including "Jack" Keane, the past National President of the AOH (reckoned by an IRA representative to be "fully behind the freedom struggle" - Irish Press, 21 March 1975), who was a founder member of the Caucus and instrumental in setting up the Biaggi ad hoc Committee on Irish affairs, and "Teddy" Gleason, a Vice-President of the AFL-CIO. Gleason twice tried unsuccessfully to promote a boycott of British goods in the USA.

Leading Caucus officials, including Sean Walsh (ex-National Director), Father Sean McManus (National Director), Fred Burns O'Brien (Deputy National Director) and Brendan McCusker (one-time Liaison Officer), have openly supported the Provisionals and maintain contact with them through periodic visits to the Irish Republic; others are at least strong sympathisers. Walsh is also registered under FARA as the agent of the Provisional Sinn Fein and its publicity organ, the Irish Republican Information Service. Leaders of the Caucus regularly appear at NORAIID functions. In 1980/81 the INC pledged full support to the Provisional IRA prisoners on hunger strike in the Maze Prison near Belfast.

The Ireland Fund

The Ireland Fund, founded in 1976 by two prominent American businessmen, A J F O'Reilly and Art Rooney, opposes violence and supports reconciliation between Catholics and Protestants. On St Patrick's Day 1983, the Fund placed full-page advertisements in New York newspapers to remind people of its goal:

"More than 2,000 people - most of them Irish - have lost their lives ... in Northern Ireland. It doesn't really matter whether they were Catholic or Protestant, once they're dead."

The Friends of Ireland

The Friends of Ireland was formed by an all-party group in the US Congress, headed by leading Irish-Americans such as Tip O'Neill, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Senator's Kennedy and Moynihan. A statement issued on St Patrick's Day 1983 included:

"It must surely be clear that any lasting political settlement in Northern Ireland can be achieved only by peaceful and constitutional means, through negotiation, compromise, and with the consent of all those involved - by ultimatum, intimidation, or violence, which serve only to prolong the anguish and frustrate progress toward unity and political reconciliation.

"On this St Patrick's Day, therefore, we appeal again to our fellow Americans to reject those who believe in bloodshed, to renounce organisations which are the agents of violence and to deny American dollars to any group that condones or contributes to the killing. Instead, we urge our fellow citizens to be unyielding in their commitment to peaceful political change."

PUBLICITY AND VISITS

Provisional IRA supporters in the United States conduct a continuous propaganda campaign against the United Kingdom and Irish Governments and those Irish groups that oppose them. The Irish People is their main instrument of propaganda. The newspaper makes liberal use of direct reprints from An Phoblacht (The Provisionals' main publication in Dublin and Belfast); the editor is Martin Galvin, publicity director of NORAID, and it is financed by/the newspaper by the Department of Justice claiming that it should register as an agent of the Provisional IRA, was rejected by a US District Court because the US Government refused to reveal in court British and Irish government documents sought by the defence. But in 1982 the US Appeal Court overturned the District Court ruling and the Department of Justice intend to pursue the case again. The American Irish Unity Committee, a republican organisation having close links with NORAID, has placed television advertisements attacking British policy in Northern Ireland on two occasions.

Leading Provisionals have undertaken extensive American tours, but many have been hampered by the US Immigration and Nationality Acts which exclude aliens "connected with organisations which advocate the killing of government agents in the unlawful destruction of property". In January 1982, Owen Carran, a Sinn Fein MP, and Danny Morrison, publicity director of NORAID, were arrested by US authorities for trying to enter the United States illegally from Canada. Both men, who earlier had been refused US visa's, were using false papers (Morrison had shaved his beard in an attempt to avoid recognition) and were on their way to speak at a NORAID dinner in New York. After a week in custody the two men were deported.