



BIRMINGHAM SIX

COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

June 1989, No. 2

Hugh Callaghan Richard McKenny
Paddy Joe Hill Billy Power
Gerry Hunter John Walker

Bishop Kavanagh Speaks Up for the Birmingham Six

The Irish people should remember the Birmingham Six in both their prayers and their actions, the Most Rev. Dr James Kavanagh, auxiliary Bishop of Dublin, said at a recent mass for the prisoners and their families. The mass, which was well attended, was held in Dublin's Pro-Cathedral on May 25, the feast of Corpus Christi.

Bishop Kavanagh said he had personally believed for some time that the Birmingham Six were innocent, and victims of a miscarriage of justice.

In a powerfully worded sermon, Bishop Kavanagh drew a historical parallel with the case of Cardinal John Newman, a victim of British justice in the 19th century. He told how Cardinal Newman had spoken out against discrimination against Catholics in his Birmingham lectures, thereby antagonising a former Italian priest called Achilli.

Newman was brought to court by Achilli on a charge of "criminal libel" and the case opened on June 20th, 1852. Newman lost, but sentence was reserved until

November of that year when his advisors demanded a new trial on grounds of a gross mis-direction by the trial judge.

The case dragged on until January 1853. Then, in another eerie parallel with the case of the Birmingham Six, the court refused a new trial arguing that the verdict of the first court should not be challenged. Newman was fined a hefty £100 and ordered to pay costs of £12,000. According to Newman's biographers, the bill was footed by the Catholics of England and Ireland. He also received a symbolic prison sentence, effective until the date of sentencing.

Both Cardinal Newman and the Birmingham Six were victims of a judicial system that could not recognise its own flaws, Bishop Kavanagh said. He urged that both the prisoners and their families be remembered in peoples' prayers.

Dr. Kavanagh was assisted at the Corpus Christi mass by Fr. Denis Carroll, Fr. Ray Maher, Fr. Dermot Lane and Fr. Dermot McCarthy. Fr. Pat O'Donoghue directed the choir. Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, Archbishop of Armagh was unable to attend the mass but sent his apologies (see his letter, page 4).

The Birmingham Six Committee would like to thank Bishop Kavanagh, the five priests and all those who attended the mass.

Letter from Paddy Joe Hill

509496
H.M. Prison, Gartree,
Market Harborough,
Leicester,
England

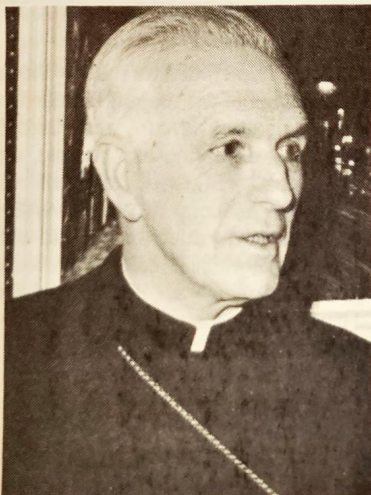
Dear Sir,

My name is Patrick Hill. I am one of the six men more commonly known as the Birmingham 6. I would like this opportunity to clarify the position between the Birmingham 6 and the Dublin Government. People all over Ireland, England, United States etc, etc, are under the impression that the Irish Government are doing all they can to HELP us, the Birmingham 6. In fact the only thing successive Irish Governments have done for us and the Guildford 4 is to KEEP us in PRISON.

Not only have they done NOTHING for us, but they are going to do NOTHING for us.

From 1974, until October 1985, I had only one meeting with an Irish official. That was at Albany, Isle of Wight, 1981; it lasted for less than 10 minutes. We were forgotten about by the Irish Government and the only thing we were to remain and still remain to this day is that we are an EMBARRASSMENT to them. Last year myself and Gerry Conlon, Guildford 4, asked them if they would even give us some financial help so as we can continue our writing Campaigns. Even this little bit of HELP has been refused to us.

Support groups are being set up all over America. The people who are organising these groups have done more for the Guildford 4 and the Birmingham 6, in six months, than the Irish Government has done in 4 years.



Bishop Kavanagh

contd. pg 2

ДОБРО ПОЖАЛОВАТЬ!

In 1988 Dall Eireann unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Birmingham Six. This reflects the widely held belief that the Birmingham Six are innocent and wrongly convicted for the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings. We, the undersigned, call upon the Irish government to now seek international support to effect the release and exoneration of the six men.

Kader Asmal
Assoc. for Legal Justice
Robert & Betty Ballagh
Anna Barron
Una Blake
Neil Blaney, TD
Kevin Boland
Lottie Brazil
Patrick T. Brennan
J. Buckley
Daniel Byrne
John Byrne
Rev. Denis Carroll
Rev. P.J. Byrne
Rev. Denis Carroll
John F. Carroll, President ITGWU
Sean O Casale
Rev. Eoin G. Cassidy
Mary Caulfield
Fionnuala Ni Chasaide
Sean O Cearuain
Deirdre Clear
S. Clear
Joe Colgan
Pat & Tom Collins
Collins, Crowley & Co. Solicitors
Communist Party of Ireland
Connolly Youth Movement
Brenda Cooney
Tom Cooney, IDCL
Ethne Coppeland
Dorothy Corr
Sr. Concepta Costello
Anthony Coughlan
Raymond Crotty
Mary Cullen, Solicitor
Nuala Daly
Orla Davin
Barry Desmond, TD
Gerard Dorgan
Ailin Doyle
Bridget Doyle & Family
Patricia Doyle
Dublin 6B Committee
Desmond Earley, Tallaght Community Council
Maureen Eastwood
Michael Farrell
Heamonn Farrell
Desmond Fennell
Rossin & Deirdre Nic Fhionnaich
Bairbre Ni Fhionn
David Fitzpatrick
Rev. Austin Flannery OP
Denis Flood
Michael Foley, NUJ
Patrick Funge
Eimear Gallagher
Seamus Geraghty
Breda Gilligan
Oscar Gilligan
Tony Gregory, TD

Norin Greene
Richard Greene
Anne Greene, Solicitor
Kathleen Griffin
M. Griffin
James Hackett
Michael & Darrin Halperny
Rev. Prof. Patrick Hannon
Alice Hanratty
Liam Healy
Most Rev. Seamus Hegarty, Bishop of Raphoe
Michael D. Higgins, TD
Brian Howley
Most Rev. Mark Hurley, Bishop USA
Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas
Irish Missionary Union
Gerry Jones
Tony Jordan
Sadie Kavanagh
Gerard Keenan
Gary Kelly
Joe Kelly
Mary Kennedy
M. Kennedy
Damien Keogh
Rev. Noel Kerins
Gene Kerrigan
Declan Kiberd
M. & E. Killian
Peadar Kirby
Paddy Lalor
Patrick Joseph Lalor
Rev. Dermot Lane
Feargal O Lideadha
MSF Union
Brian M. Lynch & Co. Solicitors
Kevin P. McConnell, NEETU
Frank McCool
Ann McCreaney
Unseann MacEoin
Committ. Martin McEvoy
Barrie McFeely
Doreen McFeely
Finian McGrath, TUSFT
S.A. McGrath
Paddy McKelvey
John McKnight, Solicitor
Carmel McNeela
Prof. Paul McNulty
Rev. Joseph McHugh
Rev. Ray Mater CSCP
Sean O Mathuna
Christy Moore
Liam S. Muineachain
Moirin Ni Muineachain
Ladhras O Murchu
James Muhalil
Brendan Murphy
T. Murphy

Claran Murphy
Paddy Murphy
Rev. Raymond Murray
National Day of Commemoration Assoc.
1916 1921 Club
Gerardine O'Brien
Rev. Denis O'Callaghan
Anne O'Carroll
Joe & Siobhan O'Donovan
Maire O'Donovan
Lella O'Flaherty
Cora O'Grady
Frank O'Higgins
Mary O'Keefe
Mary O'Malley
Sean O Mathuna
Frank O'Neill
Michael O'Prey
Michael O'Riordan
Redmond O'Sullivan
Senator Joe O'Toole
Sean Mac Reamoinn
G. Nic Reamoinn
M. & D. Redmond
Eileen & Rico Ross
Anne Rowland, Solicitor
Astarik Rutherford
Senator Brendan Ryan
Trevor Sargent (Green Party)
Mairin O Scailithe
Seosamh O Scailithe
Gail Seekamp
Maureen Sinclair
Tomás Mac Siomáin
Des Smith
Peter Smith, TJ Colgan & Co. Solrs.
Ronan Smith
South Co. Dublin Support Group
Emmet Slagg, TD
James Stenson
Bruce St. John Blake, Solicitor
Shay Stone
Rev. Michael Sweetman, SJ
Mervyn Taylor, TD
Dermot Toolan
Michael P. Tuite
University of Kent Students' Union
Helen Vaughan
Brendan Walsh
Paul Waters
Well Fed Cafe Workers Co-operative
Well Fed Books Workers Co-operative
Tony & Kathleen Wickham
Winchester Three Support Group
John Williams
Rev. Desmond Wilson
Sr. Julia O'Sullivan, MSHR
Sr. Kathleen Toland, MSHR

APPEAL

Funds are needed to help publicise the case. The Birmingham Six Committee has no aims or agenda beyond securing the release and exoneration of the six men. You can help with donations or support. Contact the Birmingham Six Committee, Jarlath House, Brunswick Place, Dublin 2. Tel: 775212.

All TDs were circularised. We thank those who contributed.

The Birmingham Six Committee
Jarlath House
12 Brunswick Place
Dublin 2.
Ireland.
Tel. (01) 775212
Fax. (01) 773427

Get Involved

The Birmingham Six Committee is one of several groups working in Ireland, Britain and the US for the release and exoneration of the six men who were wrongly convicted in August 1975 of the Birmingham pub bombings.

The group has no aims or agenda beyond securing justice for the six men. You can help, either by sending a donation or getting involved. Write to your local representatives, TD, and Euro candidate who will be looking for your support in the June 15th elections to the European Parliament.

Write to the six men in jail, and express your support.

Paddy Joe Hill, 509496, HM Prison Gartree, Market Harborough, Leicester, England.

Gerry Hunter, 509495, HM Prison Long Lorton, Evesham, Worcs, England.

John Walker, 509494, HM Prison Long Lorton, Evesham, Worcs, England.

Hugh Callaghan, 509499, HM Prison Long Lorton, Evesham, Worcs, England.

Richard McIlkenny, 509498, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, DuCane Road, London W12.

Billy Power, 509497, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, DuCane Road, London W12.

The above advertisement was published in the Sunday Tribune on April 2, 1989, to mark the visit to Ireland of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The Birmingham Six Committee plans to run another advertisement when Ireland takes the presidency of the European Council. We will need 1,000 signatures.

from pg. 1

Gerry Conlon, Guildford 4, and myself are in constant contact with these people and others in Europe. All, of these people are mystified by the Irish Government's SILENCE. They keep asking us WHY? I have been informing all these, of the Irish Government's REFUSAL to HELP us.

I have also told them that the Russian Leader Mr. Gorbachev, raised our cases with Charles Haughey and possibly Margaret Thatcher, on his recent visits to Ireland and England. Last year I wrote to the Russian Embassy in London but, to date, I have received no reply. Due to Mr. Gorbachev raising our cases, I have

written again. I have asked the Russian Ambassador if he will send someone to see me. I have also asked him if as co-signatures of the European Convention and Helsinki Agreement, they would take our case before the European Court of Human Rights.

I have also written to President Bush and also the Democrats. I have asked that they send an official observer to the Guildford 4 appeal hearing. I also hope to contact the European Parliament and I hope to write to every European Government individually. I will also be asking them to send official observers to the Guildford 4 appeal hearing.

It is my hope that all or most of these Governments will respond to our letters. By getting as many observers to this appeal hearing as possible, we hope that the British Judiciary will not have the audacity to WHITEWASH the Guildford 4 case as they did with the Birmingham 6 case. We also know that if we are to wait on the HELP of the Irish Government then we have a LONG LONG WAIT.

I remain yours,

Paddy Joe Hill,
Birmingham 6.

Birmingham Six case should get to Europe say Fianna Fail's McCreevy and Lawlor

Charlie McCreevy and Liam Lawlor, both Fianna Fail TDs in the last Dail, say they would like to see the case of the Birmingham Six brought to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

"I would support any initiative that would endeavour to get the case brought to another forum because I don't see any progress being made in the British system," said Mr McCreevy, outgoing TD for Kildare.

The Birmingham Six Committee is now polling all former members of the 25th Dail in the run-up to the June 15th general and Euro elections. The Committee wants to measure the strength of support for the prisoners' case (see questionnaire) and help put the Birmingham Six back on the political agenda. The questionnaire was mailed to the home address of each outgoing TD. Results will be published in a forthcoming newsletter.

The prisoners decided to go to Strasbourg after losing their Appeal case in January 1988. In March, the Taoiseach's office wrote to Richard McIlkenny, one of the Birmingham Six, and told him that it would "not be feasible" for the Irish government to support the men's case in Strasbourg. The Taoiseach's office took refuge in a technicality, claiming that a State could not back an individual petition to the court. Legal experts in the UK reject this argument, and say that the Irish government could take its own case to the Court.

Both Mr. McCreevy and Mr. Lawlor, of the Dublin West constituency, say they want the case to reach Strasbourg. They added that they did not know what technicalities this might entail.

"In principle I would be supportive of trying to help them in whatever way possible," Mr. Lawlor said. He added that the new Fianna Fail national party will have to take a position on the question of the Birmingham prisoners. "Pre-election

promises mean very little at this stage, he said."

His views were echoed by Mr. McCreevy. "It seems to have gone off the political agenda for the last year. I would like to see it higher on the agenda."



Hugh Callaghan
Paddy Joe Hill
Garry Hunter

Richard McIlkenny
Bibi Power
John Walker

THE BIRMINGHAM SIX COMMITTEE

JARLATH HOUSE,
12, Brunswick Place,
Dublin 2.
Tel. 775212. Fax. 773427

NAME _____

POLITICAL PARTY _____

CONSTITUENCY _____

1. Do you personally believe that the Birmingham Six have failed to receive justice in the British Courts?

2. The men are now trying to bring their case to the European Court in Strasbourg. Given that this is the only legal avenue open to them, following the unsuccessful Appeal case in 1988, do you think the Irish Government should support their efforts to take the case to Strasbourg. If yes, in what way?

3. Do you think the incoming Irish Government should give financial support to the prisoners and their families to help establish their innocence?

Elections.....X

If you feel that the Birmingham Six are victims of British justice, please raise their case with your local politicians and Euro candidates when they come looking for your support in the June 15 elections.

Put the Birmingham Six back on the agenda!



Letters to the Committee



May 23, 1989

A Chara,

Thank you for your letter of 9th May informing me that a special Mass would be celebrated for the Birmingham Six and their families by Bishop Kavanagh next Thursday evening in the Pro-Cathedral.

I am sorry that as I shall be celebrating an open-air Mass at a Mass rock in Co. Tyrone on the same evening, it will be impossible for me to attend the Mass in Dublin.

However I wanted you to know of my continued sympathy and support for the cause of the Birmingham Six and their families. I hope a large crowd will attend the Mass in Dublin and pray fervently that the Birmingham prisoners will shortly be released.

Guím rath Dé agus coimirce na Maighdine Muire oraibh.
Slán agus beannacht.

Tomás O Fiaich,
Cardinal Archbishop of Armagh,
Ara Coeli,
Ard Mhacha.

Open Letter to Mr. Haughey, An Taoiseach

22 May 1989

Mr. Haughey,

In refusing to help the member of the Birmingham 6 who is appealing his case to the European Court, you are, in effect ensuring that the appeal will fail and that this man and the others will spend their lives in prison in support of the English view that "it is better that people should suffer rather than that British justice should be brought in question".

Is mise,

P. Caomhanach,
36 Sráid Fhearchair,
Baile Atha Cliath 2.

Stop press.....Stop press.....

Stop press.....Stop press.....

Local support groups:

The Committee is looking for people, especially in the counties of Cork, Kerry, Galway, Clare and Donegal, who can help distribute this newsletter in their area, workplace or local pub. Please contact the Birmingham Six Committee at Jarlath House, tel. 775212.

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Volunteers:

Helpers wanted at the Birmingham Six Committee offices, between 3-6pm, every Thursday. Tel. 775212

Poker Classic:

There was a good turnout at the *Poker Classic*, held on 18th May at Buswells Hotel, Molesworth Street in Dublin. Watch out for other fund-raising events.

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Picket:

Free on Saturdays? Join in the weekly picket from 11am to 2 pm at the British Embassy, 31 Merrion Road, Dublin 4 organised by the Booterstown Support Group. Tel. 887299.

POEMS

Sweet Dreams, Your Honour!

Will you sleep the sleep of the just
When you reach the end of the trial?
The long denial of evidence
Has probably tired you out.
Real felons need not fear
When you decide to wake
Because Libra has not only lost
Her sight but her heart also.
What will you tell those men
Who stand dejectedly
At the gates of Britain's Chancery -
That they've failed the test of truth?

Davoren Hanna

Untitled

Through leafy glens
and sunlit glades
the mountain stream
does flow
And it whispers to the
reeds and ferns
that along its banks
do grow
It ripples soft-sweet
laughter
as their heads nod with
delight
at its tales of
wondrous highlands
and mountain peaks
clothed snowy-white
On and on it travels
and all about it
are filled with glee
at its ever-glowing
laughter
As it bounds homeward
to the sea.

Richard McIlkenny

Book list

The Birmingham Six Committee is preparing a poetry book, with contributions from both amateur and major Irish poets. *The Birmingham Six*, by Derek Dunne. Contact the B6 Committee, Jarlath House, 12 Brunswick Pl., Dublin 2. Tel. 775212. Cost £2.00, including P&P. It is also being translated and will shortly be available in German and French. Spanish and Russian editions to follow. Copies of Amnesty International's report on the 1987 Appeal Hearing are also available from Jarlath House in English, French and German.

We plan to publish this newsletter on a monthly basis. Please fill in your name and address if you would like to receive it. A donation towards printing costs would be gratefully accepted.

Name

Address

.....

.....

Tel. no

Bank Account

You can also send donations directly into our bank account at:
Allied Irish Banks,
52 Upper Baggot Street
Dublin 2.
A/C number 36220028