

Celtic News Archive 1996 - 2002

Celtic League halts dangerous weapons tests - 24-05-96

This week, the Celtic League successfully frustrated secret UK MOD attempts to start tests on countermeasures for so called "smart weapons". We argued the tests would pose a danger to ships and aircraft in the Irish sea area.

The MOD initially would neither confirm nor deny our claims (then good sense appears to have prevailed). The tests at Aberporth missile range in mid Wales have now been deferred for a month.

The League argued that the technology aimed at disabling Global Positioning Systems, on which the smart weapons depend, could pose a danger to others such as commercial ships, fishing craft and aircraft which use the systems. We set out below (in lay man's terms) detail to back up that argument.

GPS is a vital component of modern navigation: It aids accurate navigation, geographic measurement of islands in the ocean, life saving and the control of rockets. Its pinpoint accuracy makes it a vital component of so called smart weapon technology which was demonstrated to such devastating effect during the Gulf War.

GPS was originally a project of the US military which built the system of 24 satellites which span the world. Since 1990 the technology has been available for civil use and this enables a wide range of users to determine accurately the position of ships, land vehicles or aircraft.

The GPS satellites rotate around the the earth in an elliptical orbit at an average height of 20,000 km. Eight satellites are "visible" at any one time in an intersecting orbital pattern.

This constellation allows a continuous communication with the GPS receiver which, using the data from at least three of the "visible" satellites, enables determination of exact position with a degree of accuracy that, previously, mariners could only have dreamed of.

The technology is at present controlled by the United States. (A parallel system called GUS-GLONAS established by the former Soviet Union exists but does not have the accuracy or reliability of the US system).

The United Kingdom has long been anxious to offset US superiority in smart weapon technology but its world economic position does not allow it to challenge the US directly. The Aberporth experiments are, therefore, designed to develop a sort of "poor man's" solution to smart weapons which, in the process, would render useless the Americans' costly weaponry.

To carry on this research successfully, means that periodically (perhaps for just brief periods) satellite navigation systems for a wide range of users across the Irish sea and western British Isles may be disabled.

The MOD decision to defer the testing is to be welcomed, however, their original decision to initiate the project surreptitiously was dangerous.

The long term wisdom of developing counter technology of this nature is also questionable. Is this electronic counter weapons research vital to the defence of the United Kingdom or is it simply semi-redundant research workers keeping themselves in a job in the post cold war period?

QUEEN GOES HOME - 31-05-96

The decision of the Queen of England to cancel her visit to Wales on May 31st is both a further humiliation to the Crown and also to the British Intelligence Services charged with the Queen's protection.

The Queen was in Wales to open an £11 million extension to the National Library of Wales and was scheduled to follow this with a schedule which included a visit to the University of Aberystwyth to meet staff and students at the Institute of Earth Studies.

The routine visit started to fall apart at an early stage when, as the Royal party's motorcade approached the National Library, demonstrators vaulted barriers and tried to storm the vehicle which was forced to take evasive action. Five demonstrators were detained.

Later, as several hundred students gathered at the University Campus, a decision was taken to end the visit.

The dramatic decision to cancel engagements, taken on security grounds, indicates that both the Queen's advisors and also the intelligence services, who normally carry out preparatory work ahead of such visits, were caught totally unprepared. This is likely to be particularly embarrassing to the British security services who have been attempting to define a new post cold-war role for themselves. **Basic indicators seem to have been totally ignored in that, at a time that there is a growing tide of anti-monarchist opinion in England, it does not seem to have registered that the substantial body of republican nationalist opinion in the Celtic areas has also increased.**

The United Kingdom media are already attempting to pass off what is undoubtedly a deep humiliation as being linked to a single issue. The students were described as "language activists demonstrating in support of the Welsh language". It was clear, however, from the few who chose to be interviewed in English that the demonstration was an expression of contempt for the "English Monarchy". One interviewee almost spat out the words "she is not our Queen". It's clear that even Elizabeth Windsor herself is now aware of that.

The fall out from the visit is likely to be even more security paranoia when the Queen or other royals visit the Celtic areas. **The English take their Queen seriously - now they realise some of the Celtic people take their opposition to the Queen more seriously!**

World Conference on Linguistic Rights - Barcelona, June 1996.

IMPLEMENT DECLARATION NOW! - 16-06-96

A large number of linguistic associations and specialists have been working throughout the past three years to produce a Declaration on linguistic rights. This group acknowledges the fact that, traditionally, colonising language groups have marginalised and oppressed languages spoken by indigenous peoples absorbed by the

expansion of political entities. This group further acknowledges that it is the right of everyone to use and maintain their own language in their territory, irrespective of whether or not this territory lies within or is divided by other political territories.

It is accepted that there are, even yet, well over 6,000 languages still spoken in the world today. Around 80% of these are considered threatened. According to a representative of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, over three thousand may have no written form.

These facts, together with the acceptance that cultural and linguistic diversity is an essential part of human existence, led to the drafting of a Declaration of Linguistic Rights during 1995. This draft was then circulated to interested groups internationally, including the Celtic League, for comment and amendment. From the 6th to the 8th of July, over 300 delegates gathered in Barcelona to ratify the Declaration at a World Conference on Linguistic Rights.

This conference was hosted by CIEMEN (Mercator: Law and Linguistic Legislation) and International PEN (Committee for Translation and Linguistic Rights) with moral and technical support from UNESCO. The City of Barcelona also gave its support. The delegates, representing several thousand languages, heard the Declaration proclaimed in the Auditorium of Barcelona's University, and then signed it. Representing the Celtic League, were Chairman Cathal Ó Luain (Éire) and Assistant General Secretary Mark Kermode (Mannin).

Throughout the next two days, delegates discussed the implementation of the Declaration and heard submissions from representatives of UNESCO. It was the unanimous wish of the conference that the Declaration be submitted to UNESCO to be introduced as an International Convention on Linguistic Rights. Unfortunately, UNESCO has no power to act upon its own volition, requiring instead, a mandate from the appropriate National Committees of UNESCO. It is the intention of the Celtic League to involve as many organisations as possible in the Celtic countries in lobbying their respective governments to give UNESCO the necessary mandate and to honour its intent, which is unquestionable.

Statement from the Celtic League to the World Conference on Linguistic Rights, Barcelona, June 1996.

The following statement was presented to the Conference by Celtic League Chairman, Cathal Ó Luain.

"I would like to say a few words on the situation of the Celtic Languages from the perspective of the Celtic League. The Celtic League regards the Celtic Languages as essential elements in maintaining the Celtic identity of each country. The present position of each of the six Celtic languages varies considerably. The language of one of the smaller countries, Kernow (Cornwall), was considered to be eradicated well over a century ago but nevertheless, in recent decades, a revival is under way. A revival with limitations, of course, but a revival nonetheless. In Mannin (Isle of Man), the historical continuity of the language has been maintained and the autonomous government has been pressured into introducing Manx lessons into schools in recent years. Demand for these classes is buoyant.

"In Alba (Scotland), while Scottish Gaidhlig is marginalised, significant gains have been made in regard to education and communications, particularly T.V. The case of the Irish Republic, the one Celtic country with full sovereignty, illustrates well the difference between theory and practice, one could say, between declaration and implementation! The Irish language is the first official language of the state according to the Irish Constitution, yet the number of native speakers has declined steadily and Irish speakers in Ireland could hardly be said to enjoy full linguistic rights. In the north of Ireland, under British rule, they hardly exist at all and if a final political settlement is arrived at, the guarantee of linguistic rights must be an integral part of any such settlement.

"The position of the Welsh language is seen to be the strongest and this is through the efforts of the Welsh language community themselves, where major gains were made in administrative, legal and communication areas in recent decades. The position in the French state has been referred to earlier (in the Conference) and the Breton language has suffered badly, with a severe decline in the number of native speakers and only limited assistance for Breton medium schools. Has anything really changed from the time when, in public places in Brittany, signs read, 'Defense de cracher par terre et de parler Breton'(No spitting or speaking Breton) ?

"The Celtic League feels that the long periods of colonisation and enforced cultural assimilation endured by the Celtic countries must be taken into account when addressing the situations of the Celtic languages today.

"With regard to the Declaration, it was the very definition of language specific to a territory which allowed us to sign the Declaration, as it made it applicable to the varying situations in the Celtic countries. To ensure the positions of the Celtic languages, they must have a place in the legal, administrative systems and mass media of their countries. The Celtic League will be working at the implementation stage to ensure that this crucial definition is maintained."

Cathal Ó Luain, Chairman, Celtic League. 07-06-96

1996 Celtic League A.G.M. Resolutions - 15-08-96

The following resolutions were adopted at the Annual General Meeting in Plomeur, Brittany on August 10th 1996. Due to the number of motions proposed, not all were considered in the allotted time those still outstanding will be referred to the General Council of the League to determine what action should be taken.

Breizh No 1 resolution.

This lengthy resolution referred to the destruction by fire of the historic Breton Parliament building. Protesting fishermen, who had let off distress flares as part of their protest, were blamed for the fire. The Breton branch of the Celtic League believes that the burning was a opportunist act of sabotage, with the fishermen being "set-up" to take the blame:

The fire did not start until several hours after the protest. Pyrotechnic experts do not believe that the type of flares used would be capable of starting a fire of this nature immediately, let alone some hours later (they would have had to burn their way through a slate roof!). The building had also been thoroughly checked by security

staff after the protest. Conveniently, documents that could have proved serious corruption in high places were destroyed by the fire. The thrust of the resolution (written in French, a full translation to be available later) was to express the dissatisfaction of the Breton Branch and the many Breton people who feel that the whole episode is a "cover-up".

Cymru No 1 resolution (Composite with a Breton branch resolution)

This AGM - Protests against the repressive measures taken against those Breton people who provided humanitarian assistance and support to Basque refugees who had sought refuge from Spanish oppression.

Believes this action, directed at the national aspirations of the Breton people as much as against the Basques, contravenes International conventions on the treatment of victims of oppression.

This conference totally condemns the harassment of Bretons by the French and calls for an investigation into the methods used.

*See also [Basque / Celtic Link](#)
[Bretons in fear](#)*

Éire No 1 resolution

This AGM - Condemns the policies of the Irish Minister of Education, Niamh Breathnach, and the Department of Education in Ireland which have resulted in the refusal of recognition to six gaelscoileana without any forewarning, just weeks before the beginning of the school term.

For more information on the implementation of this resolution, see [Gaelscoileanna Update](#)

We urge immediate recognition be granted to these schools and, furthermore that the Minister, as part of the introduction of Education Boards establish a separate board for Irish Medium and gaeltacht schools.

Kernow No 1 resolution

This AGM - calls upon the UK government to recognise Cornwall's right to independence as a Celtic Nation in any moves to return independent powers to Wales and Scotland. Cornwall should not be joined in a region including parts of South West England.

Mannin No 1 resolution

This AGM - Whilst welcoming the steps taken to consolidate the teaching of Manx in schools,

Calls upon the General Council of the Celtic League to seek further action from the Manx government to enhance the opportunities for the teaching of Gaelic in Manx schools and also to provide support for the Gaelic Medium Education.

England No 1 resolution

This Ard-Fheis states that it shall be a general policy of the League to use the term "English" rather than "British" to refer to the occupation of Six Counties (present) and of Ireland (in the past).

General Council No 1 resolution

This AGM - Recognising the devastation being wrought upon City and rural areas of the Celtic countries by drug related crime calls for action to investigate the illegal laundering of drug related profits of narco-terrorism via off-shore finance centres in Dublin, the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles.

Calls for European cooperation to establish a Police Task Force to investigate laundering in all European financial services centres including the City of London.

For more information on the implementation of this resolution, see [Irish Initiatives Undermined by U.K.](#)

International No 1 resolution

This AGM - Urges the EU to press for the adoption of a stringent policy binding on all States to ensure conservation of fish and whale stocks;

Calls on the Irish government to strive to bring about a review of the Common Fisheries Policy during the Irish EU Presidency so as to enable Ireland and the other Celtic countries, disadvantaged as they are on account of their peripheral situation, to develop or build their fishing industry, in particular calls upon the European Union to apply subsidiarity, in the Common Fishing Policy (CFP), to the Celtic countries to control their own fish stocks.

Expresses satisfaction at the Irish government's support for the UK government in its opposition to the practice of 'flagships' using other EU member-states registers to catch fish. *For more information on the implementation of this resolution, see [Manx Government questioned on fisheries policy](#)*

Breizh No 2 resolution

This AGM - noting with keen interest the declaration by President Jacques Chirac that he is, in principle, favourable to the signing by France of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Asks the President to use his supreme authority so as to ensure that the French government signs the Charter without delay, thus fulfilling the wishes of the peoples concerned.

Cymru No 2 resolution

This AGM - Whilst accepting English and French as necessary means of common expression, ask for every effort to be made to promote the Celtic languages visually as powerful symbols of nationality.

Recommendations:

(a) As the CL has several gifted linguists, they should be given responsibility as translators to the National Executive to ensure each branch produces membership forms, renewal forms and information sheets in its language.

(b) Each branch should critically look at its literature apropos positively promoting the national language.

This should long term ensure that each branch is totally bilingual and the executive conferences multi-lingual.

Please note that the General Council has actively encouraged all Branches to produce bi-lingual material where possible, even offering type-setting and printing for such. This resolution has transformed this encouragement into a directive.

Éire No 2 resolution

This AGM - deplores the tactics of the Westminster government during the Peace Process, which led to the the loss of a unique window of opportunity.

We call on them to remedy this by admitting Sinn Fein to the All Party Talks and to relinquish their demands for the decommissioning of arms which can only be realistically attained when a full settlement is negotiated.

Mannin No 2 resolution

This AGM - Condemns without reservation the Isle of Man government for operating a Prison regime and system which holds persons in squalid, overcrowded, inhumane and degrading circumstances.

Calls for a report on the situation to be prepared by the Celtic League General Council and forwarded to the United Nations Human rights agency in Geneva.

England No 2 resolution

This Ard-Fheis believes that it is unsatisfactory to refer to as "Roman Britain" what in reality was Celtic Britain.

International No 2 resolution

This AGM - alarmed by the repetition of catastrophic oil-spills from tankers which have caused widespread destruction of marine life and so severely affected the economic life of coastal areas of at least five of the six Celtic countries in the past twenty years:

Urges the governments responsible for the protection of the environment in these countries as well as the European Union to adopt strictly binding measures to avoid such accidents, in particular enforcing double hulling for all tankers, prohibiting them from sailing through narrow sea channels or within given distances from shore, use of pilots familiar with the approaches to storage facilities.

For more information on the implementation of this resolution, see [Europe and U.K. respond over tanker safety](#)

General Council No 2 resolution.

This AGM - rejects as ineffectual the recently announced enquiry into the use by the RUC and British Army of plastic baton rounds during riots sparked by the British governments decision to allow Orange marches, previously banned, to be routed via Nationalist areas.

Noting, that the use of plastic baton rounds and rubber bullets have to date been the cause of 17 deaths (eight children and nine adults) in N. Ireland when used by the security forces, calls for an end to the deployment of these weapons.

For more information, see [Celtic League statements on R.U.C.](#)

The Following Officers were elected to the General Council.

Convenor: Cathal O Luain
General Secretary & PRO: Bernard Moffatt
Assistant General Secretary: Mark Kermode
Editor: Patricia Bridson
Treasurer: Paul Kelly.

Basque / Celtic Link is long-established

"Anti-terror police check on ETA" - Headlines like this (from the English "Guardian") appeared in many UK papers after a tribute appeared in a pro-separatist Basque newspaper to the young unarmed Irishmen Diarmuid O'Neill killed by police in London on 23 September.

The "ETA Link" and O'Neill's friendship with a girl from the Basque country exercised the feverish imagination of some British journalists and in the process neatly moved the discussion of the circumstances of O'Neill's death from centre stage.

The next few months will undoubtedly see a spate of stories allegedly links, plots etc. between militant separatist groups. Behind the headlines, the truth is even more substantial than the "conspiracy theory journalists" believe.

Links between campaigning groups striving to protect their cultures and assert their rights to self determination have existed throughout this century. The collection of minority groups that cluster on the Atlantic Arc of western Europe enjoy close ties. Their ability to provide practical support and assistance to each other when tested has proved sound.

After World War 2, many Bretons who had used the German occupation to advance the Bretons' fight within the occupied and impotent French State, were forced to flee the liberation. With Welsh support, some fled and gained sanctuary in Ireland, some moved to Spain and the Basque country. The link between Bretons and Basques still remains strong. Many Basques fleeing recent repression in their home country have

found safety in Brittany much to the chagrin on the French authorities who in turn have harassed Breton separatists providing this humanitarian support.

When the Celtic League, itself an umbrella group for the Celtic countries with branches in each one and also the United States, met in Brittany in August, a [resolution](#) was adopted condemning this recent repression. It went on to reiterate the principle of solidarity not just between the Celtic people but also other minorities such as the Basques on the "Atlantic Arc". The resolution was moved by the Welsh delegates and supported by the Irish - even via something as mundane as a conference resolution, the complex web binding several peoples (Bretons, Basques, Irish and Welsh) was demonstrated

The level and nature of commitment to this solidarity can vary from the purely cultural, as espoused by bodies like the conservative Celtic Congress organisation, to that of the more political, though legitimate, programme of politico-cultural campaigning pursued vigorously by the Celtic League. Paralleling the efforts of the inter Celtic groups are the individual links between National language organisations. The Dublin based European Bureau for Lesser Used languages and also the Barcelona based contact group, established to promote the recently adopted Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, serve to develop bonds and forge links between these aspirant groups many of which have a political as well as a cultural agenda. Both these bodies of course function strictly legitimately within the law of the host State and both receive EU funding.

The National Parties in each country also pursue distinct agendas and these can oscillate with the swings and changes in mood of the policy and leadership of the particular Party. Most Celtic Nationalist Political Organisations stimulate contact with National minorities elsewhere.

In the late 1970s, under the direction of Richard Behal the Director of its Foreign Affairs Bureau, Sinn Féin promoted vigorously the concept of solidarity between those peoples whose aspiration, like that of their own, was national self-determination.

Although the emphasis today is less strident, both An Phoblacht and the other Republican Group's (RSF) paper Saoirse still find space to promote the cause of others in struggle like the Basques, Corsicans, Galicians etc.

Many believed with the advent of the European Union the dominance of the old Nation States would become less oppressive to groups such as those on the Celtic fringe and the Galicians and Basques.

To a certain extent this optimism has been rewarded and the work of the Bureau (of lesser used languages) in promoting National languages is helping to retrieve the cultures of these minority groups; cultures which have been extremely vulnerable for most of this century.

Some States, particularly Spain, have embraced the principle of greater political autonomy though the concessions advanced to groups such as the Catalans have not proved sufficiently attractive to seduce others on the Iberian peninsula (such as ETA) away from the road of violent struggle. France, less spontaneously, has indicated

substantial concessions may be imminent to settle its long running separatist "emergency" in Corsica.

The high profile Irish situation and the failure of the British and Irish government to persuade the militant political groups like the IRA and others to "dump arms" is still the most visible manifestation of the historical failure to integrate nations within the borders of the old political States of Europe.

It is, however, not the only example and as long as the EU preoccupies itself with the mundane matters of agricultural policy or the single currency and fails to address the hot spots within this "Europe of 100 Flags", problems will persist.

Links between National Independence movements and cultural groups on the "Atlantic Arc" are a fact - they will continue until the "old" States recognise the aspirations of indigenous nations within their present frontiers.

J.B. Moffatt. pp. Celtic League

British Retreat on "National" identity card system - 16-10-96

The British Government has scrapped controversial plans to introduce a "national" identity card system the decision comes just weeks after UK Home Secretary Michael Howard had indicated the UK were to press ahead with the scheme.

The plans have attracted considerable debate in the United Kingdom with the erosion of Civil Liberties advanced as a strong argument against the proposed system. The Celtic League, one of a small number of organisations, that actually submitted a response to the United Kingdom Home Affairs Committee advanced a much more fundamental case to support the libertarian argument.

We reminded the British government that substantial groups of people presently identified as "British" within the United Kingdom have a distinct cultural identity and would resent the imposition of any system that detracted from this. We advanced that the scheme as proposed, although initially on a voluntary basis, would once introduced acquire a momentum of compulsion. We advised that in Northern Ireland the nationalist/republican community would be sure to see the British national identity system as an attack on their cultural identity and, whilst this was perhaps predicted by the British, they should anticipate that the same level of opposition would also manifest itself in Scotland, Wales and Cornwall.

There seems little doubt that had the British progressed the proposals a strident campaign of protest would have developed and when on the 8th of August 1995 the Celtic League wrote to the ID Green Paper Unit enclosing our submission "Whose National Identity?". We concluded our submission by promising to mobilise a campaign of opposition. It's now unnecessary as the British have retreated on the issue and fortunately common sense has prevailed.

J.B. Moffatt

As an addendum to the question of national identity, consternation was caused in the Manx General Election of November 1996 when, under new Legislation, candidates were required to declare their "nationality". The Manx Attourney

General, Michael Kerruish, declared that "Manx" was not acceptable; Manx candidates (the majority) were forced by a law devised and enacted *by the Manx government* to declare themselves as "British" - whatever that is.

Response to International Branch from Manx Government Re - Fisheries conservation ([AGM Resolution](#))

31st October, 1996.

Dear Alan,

Thank you for your recent communication dated 11th October, 1996 regarding the Annual General Meeting of the Celtic League held in Lorient.

I note the resolution regarding conservation of fish and whale stocks. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry will bear your resolution in mind in any further discussions.

Regarding conservation measures in the Irish sea, we work with the Irish and U.K. Governments to try and further our conservation of fish stocks, and are seeking to introduce further conservation measures in the very near future.

Lhiats

Hon. Hazel Hannan
Minister

Response to International Branch from European Commission Re- Oil Tanker spillage ([AGM Resolution](#))

See also [response from U.K. D.o.T.](#)

Brussels 25 November 1996
CD/vc A/9280 (96) D 6491

Dear Mr Heusaff,

On behalf of Commissioner Bjerregaard, I wish to thank you for your letter of 11 October concerning oil spills from tankers causing severe environmental damage.

This is also an issue of concern to the Commissioner. It is for the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to adopt rules about the technical measures to be taken on ships, including double hulls, in order to prevent such spills. Although the Community is only an observer to this organisation, I can assure you that there is a continuous concerted effort between the Commission and the Member States of the Community to push for tougher rules in this area- Indeed we have succeeded in making the IMO adopt rules which will ensure that, eventually, practically all tankers will be fitted with double hulls. The European Community has, however adopted legislation that will make a strict enforcement of the rules possible through the Port State Control Directive which is now in force allowing the port States to enforce these rules not only on ships which are registered with them, but also those registered in third countries.

It is for the Member States to adopt the necessary measures to ensure that marine traffic can be safely routed through narrow straits and approach storage facilities without endangering the environment.

Yours sincerely,

Christine Dalby

Response to Internation Branch by U.K.'s Marine Safety Agency

19th November, 1996.

Dear Mr Heusaff,

I refer to your letter of 11 October to the Secretary of State for the Environment concerning the carriage of large quantities of oil from tankers.

With particular reference to double hull tankers, they do offer some protection to the cargo in the event of a low--impact collision. They do not guarantee that no oil will be spilled in all incidents. The Government has participated fully in international agreements that single-hulled oil tankers would be phased out by the year 2024. As approximately 93% of the world's oil tanker fleet are single-hulled, a faster phasing out could restrict, if not halt, the essential movement of tankers to and from our ports. Retrospective modification of tankers to attain a double hull standard is technically difficult and could lead to reduced safety.

Following the incident involving the Braer, Lord Donaldson acknowledged that double hulls also have a number of disadvantages. They will be less effective in high energy or concentrated collisions and can lead to problems of stability during loading and unloading.

A number of measures affect the routes that laden tankers may take around the UK. These include Areas to be avoided, precautionary areas such as the approaches to Lerwick, deep water routes and traffic separation schemes.

The use of pilots is a matter you may wish to take up with the Department of Transport in Great Minister House, 76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR.

Yours sincerely

R FREEMAN

The following articles are in response to the Éacuteire Branch's No. 1 [AGM Resolution](#)

Includes:

[Response from Niamh Breathanach](#)
[Information / Statistics from Conradh na Gaeilge](#)
[Gaelscoileanna Press Information](#)

Education Minister responds to Mannin Branch letter.

I wish to refer further to your recent letter concerning the recognition of Gaelscoileanna.

The position is that it is the policy of my Department to facilitate the establishment of Gaelscoileanna in areas outside the Gaeltacht regions where a demand for such a

school is demonstrated and where there exists no alternative within a reasonable distance. Practical support for Gaelscoileanna is further demonstrated through the payment of increased capital grants for pupils in these schools, allowing a more favourable pupil teacher ratio compared with ordinary schools, and paying allowances to teachers who teach through Irish. Furthermore, my Department provides 100% of the cost of site acquisition and the provision of new buildings or extensions / renovations to existing buildings for Gaelscoileanna.

This year, a total of 14 applications were received in my Department for the establishment of new Gaelscoileanna of which 9 were granted recognition. Four of the remaining 5 proposed schools could not be approved due to the fact that they did not have 20 new junior infants to start in September, 1996. The fifth application did not succeed because as well as being satisfied about the future viability, the other long-standing criterion has been the extent to which facilities already exist in a particular area for the provision of primary school education through Irish. In this case a Gaelscoil already exists within a reasonable distance of the proposed new school.

The suggestion has been made that my department changed the rule this year in relation to the minimum enrolment required for the recognition of schools. It must be recognised that a successful Gaelscoil depends on genuine parental demand hence, there is a requirement that a Gaelscoil have at least 20 Junior infants, who had not attended school previously, before recognition is granted. This is not a new condition, it has been in existence for a number of years and is based on the belief that if a school is unable to provide such an enrolment on opening, its viability in the future must be in doubt. Future viability is particularly relevant at a time of major decline in primary school enrolments generally within the State. My Department's latest projections put the current rate of decline at approximately 11,000 pupils per annum.

The total number of Primary Gaelscoileanna operating within the State is now 95 and a third of these have been approved during my term of office as Minister for Education. I will continue to facilitate provision for education through Irish where there is a demand for it and where it is possible to do so.

In that connection, I have established a Commission on School Accommodation Needs, arising from a commitment given in the White Paper Education "Charting our Education Future." As part of its remit the Commission will examine and make recommendations regarding appropriate criteria for the recognition of new national schools including Gaelscoileanna.

I trust that this clarifies the position for you and I thank you for your interest in the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Niamh Bhreathnach T.D,
Minister for Education

Information from Conradh na Gaeilge on Irish Medium Schools

Page 28 of the document *Government of Renewal - Policy Agreement* drawn up between Fine Gael, The Labour Party and Democratic Left, December 1994 states:

"Among our (educational) policies are:

□ Support for multi-denominational schools and Gaelscoileanna including the early recognition of new schools."

□ By contrast, the Department provides the full cost of sites for all-Irish national schools. Demographic changes and the growth in demand for all-Irish schools and multi-denominational schools have increased the need for interchangeability in the use of school buildings.

Multi-denominational national schools and all-Irish primary schools are given initial recognition on a temporary basis for a number of years subsequent to their establishment. As a result of this, the promoters must provide temporary accommodation without the aid of capital grants during the period of temporary recognition. This is often a hardship on the promoters of such schools and may militate against their establishment.

This requirement was originally imposed to ensure that State investment was made available for viable school projects. Because (for historical and practical reasons) new denominational school projects have been grant-aided from their inception, the requirement is seen as discriminatory against new school projects other than those promoted by the main religious denominations.

In future, full recognition and full entitlement to capital grants will be given to all schools, including all-Irish and multi-denominational schools, from the date of their establishment as soon as the Minister is satisfied in each case that there will be a continuing need for the school.

This will allow permanent accommodation to be provided at an earlier stage, and early recognition of new multi-denominational and all-Irish schools is listed as a priority in the Government of Renewal policy document.

*(cf. pages 32 and 33 of the White Paper on Education - *Charting our Education Future*.)*

Rules for Recognition - The Background

1. In the Summer of 1986 the Department of Education announced that new all-Irish schools would no longer be recognised unless 20 or more pupils were enrolled in each school.
2. In the Summer of 1987, the Department introduced a further sub-rule: new all-Irish schools would no longer be recognised unless 20 or more pupils who had not previously attended school were enrolled in each school.
3. The Minister for Education has now announced that the 20 new pupils, who had not previously attended school, must all enrol in the same year in the all-Irish school seeking recognition.

Until now the necessary quota of 20 new pupils could be attained by the school's enrolment figures over two years (or more).

That is no longer to be allowed despite the fact that such children would have spent a year attending a school which was neither recognised nor subvented by the Department of Education.

As a result of this new rule, the Minister is refusing to recognise three all-Irish schools which have been kept open since last year through the parents' fund-raising activities:

- Scoil Phidraig, Ballybrack, Co. Dublin.
- Gaelscoil Inis Corthaidh, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford.
- Gaelscoil Eois Clones, Co Monaghan.

4. The Minister has also refused to recognise four all-Irish schools which are being opened in the following places come September and which have more than 20 pupils enrolled who have not previously attended schools.

- Gaelscoil Cholmcille, Whitehall, Dublin 9.
- Gaelscoil Ui Fhiaich, Maynooth, Co. Kildare.
- Gaciscoil na Boinne, Trim, Co. Meath.
- Gaelscoil na nDeise, Waterford.

5. Yet another all-Irish primary school is being established this year - in Ballinamure, Co. Leitrim. It was not expecting recognition this year as it would not have 20 pupils enrolled who had not attended school before. The Minister's new rule will make it extremely difficult for parents of that school to qualify for recognition next year, which they had been counting on.

6. The following all-Irish primary schools in the Six Counties have yet to get official recognition:

- Gaelscoil an Iuir, Newry, Co. Down (established in 1989)
- Bunscoil Lunaigh, Maghara, Antrim Road, Co. Derry (established in 1993)
- Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain, Belfast (established 1994)
- Bunscoil Ui Neill, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone (established in 1995)

7. Meanscoil Dhoire, the Derry post-primary all-Irish school established in 1994 is, also, without official recognition.

8. The Minister for Education has announced that recognition will be given this year to Gaelscoil na Cruaiche, Westport, which operated without recognition from September 1995.

9. The Minister for Education has announced that the following new all-Irish schools shall be recognised this year:

- Lios na nOg, Dublin 4 and 6.
- Gaelscoil Chnoc Liamhna, Knocklyon, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.
- Gaelscoil Bharra, Cabra, Dublin 7.
- Gaelscoil Chill Mhantain, Wicklow.
- Gaelscoil Cnoc na Ri, Sligo.

Growth and Development of Irish-medium schools

(a) 9 Primary and 6 Post-Primary all-Irish schools were established in September 1993.

(b) 10 Primary and 1 Post-Primary all-Irish schools were established in September 1994.

(c) 11 new Primary all-Irish schools were established in September 1995.

It would appear that that tremendous rate of expansion is a cause of concern for the Minister for Education and for her Department. Instead of trying to stifle that development the Department of Education should be doing its utmost to cater for it and, also, to take the wishes of many parents who wish to provide an all-Irish education for their children into account when the Department itself is planning new schools.

Irish Medium Schools

Primary Schools

1992/93	110	4	71	185
1993/94	109	7	77	193
1994/95	109	8	86	203
1995/96	109	10	95	214

Post-Primary Schools

1992/93	19	1	16	36
1993/94	18	1	22	41
1994/95	18	2	22	42
1995/96	22	2	22	46

Public Support

Survey after survey has confirmed that a large majority of the population of the 26 Counties believe that the State should support all-Irish schools. The following question was asked respondents in those surveys:

Should the Government provide all-Irish schools wherever the public want them?

Year: 1973 1983 1993

"Yes" Response: 70% 67% 70%

People were also asked whether they would send their children to an all-Irish school were such a school located near their home.

% of people responding "Yes"	1983	1993
to an all-Irish school	24%	30%
to a Post Primary all-Irish school	19%	23%

Sean MacMathuna,
Ard-Runai,
Conradh na Gaeilge.
19 Lunasa, 1996

GAELSCOILEANNA

PRESS INFORMATION: WEDNESDAY 21 AUGUST 1996

GAELSCOILEANNA (coordinating body for Irish Medium Schools) welcomes the decision taken by the Minister for Education, Niamh Bhreathnach earlier today to grant recognition to gael scoileanna in the following areas: Whitehall - Dublin, Trim Co. Meath and Waterford City.

"We are delighted that the Minister has recognised parental rights to Irish Medium Education in these areas," said Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa, GAELSCOILEANNA Executive.

The parents have worked very hard to set up these schools and at least today they know that their children will be attending a recognised state school through the medium of Irish on September 2nd"

However, GAELSCOILEANNA have condemned the Minister's decision not to grant recognition to three schools that have been in operation for one year, in Ballybrack - Dublin, Clones - Co. Monaghan and Enniscorthy - Co. Wexford.

These three schools have operated unofficially for the last year with parents fund raising all the running costs of the schools such as teachers' salaries, rent, electricity, books etc, on the understanding that they would be allowed to combine junior Infant numbers over a two or even three year period. If these schools had started one year earlier they would now be recognised but this year, the Minister has seen fit to change the rules four weeks before the start of the school term and has told the schools that this arrangement is no longer acceptable. Schools will now have to have 20 pupils every year in order to prove to the Department that the schools are viable.

A fourth school, in Maynooth, has also been refused for spurious reasons without proper foundation say GAELSCOILEANNA.

"We are outraged at the Minister's decision," said Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa today. *"It is not acceptable that the Minister should change her rules at such short notice and without consultation with schools or with our organisation. It shows an appalling lack of understanding of proper planning structures and of any respect for parents or pluralism in education. The Minister promised the parents in Ballybrack last year when they met her in her clinic that if the parents could find twenty children over a*

two year period that they would have recognition this September. In fact the school has exceeded this demand and they have a total of 28 infants enrolled at the moment."

GAELSCOILEANNA has announced that the schools will be opening as planned in September and a major fund raising campaign is now underway.

For further information please contact:

Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa,
Feidhmeannach,
GAELSCOILEANNA,
7, Cearnóg Mhuirfean,
Baile Átha Cliath 2,
Éire.

Celtic Film Festival Snubs Mannin! - 15-01-97

A video production unit established at a Manx secondary school produced a professional quality production entitled "Manx Myths and Fairy Tales". The subject is self explanatory and Irish and Scottish viewers would probably recognise many of these ancient Manx legends as having counterparts in their own countries. The Celtic Film and Television Association , however, refuses to recognise Manx contributions as valid in its forthcoming festival.

The matter came to light after the school's Deputy Head Teacher, Julie Harmer, contacted Brian Stowell of the Manx Branch of the The Celtic Congress. The school wished to submit the film to the International Celtic Film and Television Festival, organised by the Celtic Film and Television Association, to be held in Cornwall this year but was refused on the grounds that the Association considers Mannin to be a "Sottish region"!

It is not, unfortunately, the first time that the Association has displayed its ignorance. Some years ago Manx film maker Rob Rohrer tried to submit an entry and was refused because the Association did not consider Mannin to be a Celtic country!

The following letter has been sent by Dr. Stowell, in both Manx and English, to the Association.

English translation :

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing on behalf of the Manx Branch of the Celtic Congress the long-established association which promotes the languages and cultures of the six Celtic countries Brittany, Cornwall, Ireland, Isle of Man, Scotland and Wales.

I have heard from Julie Harmer, the Deputy Headteacher of Queen Elizabeth II High School in the Isle of Man, that the video "Manx Myths and Fairy Tales" is not acceptable for entry in this year's International Celtic Film and Television Festival in Cornwall. It seems that this has happened because the video has been classified as

coming from the " Scottish region" (sic) at a time when there is a very large number of entries from Scotland. If this is the case, it is unacceptable.

Firstly, this is a high quality video. The video unit at Queen Elizabeth II High School has gained a high reputation - So high that it is backed by a major international company. The video itself is being broadcast in Ireland.

Secondly, the Isle of Man is a Celtic country with its own identity, as can be appreciated briefly from these features:

- ☐ the Isle of Man has its own government along with the oldest parliament in the world.
- ☐ the Isle of Man is not part of the United Kingdom nor is it in the European Union.
- ☐ the Isle of Man has its own Celtic (Gaelic) language the native culture is Celtic.

Hence, we should not be included in the "Scottish region"! In some ways, I can understand if there is a difficulty: Manx people have not taken part in the Festival in recent years. Therefore, I would be grateful if you would make known what must be done to enable the Isle of Man to take a proper part in the Festival. It should be important for the Celtic Film and Television Association to be sensitive in matters of cultural identity. Unless this is so, there is not much point in having such an association.

I would be grateful if you would forward copies of this letter to members of the Executive Committee and to Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas.

Yours faithfully

Dr Brian Stowell
Secretary, Manx Branch of the Celtic Congress
International President of the Celtic Congress, 1993-1996

Celtic Film and Television Association
The Library
Farraline Park
Inbhir Nis IV1 1 LS
Alba

Dr. Stowell contacted the Celtic League for assistance and all the League's National plus International and North American branches have been asked to lobby the Association to give proper recognition to Mannin. Individuals and organisations are asked to do likewise (address above).

In August 1995, the Celtic League produced a report highly critical of the impact of so called Fair Employment Legislation in Ulster entitled, "Employment Discrimination in the North of Ireland" (see CARN magazine - Autumn 1995)

This report concluded that, on the basis of best analysis, the 1989 Fair Employment (N. Ireland) Act, whilst putting in place a decisive framework to tackle religious and political discrimination, had not reduced the high employment levels which we speculated meant Northern Catholics were more than twice as likely to be unemployed than Protestants.

We were also scathing of British Social Commentators who, comparing the Ulster legislation with comparable United Kingdom 'mainland' legislation aimed at ending racial discrimination in employment matters, concluded the N. Ireland Act was a better model.

The latest information compiled by the Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey dramatically confirms our assertions. The overall employment situation is still bad in the North, with the male unemployment rate (at 12.6%) higher than those in "other regions of the UK". Although the overall unemployment rate has declined by approx. 7% since 1984 many of the jobs created are part-time. Whilst the female labour force increased by 22,000 in the period 1984-94, during the same period the number of economically active men declined by 3,000.

The statistics are most telling however in the area of religion. Unemployment rates for males indicate that in spring 1994 22% of Roman Catholics were unemployed as opposed to 11% of Protestants. The two to one imbalance was almost as bad when it came to women with 5% of Protestants to 8 % of Catholics. Overall the figure was 9% of Protestants and 16% of Roman Catholics unemployed.

The picture was further compounded when assessment of the relative periods for which individuals were unemployed. Again, Roman Catholics tended to have greater difficulty obtaining employment than their Protestant neighbours.

The overall position is as we had earlier concluded. Religiously based employment discrimination is still endemic. More detailed analysis of previous Northern Ireland Labour Force Surveys show that despite the earlier legislation and the revised 1989 Act discrimination against Roman Catholics over jobs persists.

A detailed report is under preparation and will be published in CARN in due course.

J.B. Moffatt. February 1997

Highlands Council stops teaching of Gaidhlig - 10-03-97

See also:

[Gaelic Secondary Education threatened](#)
[East Kilbride GMU threatened](#)

Inspite of overwhelming opposition, the Highlands Council has gone ahead with a possibly fatal attack on the teaching of Scotland's native language.

The Scottish Highlands area is the heartland of the Scottish Gaelic tradition. As would be expected, demand for the language is high and so there are several Gaelic Medium Units attached to schools where children who are Gaidhlig speakers can learn through their own language.

In addition, English speaking children were able to receive Gaidhlig lessons from itinerant teachers. The Highlands Council, who are responsible for education in the region, decided to scrap five teaching posts from the Gaighlig language programme. This will effectively deprive the majority of schoolchildren in the highlands region from any exposure to their native language in the school environment.

This potential death-blow to the language in the Highlands (the other strong-hold being the Scottish Islands) comes hot on the heels of the closure of the Peterhead GMU and the attempted closure of the [East Kilbride GMU](#). Both these incidents incurred substantial opposition and it would appear that, in an attempt to bulldoze the proposal through, the Highlands Council made the move with the absolute minimum of notice and no publicity. Nonetheless, the word got out and with a mere two days before the fateful meeting of the Education Committee of the Council, the Council's offices were deluged with letters, faxes and 'phone calls of opposition. One source has it that of the twelve man committee, only one opposed the job losses.

Despite this, the job losses went ahead but the Education Committee was reportedly very "rattled" by the scale of opposition. The Celtic League's letter is reproduced below:

Mrs. Val MacIver,
Chair,
Education Committee,
Highlands Council,
Glenurquhart Road,
Inverness,
Scotland.

Dear Mrs. MacIver,

The Executive Committee of The Celtic League is extremely concerned to learn that it is the intention of the Highlands Council to effectively withdraw the teaching of Gaelic from its schools by dismissing five teachers from the Gaidhlig teaching programme.

This intention, following so closely on the closure of the Peterhead GMU and the near loss of the East Kilbride GMU, gives the impression that Scottish regional Councils have got together to declare "open season" on the Gaelic language. Such action could be more forgivable if there was no demand for the teaching of Gaidhlig but this is clearly not the case. The continued success of the Gaidhlig pre-school playgroups run by CNSA show the wish of a huge number of parents to give their children a choice of languages and that there are sufficient Gaidhlig speaking children to people the GMUs throughout Scotland is proof positive of the overwhelming commitment of both parents and children to the future of the Gaidhlig language.

Nor is the fact that most children arriving at primary school are English mongolots an indication of any lack of desire on their own part to speak the language that is their

birth-right: In too many cases this situation is the result of lack of provision of the facilities to acquire a knowledge of the language at an earlier age.

Despite being regarded as the "mother country" of the three Gaelic languages, Ireland has learnt a lot from the example set by Scottish Gaidhlig speakers in having their language decline not only stabilised but reversed. It would appear that it is the intention of the Highland Council to severely undermine the hard work of decades.

The retention of Gaidhlig as a living language is most certainly not the preserve of a few extremists and I would draw the Committee's attention to various UN conventions and charters on linguistic rights and ethnic diversity. Most particularly, the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, promulgated in Barcelona in June of last year and currently in the hands of UNESCO for transcription into a UN Charter is worthy of consideration.

Without doubt, "budgetary considerations" will be cited as the reason for this but, as has been shown to be the case on too many previous occasions, it is felt more likely that the Gaidhlig language has been singled out as an easy target. If the trend of the past year in Scottish Education is followed it is quite possible that, in the next century, there will be no Gaidhlig language except in museums. Should this be the case, it will doubtless be claimed that it "simply died out". This letter will be available on file, however, to show whether or not the Highlands Council helped it on its way.

The Celtic League most importantly asks, therefore, that this matter be treated with the gravity it deserves and the Gaidhlig language, one of the few identifiable elements of Scottish culture to have survived from the previous millenium, be given a fair chance of survival into the next.

Yours faithfully,

Mark Kermode,
Assitant General Scretary.

While the Gaelic teaching has now received a 100% slash, art, music and P.E. have only received 10% cuts. It is suggested that both individuals and organisations continue to send the Highlands Council letters expressing disgust at this decision.

League supports Kilbride Gaelic Medium Unit - 22-02-97

The Celtic League has been informed by its Scottish Branch that there is a plan to shut the East Kilbride Gaelic Medium Unit in order to save money. The letter below is self explanatory. All branches of the Celtic League have been requested to show similar support.

The Director of Education,
South Lanarkshire Council,
Almada Street,
Hamilton,
Scotland,

Dear Sir,

I write to express the Celtic League's concern at rumours that the East Kilbride Gaelic medium unit is under threat of phased closure.

I understand, from our Scottish branch secretary, that this unit is one of the most successful and largest Gaelic medium units in Scotland.

Obviously we appreciate that there are financial constraints on all budgets at the present time. However, to apply cuts in this area will undoubtedly do critical damage to the Gaelic medium education programme.

I would welcome clarification from you on this situation at your earliest convenience. Obviously if any threat to the unit is cost driven then it would be our intention to write to the Secretary of State for Scotland and seek his urgent intervention in this matter.

The overall thrust of Gaelic and Celtic languages education has been very positive in recent years. The availability as part of the regular curriculum of education through the National language is now accessible in Scotland, Ireland, Mann, Cymru, Cornwall and Brittany. In the light of this it would be unfortunate if this process was reversed in your area.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully.

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League.

Although it has escaped the axe this time, East Kilbride will have to fight for its survival at next year's budgetary revision. We must be prepared to fight again.

Gaelic Medium Secondary Education Under Threat - 16-06-96

At the end of April, Michael Forsyth the Secretary of State for Scotland published his long waited response to the School Inspectors Report on gaelic Education. The 1994 report to which Forsyth was replying praised Gaelic medium primary education but stated that secondary education through the medium of Gaelic was "neither feasible nor desirable". This decision provoked an uproar amongst speakers and friends of Gaelic at the time, leading to a large petition, numerous letters to the Secretary of State and a demonstration outside the Scottish Office.

After two years of uncertainty, and despite the opposition of all the Gaelic groups which he consulted on the matter, Forsyth has decided to accept the inspectorate's recommendation against the expansion of Gaelic education to secondary level. Instead of the teaching of a wide range of subjects through the medium of Gaelic, there are to be tokenistic and ghettoistic Gaelic medium modules about Gaelic culture - probably only around an hour a week. Forsyth's response did however provide two welcome developments: an increase of £200,000 per year in the Government Specific Grant for Gaelic and the development of a new national Gaelic resource centre.

Forsyth's report has been universally condemned by the Gaelic movement who believe that Gaelic medium secondary education is an absolute right which Forsyth has no right to withhold. While the government have said that the decision was caused

by "significant practical difficulties", there can be little doubt that the real reason has been the desire to save money. If it was not practical to teach through Gaelic then Gaelic nursery, primary and further education would not be available. The government already supports Welsh high schools and has recently announced that it is to support the Irish medium high school Meanscoil Feirste in the six counties. Gaelic deserves equal treatment.

There are currently around 2500 children in Gaelic playgroups, 1500 in primary school units and 130 in high school units. To ensure that Gaelic medium secondary education remains available to them, it is important that as many people as possible write to newspapers, MPs, MEPs and to Forsyth demanding that he does not stop Gaelic medium secondary education. More importantly than this, it is vital that people continue to support the existing playgroups and primary units. The more children that enroll in Gaelic medium education, the more difficult it will be for "Mental Mickey" Forsyth to deny them high school units.

Write to:

Michael Forsyth,
Sectetary of State for Scotland,
The Scottish Office,
St.Andrew's House,
Edinburgh,
Alba / Scotland.

1997 IS THE YEAR THAT MATTERS

Mebyon Kernow Press Release -30-01-97

Five centuries ago, 15000 sons of Cornwall took a stand against the rule of London. Marching all the way from the Lizard village of St. Keverne to Blackheath near London, they represented Cornwall and the wishes of its people.

500 years on, we must strive to bring all the people of Cornwall together once again as we campaign for maximum autonomy for Cornwall. The achievement of An Gof and Flamank in uniting the people of Cornwall remains an inspiration. It is right that the spirit and memory of these enduring heroes of Cornish nationalism should be evoked in our modern day fight for the future of Cornwall. Throughout 1997, we must celebrate their achievements, our Cornishness and work to enhance the reputations of these men - the greatest of Cornish heroes.

There will be those among our political opponents, of course, who will offer snide criticism by saying that we are looking to the past when we should be looking to the future - but we should not be scared of such comments. Mebyon Kernow - the party for Cornwall - is a progressive, forward looking party, to which our new manifesto is a marvellous testament.

We must remember it is only due to people like An Gof and Flamank that the Cornish identity survives, and that the best chance for Cornwall are the Cornish, green, left of centre and decentralist policies of Mebyon Kernow, supported by the bedrock that is our distinctive identity and network of communities.

As we enter 1997, there is a greater acceptance of our special identity and distinctiveness than ever before. We must take confidence in this and demand the political and economic autonomy that we need to take back control of our own affairs.

And it is a struggle we are winning - MK pressure is winning for Cornwall. Just before Christmas David Curry, Major's man for the 'south-west', openly acknowledged that Cornwall should be split from Devon in its dealings with Europe so that Cornwall will be able to benefit from Objective One funding. This has only happened because of MK pressure and it is only MK that has alerted the Cornish people that they have missed out on this funding. Cornwall's GDP is only 71.2% of the UK average, compared to 77.4% in 1981. That fall over the last 15 years equals a loss, in real money, of stlg2,590,000,000 to Cornish communities.

That is £stg5430 lost to every man, woman and child in Cornwall today.

During November, in less than 3 weeks, MK's National Executive Committee was able to compile a petition of nearly 1,000 signatures demanding a Cornish Euro-seat. Again it was MK that was leading the fight for Cornwall, to be followed by Cornwall Council which unanimously backed an MK motion for proper Cornish representation in Europe.

Cornwall's distinctive character and it's future prosperity will only be safeguarded by MK and the policies and sentiments we represent. We must pull out all the stops in 1997. This symbolic year is our great fight for Cornwall. With four General Election prospective parliamentary candidates and many council candidtes in place, we must offer a real Cornish alternative.

Work for Cornwall in 1997. Join the celebrations, march for Cornwall but most of all participate in MK's most important campaign for years.Help with leafleting and canvassing, support MK's election fund, or write letters to local newspapers in support of MK policies, if in Cornwall stand as a local council candidate, just do whatever you can.

REMEMBER - 1997 is the year that matters.

Support Mebyon Kernow in 1997.

MK has a dedicated team of election candidates and workers, but we are still up against the wealth and might of the English parties. In order to fight effective campaigns, the party will need your help, both money and people power will be required. MK has no private income, we are totally dependent on peoples commitment. Please help in whatever way you can. Please give generously. Donations can be sent to:

Election Fund,
c/o Graham Symmons,
Tremayne Farm cottage,
Praze an Beeble,
Camborne,
KERNOW.
British Isles

Details from;

MK Campaigns,
Shell Cottage,
Moorland Road,
Indian Queens,
TR9 6HN,
KERNOW
British Isles.

To register for the march to London contact;

Keskerdh Kernow 500,
5 Quarry House,
Rundles Court,
Malpas Road,
Truro. TR1 1UR

In Castlereagh they "Strive to safeguard individual rights"

Tell that to Roisin McAliskey

The release of Roisin McAliskey has once again focused attention on the operation by the British government of the holding and interrogation centres such as Castlereagh in N. Ireland.

There is little doubt that the treatment of McAliskey and the pressures she was subjected to whilst held at the centre in no small part contributed to the deterioration in her physical and mental condition that ultimately, and belatedly have resulted in her release.

Operated by the paramilitary RUC, Castlereagh has been the subject of criticism for almost the entire period it has been operational and there is absolutely no doubt that prisoners detained in the centre have been subjected to degrading treatment.

The United Kingdom government seems unwilling to end the abuse perpetrated at the centre which has been the subject of two recent critical reports by International bodies. In 1994 the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment called for immediate improvements. In July 1995 the UN Human Rights Committee recommended it should be closed 'as a matter of urgency'.

The Blair government has recently been pontificating in the Middle East on the need for adherence to United Nations decisions. The British Foreign Secretary has been calling for respect for Human Rights in the Balkans. The Northern Ireland Secretary however seems unmoved on the need to reform Castlereagh. What will it take? More illtreatment or perhaps a death before they heed International condemnation.

In 1997 the Celtic League specifically condemned the operation of all holding centres in N. Ireland. The N. Ireland Office replied that in the operation of the Centres "it strives to..safeguard individual human rights". The greatest safeguard to the individual human rights of those detained in N. Ireland would be to heed international condemnation and close Castlereagh now!

Germany confirm's "neutral" stance over McAliskey's detention - 18-03-97

The German Embassy in London has confirmed that Germany has no involvement or has expressed any wishes in relation to the detention (or otherwise) of Roisin McAliskey.

Although the international media have kept us fairly up to date with the progress of the McAliskey situation it is worth re-stating, for the record, that the German authorities have no part in the detention of Roisin McAliskey. In the response to the Celtic League, the German Embassy draws our attention to the 1957 European Convention on Extradition, which clearly states that the extradition should be governed solely by the Law of the party requested (in this case, the U.K.).

Whilst standing by the Extradition application, the comments by German Prosecutor in the case, Dr. Morré, to the U.K. / Irish media were confirmed. He stated that he had not been in contact with the British Crown Prosecution Service since the extradition request was made. He further made it clear that even if he were asked directly by the British authorities, his office would hold no view on the matter of Ms. McAliskey's arrest which is entirely in the hands of the U.K.

See below for previous Celtic League involvement in the matter

McAliskey - British should heed Irish Government's Intervention

The Celtic League welcome the decision of the Irish government to intervene over the detention of Roisin McAliskey. Last week the League called on the Irish government to make representations to the British [\(attached\)](#). The British Prison Authorities were also questioned by the League regarding [McAliskey's treatment](#)

The coded terms that Irish deputy Prime Minister has used in discussion with the British Ambassador to Dublin should be carefully scrutinised before the British respond. Mr. Spring had said the matter "could damage the shared objectives of the British and Irish government" in respect of advancing a negotiated settlement of Anglo-Irish differences.

The McAliskey issue has the potential to seriously accelerate the steady unravelling of relations since the IRA ceasefire broke down.

If the British do not understand this, they should consider what crass political actions by the Spanish government in their dealings with the [Basque separatist movement](#) has achieved in recent weeks. A bad situation has now spiralled out of control: A parallel can be drawn.

The Irish government intervention should not be viewed by the British as unhelpful or as an interference. It provides a clear perspective of how moderate opinion in the Celtic countries views the circumstances of McAliskey's detention.

By her continued detention the British government provide a *raison d'être* for a continued spiral into violence.

Text of letter sent to Irish government relating to detention of Roisin McAliskey.

An Taoiseach, Mr. John Bruton,
c/o Government Buildings,
Kildare Street,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.
Dear Sir,

I enclose correspondence to both the British and German governments concerning the disgraceful treatment currently being received by remand prisoner Roisin McAliskey in Holloway Prison, London.

A wide range of Irish and International organisations have expressed concern about the regime under which this young woman is confined.

We call upon the Irish government to make the strongest representations to the United Kingdom to ensure that the application of normal remand prisoner routine is applied. In particular the practice of strip searching and sleep deprivation should cease, and access to association and exercise facilities be afforded.

We also urge your government to make clear to the British that as this prisoner is in the advanced stages of pregnancy prenatal and antenatal treatment should be afforded to both her and her child in line with those that one would associate with a civilised society. We would request that you seek a specific assurance that Ms. McAliskey will not be shackled while giving birth as is currently threatened.

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt, General Secretary.

15/2/97

AMNESTY call for World action over Irish political prisoner 16-02-97

The Celtic League is to seek clarification from the British Prisons Minister of reports that Irish political prisoner Roisin McAliskey may be shackled whilst giving birth and that the new born child will be taken away from her within twenty-four hours.

McAliskey is currently on remand in Holloway Prison in London pending a German government extradition warrant (i.e. she is not charged with any offence within the U.K. and has not yet been tried over the German allegations).

The circumstances of her detention have already caused considerable concern and the International Human Rights "watchdog", Amnesty, has taken the unusual step of calling for "urgent action" from its branches and members worldwide to protest to both the British and German governments. Amnesty believes that, "the outcome of the possible decision to separate mother and baby would amount to 'cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment' and would damage permanently the mother child bonding relationship".

Roisin McAliskey is already subjected to a harrowing twice daily strip searching regime and is denied association with other inmates. Independent medical reports

indicate that the circumstances of her detention (in isolation, with sleep deprivation and understandable concerns about her pregnancy) are worsening her overall medical condition.

Signs that the British have started to realise the implications of the regime they are applying are indicated by the disclosure by Roisin's mother (former mid-Ulster MP Bernadette McAliskey) that prison authorities are trying to get her daughter to sign a disclaimer that would waive any legal claim against the prison in the event of harm being caused to her or the unborn child.

The Celtic League will be adding its voice to the protests urged by Amnesty. We will also be directing criticism at the Irish government over its failure to act over treatment which verges on torture being applied by the British authorities to this detainee. McAliskey's is the latest high profile example of the treatment of Irish political prisoners in British jails.

J. B. Moffatt, Celtic League.

General Council Meeting - 30-3-97

The General Council of the Celtic League met in Mannin over the Easter weekend and considered a range of issues which are of concern in the various Celtic countries.

Reports were received from the General Secretary of the League on action taken following the League's conference in [Brittany last August](#).

It was noted that our opposition to proposed cuts in [Irish Medium Education](#) which had been the subject of a sustained campaign by the six League National branches had been successful. Other [language campaigns](#) over cuts in Gaelic Education units in Scotland had also been successful and the Council noted the progress made in Gaelic Education in Mannin.

The Council unreservedly condemned the continued deployment of British Special Forces in the North East of Ireland and the General Secretary was requested to write to the N. Ireland Office calling for a full independent enquiry into events in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone on 27th of March when an unarmed civilian was shot and seriously injured by troops in an incident in which another civilian, a Catholic Clergyman, also narrowly escaped injury.

The decision of the U.K. to rule out the Sellafield site as the nuclear waste repository was welcomed but League Chairman, Cathal O' Luain, warned that the Celtic political and environmental groups should not be complacent as the U.K. will now probably set their sights on alternative dump locations and invariably there will again be pressure to use areas in Scotland or Wales. The League should be prepared to initiate an opposition campaign at short notice if this danger materialises.

The meeting also considered a report from the International branch Secretary, Alan Heusaff, concerning the ongoing [repression of Bretons](#) for providing assistance to Basque political refugees. The Council noted that in the past six years, 216 Bretons have been subjected to detention and investigation as the Spanish and French Police have co-operated in actions against "ETA - Militaire". The actions of ETA in the Spanish [Basque](#) area have been used as an excuse by the French for an assault on the fundamental human rights of Breton citizens.

Whilst on the subject of political detainees a brief report was given by the General secretary into the actions taken by the League centrally to support the campaign to improve the detention conditions of remand prisoner [Roisin McAliskey](#). McAliskey, currently in Holloway prison remanded pending extradition hearings, is the only pregnant Category A prisoner in the British penal system. She had been held under intolerable conditions but these had now been improved following a sustained campaign by a broad range of support groups.

In relation to the League's military monitoring programme the General Council applauded the commitment given by the Fianna Fail opposition party to initiate a fresh enquiry into the loss of Aer Lingus Flight [EI-712](#) near the Aberporth military testing range in March 1968. The Celtic League have been at the forefront of calls for such an enquiry and have campaigned for almost twenty years on the issue. The General Secretary also confirmed that the MOD had released to the League substantial statistical information and aircraft accidents and this is currently being assessed. The MOD however rejected concerns about one particular aircraft type ([The B Ae Hawk](#)) despite the fact that one in six of the aircraft have crashed (ironically another incident occurred just days after the reassurance on the aircraft's safety from Defence Under Secretary Earl Howe).

A statement from Secretary of State for Scotland (issued in Nov/96) on the conclusions of the survey of [Beaufort Dyke sea munitions dump](#) was rejected by the League as vague and inconclusive and, given the recent pollution of shores in the N. Irish sea with explosives it was resolved to press the Irish government to readdress the problem of the British munitions dumps which pollute areas around the western British Isles.

The meeting concluded with a review of financial matters and a General meeting of the League was confirmed to take place in Wales in the summer.

J.B. Moffatt,
General Secretary

General Council Meeting - 30-3-97

The General Council of the Celtic League met in Mannin over the Easter weekend and considered a range of issues which are of concern in the various Celtic countries.

Reports were received from the General Secretary of the League on action taken following the League's conference in [Brittany last August](#).

It was noted that our opposition to proposed cuts in [Irish Medium Education](#) which had been the subject of a sustained campaign by the six League National branches had been successful. Other [language campaigns](#) over cuts in Gaelic Education units in Scotland had also been successful and the Council noted the progress made in Gaelic Education in Mannin.

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J.B. Moffatt,
General Secretary

Conservatives and Labour both "Chicken Out" on Ulster -12-04-97

In the European newspaper (3-9 April 1997) an article appeared which questioned the ability of the IRA to mount a sustained campaign in England in the run up to the British election. The author might wish to redraft his article after the events in England in the past seven days.

Even after the Railway and Motorway problems British newspapers, perhaps in hindsight foolishly, were dismissive of future disruptive trends. The newspapers from the UK after Aintree will no doubt "sing a different song" and will be invoking the "Dunkirk" spirit and the "Britain (England) can take it" philosophy. Already the dangerous rhetoric of "no dialogue with Sinn Fein" is being bandied about, with each of the main parties attempting to outdo each other.

All this is nonsense!

When the normally authoritative military intelligence review, "Jane's", published a series of articles last August, critical of the capacity of the armed republican movement, the Celtic League issued a warning that such claims were [based on propoganda more than objective military comment.](#)

The "Dunkirk spirit" is going to become increasingly strained as bomb alerts, actual and hoax, pervade.

Only fully inclusive talks can resolve this situation and the sooner the parties engage the better for all the peoples of these Islands. Strains on the structure of the United Kingdom, involving calls for Independence or devolution, can be confronted politically in the other Celtic countries, so why not Ulster?

The main log jam on political progress in N.E. Ireland is not the IRA but rather the nasty and uncompromising veto which the British government has allowed the Ulster Unionists. Their ugly and menacing belligerence was on display publicly on Friday (04-04-97) evening. For them the Aintree media attention provided a welcome diversion from the torching of the Churches of Catholic worshippers which was undoubtedly stimulated by Unionist politicians at the Friday rally.

Last week the two main political parties in England were attempting to outdo each other parading giant chickens, however when it comes to confronting the realities of N. E. Ireland it seems they're both chicken!

J.B. Moffatt, General Secretary

An Intelligence report on the IRA in Janes Intelligence Review entitled "Uncovering the Irish Republican Army" sheds little light on the 'Secret Army'. The Celtic League challenge some of its comments and assumptions and conclude articles of this type do nothing but foster hopes within the British military of the 'false dawn' of defeat of the armed Republican movement -25-08-96

Janes Intelligence Review (July & August) purports to provide updated intelligence on the world's oldest and most secretive guerilla army. The detailed articles by Irish journalist Sean Boyne do not, however, contribute greatly to

uncovering the mystery which surrounds what author Bowyer Bell termed "The Secret Army".

A lot of the material is conjectural or is re-hashed from earlier statements and publications. The articles, however, serve a useful function in that they illustrate the deficiencies in intelligence available to the British in assessing the 'enemy' which, following the breakdown of the cease fire, they continue to face. It is interesting that a magazine conglomerate such as Janes retains the services of an outside journalist to furnish this assessment. The Defence and Intelligence publication is known for the close links its regular staff have to both British and overseas military and intelligence sources. The failure of those sources to deliver first-hand knowledge is indicative of the difficulties the British face in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the Irish Republican Army. The article sets out both the structure of the Republican Army and a brief assessment of those intelligence units ranged against it. Some obvious deficiencies exist in respect of the latter.

INTELLIGENCE UNITS COUNTERING THE IRA

We are told the Garda Special Detective Unit is the counter-subversive unit of the Irish Police. Operating from its base at Harcourt Street in Dublin, it can also call on detectives 'outside' Dublin who may also carry out a Special branch role. This brief analysis understates the nature and extent of the Irish Police operation against both the IRA and fringe republican movements. It under-rates the ability of the IRA to stay one step ahead of a formidable police machine in the 26 Counties over thirty years. It also skirts around the now obvious institutional link that exists between both the Irish police and their counterparts in the RUC. This position, more formalised in the recent years of 'Anglo-Irish cooperation', may be potentially politically embarrassing but none the less is a fact.

Turning to the North, mention of the (RUC) Special branch also significantly fails to include detail of the liaison unit formed some years ago to coordinate efforts between the RUC (SB) and their 'mainland' counterparts. Ostensibly established to enhance the flow of information between Belfast and England, an additional imperative was the suspicion with which some senior London based Special Branch Officers regarded 'the natives' in the North.-MI5 receives mention as the security service of the UK. 'Its personnel' we are told have been active in Northern Ireland.

MI5 is significantly committed to the Irish problem and has been for decades; indeed it was founded as the Special Irish Branch and the major part of its "raison d'etre" is still Ireland. This commitment extends to large scale intelligence gathering involving GCHQ and other centres plus liaison to overseas intelligence services. The mention, in the article, of close liaison between MI5 and the Scotland Yard Special Operations Department should have warranted special attention in a thorough intelligence assessment. There is little doubt that the deep distrust between these two strands of British counter terrorism has contributed immeasurably to the ability of Oglagh na h'Eireann to establish, support and contain consistent Army operations in England.

The British Army's brief mention alludes to the role of the SAS. We are told there is 'at least' a troop (of SAS) active in N. Ireland. No mention here of the well established counter insurgency section built up by the British Army over twenty five years and specifically tasked to the North (This is well documented by former disaffected intelligence employees of the British). Indeed, the reference to the SAS being

'actively deployed' in the north is somewhat dated. Even the Celtic League's somewhat "amateurish" intelligence machine had concluded that Special Forces operations to the province were, on many occasions, mounted with air support from bases in the UK considered doubly secure both from the IRA and untrustworthy 'paddies' in the RUC (SB). The operations in S. Armagh to detain suspects for the London bombings is one such recent example.

THE IRA - ITS STRUCTURE AND DEPLOYMENT

Inferences as to the location of this IRA Commander or that Commander cannot disguise the conjectural nature of some of this comment. British media speculation in recent years makes the IRA top heavy with senior Officers. This series of articles go no way to stabilising those inaccuracies. The article would have us believe that the Irish and British authorities know the identities of most of the middle ranking and senior personnel of the IRA. This is exactly the sort of "clap trap" that was being peddled prior to internment over twenty years ago. The truth is that the various intelligence services *believe* but they do not *know*. What is clear from recent events, and what the Janes Intelligence Reviews completely miss, is that this is a guerilla force, fighting in the most inhospitable of terrains for its rural and urban warfare, that continues to sustain a level of military operations that has stretched the British Army and government to breaking point.

THE IRA - ITS RESOURCES

A full page table in Part 2 of the Review sets out details of arms procurement by the IRA from 1969 to the 'present'. The table concludes, however, in the late eighties. Thus, the operations of one of the most significant elements of the IRA, its quartermaster element, disappear into a 'black-hole' over six years ago. Janes, assorted media pundits, British Intelligence and the Garda may believe that the Republican movement sat back on its 'Libyan stockpile' six years ago, but if that is the extent of their intelligence then it indicates a sad detachment from reality.

The section on arms procurement also rehashes an old favourite of media analysts, the IRA's preoccupation with obtaining ground to air missiles. These, we are told, are essential in order to gain superiority over the British Army's ability to sustain border garrisons in the North. The capacity of the border based ASUs of the IRA to mount a challenge to air operations is now well proven. Examination of news records will show that fire fights (successful from the IRA perspective) between units and the British Army, particularly in S. Armagh, were a regular occurrence just prior to the cease fire. The British Army, invariably supported by helicopters, does not seem to have gained any advantage.

The articles were entitled "Uncovering the Irish Republican Army". If this is the best Janes can do, the Republican movement has nothing to fear from British "Intelligence". Sean Boyne's article is not fundamentally inaccurate. It avoids the usual rhetoric associated with such articles that usually appear in British military or defence journals. If it has any faults, these are by omission of fact (and quite frankly that factual information is not available). It rehashes some questionable 'intelligence' (Did ETA really have the resources in the early 1980s to supply arms to the IRA? Did those RPG-7s allegedly obtained in 1972 come from Europe - or further afield?), but in less dramatic style than some recent articles.

The main deficiency in the article is that, in pandering to Janes' pretensions as a military Intelligence Review, it misses the fundamental reality. The British military have lost their way in Ireland. Their day is done. They are beaten. The 1994 cease fire came just in time to give them a breathing space. The morale of their troops was low (any posting but Ulster); their Intelligence Machine was a squabbling jelly of conflicting interests; will we ever know the truth of those bloody deaths on a Kintyre Hillside when, in a tragic "accident", the heart was ripped out of the Ulster intelligence manpower infrastructure?

Politically they had stalled and, despite present attempts to rewrite history, Gerry Adams and Sinn Fein, in engaging with John Hume, were setting the political agenda. Finally, the article makes dangerous and, in our view, flawed suggestions. In the final section of Part 1 it comments on recent IRA operations; recent 'failures' are taken as indicative of current manpower deficiencies in the IRA. It speculates that this campaign is being mounted with 'comparatively inexperienced people'. What is singularly apparent to most who survey recent developments is that the IRA are demonstrating that they have the capacity to continue 'armed struggle' with all the vigour of the pre 1994 situation. This is also demonstrated in the context of a general consensus in the movement that honest, open and inclusive political dialogue is still on the Republican agenda. There have been so many false dawns for the British Army in its dealings in Ireland. They should be wary of any "dawning" of the IRA's defeat *this* century.

J.B. Moffatt,
pp. Celtic League.
August 1996

Basque Independence - Celtic League's campaign of support

See also:

[AGM Resolution](#)
[Celtic / Basque links long established](#)

Included in this document

[Media clampdown a threat to democracy - 17 July '98](#)
[Action over double standards of UK in relation to Human Rights - 5th March '98](#)
[Letter to President Clinton re appointment of Felipe Gonzalez to OSCE 7 Jan '98](#)
[Letter to Portuguese Government re Basque Asylum seeker - 22 Dec '97](#)
[French Police arrest five in Brittany - 1st Dec. '98](#)
[Letter to Spanish Ambassador in Dublin re trial](#)
[Letter to Minister for Interior re Basque arrests](#)
[Bretons live in fear of life](#)
[Open letter to European Embassies](#)
[Spain condemned for return to fascist methods](#)

Basque Media Clampdown - an attack on democracy - 17 July '98

``Attack on the Basque media goes too far. This is no longer a localised problem it is an attack on democracy and free speech throughout Europe".

The Spanish government seem unwilling to accept the lessons of recent history. Many of this centuries longest running conflicts have, over the past decade, been overcome via diplomatic conflict resolution.

With the end of the Cold War the United States has adopted a pro-active role in encouraging warring factions world wide to settle their differences amicably.

Most recently the first meaningful steps for over thirty years were taken in Northern Ireland, with the British and Irish governments receiving formidable backing from Washington., which saw that apparently unreconciled conflict take the first steps on the road to peace. Hard men and hard lines did not win in N. Ireland and the ultimate realisation of that conflict was via dialogue.

The Spanish government, wrestling with an emergency of its own creation in the southern Basque country, has chosen to ignores all the positive pointers to peaceful conflict resolution. It has waged a vicious and unsuccessful war against ETA and because of its failure to defeat what it sees as a militant separatist movement it has now broadened its attack.

In jailing the complete Executive of Herri Batasuna it attacked democracy in Spain and in the Basque country in particular. The EU, like the pre WW2 democracies, looked the other way. Now with its attack on the Basque media and the closures of Basque newspapers and radio it goes too far. This is no longer a localised problem effecting the Basque region. It is an attack on democracy and free speech throughout Europe.

Spain tries to justify its actions with tales about the media being used to communicate with terrorists. This justification might have been lifted by turn of the century "ripping yarns" such as Buchan's "The Thirty Nine Steps" . The whole episode would be laughable if it were not so serious.

Even those elements of the pro government media in Spain are indicating quiet alarm. The news media of Europe should consider the implications if this action is not challenged.

J B Moffatt

Standard Letter sent to European Ambassadors - 17 July '98

The
Embassy of.....

Ambassador

Dear Ambassador,

The Celtic League has repeatedly expressed concern, to EU member States, about the repressive measures adopted by the Spanish government to address the political crisis it faces through denying self determination to the Basque country.

Despite a wave of International criticism about the behaviour of Spanish security forces and also its extremely provocative action in jailing the complete Executive committee of the Basque National movement, Herri Batasuna, the EU has turned a blind eye.

Repeatedly calls have been made, by our organisation and others, for Spain's partners in the EU, and particularly the British, to point the Spanish government in the direction of conflict resolution along the lines of that achieved successfully in Northern Ireland.

The latest move by the Spanish government, in closing down the Nationalist newspaper Egin and its sister radio station, takes the situation beyond the pale. This is not an attack on ETA or even an attack on those Basques seeking self determination it is an attack on democracy itself.

If the EU disregards this serious development it is sending a clear signal that its member States are allowed to take measures similar to those practised in the mid twentieth century fascist States.

Whilst these attacks on the Basque media are officially a judicial and not a political decision the scarcely coded statements from Spanish Ministers, including Interior Minister Oreja, indicate that this latest step is politically driven.

Spain is raising the stakes in its hard line campaign against Basque separatism and in doing so asking the EU, and democracies generally, to endorse attacks on the Freedom of expression.

We call on your government, and all countries committed to democracy, to protest to the Spanish about this undemocratic act. We call on all EU States in particular to urge Spain to promote conflict resolution on the lines of the successful model adopted by the British and Irish governments with United States support in N. Ireland.

Yours sincerely

J
Secretary General Celtic League

B

Moffatt

Part of correspondence to UK Foreign Office re Human Rights - 5th March '98

The Celtic League is calling on the British government (see below) to show as much interest in human rights in Brittany and the Basque country as it does to events in the Balkans.

The League is writing to the Spanish authorities that bail be allowed for the leaders of Herri Batasuna pending their appeal against their imprisonment for their political beliefs.

In a new and disturbing development a number of Basque youths have been detained the Celtic League is particularly concerned at this ominous development and the suggestion that some of these 18-19 year olds may have been subjected to torture. We will be contacting the European

Committee for the prevention of torture asking them to urgently investigate this situation.

David				Moran
Western		European		Department
Foreign	and	Commonwealth		Office
LONDON SW1A 2AH				

Dear Mr. Moran,

I was surprised by your correspondence of the 19th of February.

The delay in replying was disappointing, however what was of more significant concern was that your reply does not even appear to have been read prior to signature.

Notwithstanding the incoherence of the concluding sentence, the initial part of the second paragraph is clear enough for me to deduce that the Foreign Secretary does not apparently extend the human rights values he is currently espousing in the Balkans to more immediate neighbours and partners of the United Kingdom in the European Union.

It really is not good enough for a country such as the United Kingdom to turn a blind eye to the misfortune suffered by many citizens of France, part of the Breton minority, who have simply provided humanitarian support to Basque refugees fleeing repression in their own country.

The "knock at the door" in the early hours has become a reality for many of these citizens and yet you advise that the United Kingdom does not have an opinion on this.

Annick Lagadeg, a Breton journalist, was recently imprisoned in Rennes. The French authorities committed her to Prison despite the fact that the original sentence, which appears to have been imposed for the opinions she holds, had been set two years earlier. These are the sort of psychological pressure that ordinary citizens are being subjected to.

I am sure that the Foreign Secretary does not simply apply the British government's humanitarian principles to the Albanian minority in Kosovo.

I therefore appeal to Mr. Cook directly to enquire into the ongoing harassment of Breton citizens whose sole crime appears to be to wish to assist political refugees from the Basque country.

Yours sincerely,

J	B	Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League		

Text of Letter to President Clinton re Felipe Gonzalez - 07 Jan. '98

PRESIDENT	BILL	CLINTON
The		Whitehouse

Washington
United States of America.

DC

Mr. President,

I write to express our concern at reports that your government is actively promoting the appointment of former Spanish Premier Felipe Gonzalez, to the role of Supervisor of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, to supervise the peace agreement in the former Yugoslavia.

Gonzalez held power in Spain during a period when government sponsored death squads (GAL) waged a campaign of torture, murder and kidnap against what the Gonzalez government regarded as its enemies in the Basque country. There are serious allegations, still unresolved that Gonzalez knew personally of this campaign and participated in its formulation.

Not only was the campaign directed at political opponents but many people unconnected to politics were used or abused during this period by the government run GAL.

A man of Gonzalez' stature plainly has nothing to offer to an organisation such as the OSCE which is founded on principles of peace, respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The OSCE is one of the most important organisations established in this century and since its formation has greatly assisted to development of dialogue and consensus to end hostility and aggression in Europe.

The Celtic League urge the United States government not to demean the organisation via the appointment of inappropriate individuals such as former Premier Gonzalez to a key role within it.

Yours sincerely

J.
General Secretary, Celtic League

B. Moffatt

CC: OSCE Chairman in Office, OSCE NGO Liaison office - Vienna
US Embassy London & Dublin

Text of Letter to Portuguese Government re Basque asylum seeker - 22 Dec. '97

The Minister for the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Lisbon
PORTUGAL

Dear Sir

I write to register our concern at the decision of your country's Interior Ministry to refuse political asylum to the Basque Refugee Jose Luis Telletxea Maia. I understand that a judicial review of this decision has confirmed this decision.

It has been clear for sometime that a coalition of EU states have agreed openly to co-operate with Spain in repressing certain elements promoting national independence for the Basque country.

It is of course perfectly appropriate for governments to reach diplomatic arrangements with neighbouring States. However, given that such an arrangement in all certainty underpins the decision taken in relation to this asylum application, its legitimacy is questionable.

The principle under which asylum applications are considered is supported by International law. Your decision to refuse this application is flawed because it is based on a political 'Accord' with a neighbouring state from which the asylum seeker comes. Therefore the decision to deny asylum is a clear breach of the intent of the United Nations Declaration on Territorial Asylum (a copy of which is attached). I also refer your government to Articles 13 & 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The Celtic League will be formally complaining to the United Nations Secretary General about these alleged breaches.

Yours sincerely

J
General Secretary, Celtic League

B

Moffatt

French arrest five in Brittany 1st December '98

French police arrested five people, three of them Basques, on Wednesday in the Lannion region of Brittany. They are suspected of involvement with the Basque armed organization Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA, Basque Homeland and Freedom), authorities said.

Francisco Xabier Gallaga Ruiz, Asier Ormazabal Lizeaga, and Miren Iratze Zorza were arrested in in the early morning. Annie Alexandre and her husband, Bernard Michon, from Brittany were also rested. All five were reportedly arrested in the home of Alexandre in the locality of Pluzunet.

Alexandre was arrested in 1992 and sentenced in 1995 to 10 months in jail for hiding Francisco Xabier Gallaga Ruiz. She was exempted from serving time provided she would not be convicted for similar charges within a period of five years.

Today's arrests were ordered by Paris "anti-terrorism" judge Laurence Le Vert. Members of the elite force RAID led by chief of police Roger Marion and of the Rennes regional police, broke into Alexandre's home and "neutralized" its occupants, authorities said.

When arrested, Francisco Xabier Gallaga Ruiz and Asier Ormazabal Lizeaga were carrying each a handgun which will prevent their immediate expulsion to Spain. They will be prosecuted in France for "association with criminals."

Spain's Ministry of Interior Jaime Mayor Oreja said today that the arrests were the latest in a series by French police who earlier this month apprehended seven Basque refugees presumed to be members of ETA, the Spanish press said.

The Spanish government has accused ETA's leadership of orchestrating attacks in Spain from their headquarters in France.

The Basque clergy supports negotiations with Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, which has been fighting since 1968 for national self-determination and an independent Basque Country.

In January 1997 the Spanish Government rejected an offer from Nobel Peace laureate Adolfo Pérez Esquivel to mediate between the government and ETA and for peace talks.

The Madame 13 75042 Paris Cedex 01	Minister Elisabeth Place	of 	Justice Guigou Vendome
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Dear Minister,

I write to express our organisations concern at the arrest of Annie Alexandre and Bernard Michon in Brittany on November 26th. A number of Basque nationals were detained with them.

These latest arrests are part of a series which seem aimed at harassing and deterring Breton nationalists from providing support to those fleeing oppression in the Basque country.

They come at a time when the Spanish authorities seem set on further suppressing Basque political organisation and also in a week in which the Spanish authorities have once again been condemned internationally for their treatment of detainees in the Basque country.

As the government of Spain drifts inexorably towards an almost fascist repression of its opponent, and specifically of those who seek political self determination, it seems strange that a government in France which advances socialist credentials should wish to align itself with them.

The French government, and specifically your department, would do well to review its strategy of support for Spain in that countries continuing repression of the Basque peoples struggle for self determination.

The Celtic League supports a negotiated settlement of the problems of the Basque people and movement towards such a settlement is not assisted by repressive action by the French against the Basque people either in the northern (French) Basque country (were other arrests have taken place) or in Brittany where many Basque nationalists have found shelter.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

Text of Letter to Spanish Ambassador in Dublin re Herri Batasuna trial

The		Ambassador,
Embassy	of	Spain,
17a	Merlyn	Park,
Dublin,		
Ireland.		

Dear Sir,

I write to express our concern at the "show trial" initiated in Madrid this week of leaders of the Basque National movement Herri Batasuna.

The attempt to both smear and repress an organisation that has a clearly defined democratic mandate sets the clock back in Europe fifty years.

The recent experience of other centralised States in Europe, such as the United Kingdom, which have attempted similar tactics to that currently being employed by your government against the Basques, have seen this strategy disastrously undermined by popular opinion. Put simply, Herri Batasuna enjoys considerable popular support in the Basque country at present and your governments efforts to undermine the organisation can only strengthen that support.

I understand that another Basque Nationalist movement the (PNV) has described the trial of Herri Batasuna leaders as "a mistake". We would use somewhat stronger language than this and in our view the whole "show trial" is a corruption of the political and judicial process in a democratic society.

In recent years Spain has projected internationally an image of devolved government to the International community. There were some who saw this as a positive development coming so swiftly after the return of democracy to Spain. Your governments action against Herri Batasuna indicate that your agenda is, as it always was, the maintenance of the nineteenth century "Nation State", in this Spain is a political dinosaurs as Europe looks forward to a new millenium where its diversity of peoples enjoy self determination.

Yours sincerely,

J	B	Moffatt,
pp Celtic League		

Text of Letter to Spanish Minister for Interior - 07-07-97

Jaime		Mayor	Oreja,
Ministerio		del	Interior,
Paseo	de	la	Castellana
28071			5,
Spain.			Madrid,

Dear Minister,

I am writing to express the Celtic Leagues' concern at the circumstances surrounding the arrest and detention of four people in the Southern Basque country on July 1 1997, and the subsequent detention of two others on July 3.

We are particularly concerned at the violence (which we understand the arresting authorities do not deny) associated with the arrests.

There is unfortunately a long history of arbitrary violence to those detained by the Spanish Authorities in the Basque country and indeed some deaths have also occurred in questionable circumstances.

We therefore urge you to:

- 1) take all prudent steps to guarantee the security of these detainees from physical and psychological abuse.
- 2) ensure appropriate medical examination and treatment for any with pre-existing health problems, or for those who sustained injury during arrest.
- 3) ensure that the detentions and arrests comply strictly with rights applicable under domestic and international law.

The Celtic League appreciates that there are perceived security problems in relation to the Spanish authorities and those seeking self determination for the Basque country. Those problems however are best addressed via meaningful dialogue on a fully inclusive basis with all political organisations in the Basque country. Repression and harassment by the Spanish authorities of those working on a politically active basis for self determination will ultimately be counterproductive.

A list of the six detainees with dates and times of arrest is appended.

Copies of this correspondence will be forwarded by post to UK based Ambassadors of EU States for information.

A copy will also be faxed in parallel with this message to you, to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman Treatment and Punishment, whom we understand have already made critical observations on the treatment of Basques similarly detained.

Can I conclude by saying that it is incumbent on all political organisations, non governmental rights organisations, authorities, governments and individuals to show respect for human rights. On this basis a broader consensus for political progress in Europe can be achieved.

I trust you will respond to this request in the same spirit as it is made.

Yours sincerely

J.B.
pp. Celtic League

Moffatt

7/7/97

cc. European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (Special Rapporteur) - by fax.
attachment

List of detainees etc.

Name	Time and date of arrest
Joxe Luis Erosteigi	3-3:30am July 1 1997
Josu Uribetxeberria Bolinaga	"
Xabier Ugarte Villar	"
Joxe Miguel Gaztelu Etxandorena	"
Sabin Usandizaga Galarraga	1:40am July 3 1997
Emilio Arrizabalaga Ruiz de Azua	4:15am July 3 1997

Breton Citizens in fear of their lives - 06-04-97

The following press release was received by the Breizh Branch of the Celtic League. The Central Committee has responded with an [open letter](#) to National ambassadors to the E.U.

PRESS STATEMENT

We wish to draw attention to the harassment to which Klaod an Duigou (officially Claude Le Duigou), a secondary school teacher and active member of the Breton Language movement, is subjected by the French Criminal Investigation Department.

For several years now, a number of Bretons have put up Basque refugees in their homes, not because they wanted to support the ETA use of violence but out of concern that if they were extradited to Spain they would be tortured. Since 1990, 216 Bretons have been questioned and detained in this connection: 30 have received jail sentences (generally suspended), 17 others are due for trial (5 of them on 25 March) in Paris.

K. an Duigou has played an important role in the setting up of committees to support those arrested. Protests have been backed by a large section of the Breton population, including several elected representatives.

K. an Duigou had his house in Lorient searched on 23/03/94 on a warrant from Judge Laurence Le Vert. No evidence was found that he would have harboured Basques. But documents containing nothing of an illegal nature were seized. He was detained for 24 hours and released without charge. However the police took his photo and fingerprints.

An attempt to incriminate him prior to the trial of 81 Basques and Bretons in Paris on 24-10-96 could not be sustained. His request for the return of the seized documents was ignored.

What worries him much more is that his photo is kept in a police file marked ETA Militaire: he and another person, Christophe Millox, could see it in such a file in the Lorient Police Station early last year, and a third person, Anne Riou, wife of the editor

of the nationalist monthly Combat Breton (himself then in police custody) had it also shown to her when being interrogated.

Klaod an Duigou believes that this photo could be used to implicate him in cases with which he has nothing to do, when people are being questioned under harsh conditions which have frequently been denounced.

It can be assumed that his photo is now in the files of the various French police services, which means the possibility of continuous harassment when he is travelling. It is likely also that it has been passed to the Spanish Police Services, members of which, as is well known, have been involved in at least 26 assassinations carried out by GAL on French territory.

"This puts my freedom and even my life under threat," says An Duigou. He adds that the situation (for active Breton nationalists) has become very dangerous.

In any case, the facts outlined here constitute a serious infringement of fundamental rights. Anyone concerned should write to:

M. Le Procureur de La Republique,
Rue Maitre Esvelin,
56100 Lorient.

asking for the documents seized on 23/3/94 to be returned to him and for his photo to be removed from the police files.

An Open Communiqué to the Embassies of the European Union

Circularised on 6th April, 1997.

Dear Sir / Madam,

Since 1990 216 Bretons have been subject to arrest or investigation on suspicion of harbouring or providing support to Basque refugees. Thirty people have received jail sentences which, although for the most part suspended, have been awarded after prolonged periods of remand. Trials are continuing in France and this number will undoubtedly increase.

Protests against the French government's actions are backed by considerable numbers of people both in Brittany and in the other Celtic countries who believe it is an overriding principle of International humanitarian behaviour to provide support to people (in this case the Basques) who risk being tortured or imprisoned if extradited to Spain.

Lest your government believes this to be an extreme representation we would remind you that:

a)The entire Executive of the legitimate political Party Herri Batasuna were recently imprisoned.

b)In tandem with this judicial drive against politicians, the murders continue and on 29th March, Jose Zabala, a Basque separatist activist, was found beaten and murdered after being held for some days by the Spanish Police.

c) There is increasing evidence that the government of former Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez, was involved with the GAL assassination squads which operated both in the Basque country and also in the French area of the Basque country. Last year, the Spanish supreme court indicted the former Interior Minister in the Gonzalez government, Jose Barrionuevo, on GAL related charges, accusing him with others of running the murder gangs.

Many of those who have assisted the Basque refugees in Brittany also fear for their lives as there is evidence that the French police, either by accident or design, have identified them as being active in assisting "ETA-Militaire", despite the fact their involvement in assisting the Basques is purely humanitarian. The "close" cooperation between the Spanish and French police services over Basque separatists matters is well documented.

We call on your government, via the institutions of the EU, to

1) use its good offices to prevail upon the French government to end repression of those providing humanitarian assistance to the Basques in Brittany.

2) support an independent investigation into the ongoing political repression in the Basque country, an end to the detention of members of Herri Batasuna and an enquiry into the murder of Jose Zabala.

Thanking you in anticipation of a positive response.

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt,
General Secretary, Celtic League.

Spain condemned for return to days of fascist repression - 3-02-97

The Celtic League has written to the Spanish Ambassador in London condemning the Spanish authorities' repression of the Basque country's National organisation, Herri Batasuna. It is understood that an order has been made requiring the 25 member committee of the long-standing political party to appear before a Spanish supreme court based in Madrid before February 18th.

The matter relates to an election campaign video which included footage of members of ETA, the armed separatist movement, speaking in the Basque language. The Spanish authorities have chosen to interpret this as conspiring with terrorists and have given the Basque politicians a choice of explaining themselves before the court or being arrested.

The letter to the ambassador states:

"As a constitutional organisation, the Celtic League was optimistic that, when Spain emerged from the repressive years of its fascist past, it would move swiftly to right the injustices perpetrated against those National groups such as the Basques who have been unreasonably incorporated within the Spanish 'Nation' State against their will. Instead of progress, however, we see a return to repression."

The letter goes on to call for a recognition of the Basque country as a separate nation as the only solution to the political conflict. The present course of threatening legitimate political movements is condemned as, "a retrograde step which will damage your country's credibility."

The Basques are prepared to go to a Spanish prison: We should be prepared to voice our distaste for this heavy-handed tactic of the Spanish authorities, which ultimately can only serve to strengthen support for those who believe in direct action.

The address for the Spanish Ambassador in London is:

39, Chesham Place,
London,
SW1X 8SB,
England.

Europe looks at torture allegation - 27-04-97

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) have agreed to consider a complaint submitted by the Celtic League following the beating of a number of civilians arrested in the South Armagh N. Ireland area on 10 April.

Three have those arrested have since been charged with terrorist offences and IRA membership. There is no doubt excessive force was used at the time of the arrests some of the men required hospital treatment and the arrest site was described by eye witnesses after the event as "being like a butchers yard".

The League protested to the N. Ireland Office and in addition to the CPT also wrote to all EU Embassies, the US Embassies in London and Dublin and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture.

British Media Hypocrisy - 21-04-97

Condemn the IRA - but look the other way when British troops administer rough justice!

[Letter to Patrick Mayhew](#) (Sec. of State for N.Ireland)
[Circular to European Ambassadors](#)

Last week the IRA once again caused widespread disruption throughout the United Kingdom. As they no doubt intended, this action created great media attention. Considerable coverage was provided to senior UK politic leaders who were effusive in their criticisms.

Strangely, events in the north of Ireland several days earlier do not seem to have exercised the British media or British political leaders. After arrests in South Armagh on Thursday 10 April, its quite clear that those detained were subjected to appalling physical abuse.

The British Security Forces have a well documented track record of abuse in this region of Ireland and one would have hoped, following recent criticisms by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and other International bodies, that the British media would highlight any recurrences so as to ensure the pattern of previous decades is not repeated.

However, the British media looked the other way and are every bit as guilty as the thugs that beat the three detainees mentioned in our letter to The Sec. of State for N. Ireland. (below)

Text of Letter to Secretary of State for Northern Ireland

The Secretary of State for N. Ireland,
Rt. Hon. Patrick Mayhew,
Stormont Buildings,
Belfast,
N. Ireland.

Dear Sir,

I write to express the concern of our organisation at the ill treatment suffered by three persons detained by the Security Forces in South Armagh on Thursday 10th of April.

The three men, we are aware, have since been charged with a variety of offences although a number of persons detained with them have since been released.

From press reports of the men's appearance in Court, and also the complaints registered on their behalf by their Solicitors, it is clear the men were subjected, either at the time of arrest or subsequently whilst in detention at Gough Barracks in Armagh, to considerable violence.

Injuries were so serious that at least one of the three required Hospital treatment and injuries to all three seem consistent with an extremely violent beating, probably involving the use of weapons, and carried out over a considerable period.

We would remind you that this latest series of incidents is, regrettably, completely compatible with the track record of the United Kingdom's Security Forces for a period of over twenty years in N. Ireland.

In 1972 the Irish government complained formally to the European Commission about interrogation techniques then used. The Commission found against the United Kingdom and confirmed that those techniques contravened Article 3 of the European Convention. Periodically over the years there were sustained allegations about methods used in Police Stations and Army bases throughout N. Ireland.

In 1991, Amnesty International issued a report bringing together these concerns and confirmed that "existing procedures and safeguards are inadequate to prevent the ill-treatment of detainees". Indeed on that occasion Amnesty issued an "urgent action" notice to its members in relation to N. Ireland Security Force behaviour, a step the organisation only takes in the most serious of instances. In October of 1991 Amnesty referred a specific case of ill-treatment at the Castlereagh interrogation centre to the UN Committee on Torture.

In addition to Amnesty concerns, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment has expressed its concern following many substantiated complaints. In 1994 it urged improvements in procedures at one holding centre whilst one year later the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that the same centre, Castlereagh, be closed.

The prohibition on torture, inhuman and degrading treatment set out in the Universal Declaration is also reflected in both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 7) and the European Convention on Human Rights (article 3). Uniquely these protections are regarded as so sacrosanct that whatever the internal security situation States are allowed no derogation.

We often hear British government representatives, including yourself, on radio and TV condemning the "vicious, nasty and cowardly behaviour" of the various paramilitary groups in N. Ireland. Your criticisms may be well founded. However we would put it to you that there can be nothing more despicable nor heinous than to carry out systematic abuse of detained persons who are invariably manacled and defenceless.

I would reiterate our concern over the treatment of these three men, Brendan Martin McGinn, Micheal Caraher and Martin Mines, and ask if you will be as fulsome in your criticisms of this "vicious, nasty and cowardly behaviour" as you are on other occasions.

Yours faithfully,

J. B. Moffatt
General Secretary

20/4/97

cc.

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading
Treatment or Punishment
Department of Foreign Affairs - Ireland
EU Embassies
United States Embassy - London and Dublin

Text of Circular to EU Ambassadors

The Ambassador

Government of

An Open Communique to the Embassies of the European Union

Dear Sir,

I draw your attention to the attached communication to the British government following events on and after the 10th of April in N. Ireland.

It is apparent that despite periodic criticism by International bodies and reputable Human Rights NGOs, the United Kingdom continues to allow abuse of those detained in the N. Ireland.

We call upon your government to use its good offices with the British to bring an end to practices which involve physical and psychological ill-treatment of detained suspects in Ulster.

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt
20/4/97

UN Children's Rights Committee concerned about use of baton rounds - 15-06-97

The influential United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has reiterated its concerns about the use of plastic bullets in situations involving children in N. Ireland ([attached](#)).

The comments come in response to [concerns raised by the Celtic League](#) with the Committee following an incident in which a thirteen year old child received severe head injuries.

The United States Embassy in Dublin had already [responded](#), indicating that it shared the concerns and agreeing to forward the correspondence to the appropriate officials in Washington.

The League is now to write to British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, calling upon him as a parent with young children, to consider the anguish caused by the deaths and injuries inflicted by these weapons over many years.

The League is aware of the controversy earlier this month about so called "faulty" baton rounds. However, this issue should not confuse the main point: **Plastic bullets, never deployed in other areas of the U.K., should not be used in N. Ireland - certainly not in situations involving children!**

J.B. Moffatt

Letter from UN Committee on the Rights of the Child - 10-06-97

Dear Mr. Moffat,

I wish to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated 26 May 1997 and its enclosures concerning the use of plastic bullets by security forces in Ulster in incidents involving children.

The contents of your letter and its enclosures have been brought to the attention of the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its recently concluded fifteenth session.

The Committee wishes to draw your attention to the concluding observations adopted upon consideration of the United Kingdom's initial report by the Committee (CRC/C/15/Add.34), where the Committee expressed its concern about difficulties experienced by children living in Northern Ireland (para. 10). In its recommendations, the Committee suggested (ul)inter-alia(ul), that the general principles of the Convention, particularly the provisions of its article 3, relating to the best interests of the child, should guide the determination of policy making at both the central and local levels of government(para. 23); that teaching about children's rights be incorporated into the training of curricula of professionals working with or for children, including the police (para. 26) and that additional efforts were required to overcome the problem of violence in society.

I am enclosing a copy of the document CRC/C/15/Add.34 for you information.

Yours sincerely,

Soussan Raadi-Azarakhchi,
Secretary
Committee on the Rights of the Child

United States Embassy endorses concerns over plastic bullets - 07-05-97

The Celtic League welcome the endorsement ([encl](#)) received from the U S Ambassador in Dublin concerning our condemnation of the continued use of plastic bullets in N. Ireland.

The League wrote last week to the US Embassy (see below), and also the Embassies of EU countries, following a further serious incident in which a thirteen year old child received a serious head injury (Lurgan - 26/4/97).

Pointedly, the Ambassadors letter also endorses our concern that despite guidelines operated by the RUC and aimed at restricting the possibility of head or upper body injury, many injuries of this type have been suffered.

A parallel protest has been lodged with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child highlighting our concern that a substantial number of those killed or injured by these weapons in N. Ireland have been children.

Text of letter from U.S. Embassy in Dublin - 07-05-97

Dear Mr. Moffatt,

On behalf of Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, this is to thank you for your letter of [April 26](#) concerning the use of plastic bullets in Northern Ireland.

The 1996 Human Rights report on the UK prepared by the U.S. Department of State notes that "Police continue to use plastic bullets in crowd control situations, a practice restricted to Northern Ireland. The number of plastic rounds fired this year surpasses all but one prior year. This practice has been widely criticized by human rights monitors and the UN Committee Against Torture. The European Parliament has called for a ban on their use. According to RUC rules, plastic bullets should only be aimed at the lower half of the body; numerous head and upper body injuries nevertheless have resulted from their use."

I can assure you that your concerns are being forwarded to the appropriate officials in Washington. Thankyou for sharing your views with the Ambassador on this important human rights.

Sincerely,

Richard B. Norland
First Secretary (Political)

Further action against use of plastic bullets - 27-04-97

See also:

[AGM resolution](#)
[RUC unfit to police](#)

Letter to Parick Mayhew, Secretary of State for N. Ireland 27-04-97

The Secretary of State for N. Ireland, Sir Patrick Mayhew
N. Ireland Office
Stormont Castle
Belfast BT4 3ST

Dear Sir,

I write to express our concern at the continued use of plastic bullets by British Army and Police units in N. Ireland.

We understand that over the weekend 26/27 April another child, a thirteen year old boy was injured when one of these weapons was fired into his face, initial reports indicate he is lucky not to have lost the sight of an eye.

It has not escaped our attention that this incident comes just fifteen years to the week after another child, eleven year old Stephen McConomy was killed in a similar incident.

Plastic and Rubber bullets have caused numerous deaths in N. Ireland since their deployment and many other people have been scarred and maimed. Despite persistent denials by the N. Ireland Office there is clear evidence that the weapons are used outwith procedures supposed to minimise the injuries they cause, the number of serious head injuries indicate that this is a weapon not only used but abused by the Security Forces.

Senator George Mitchell set down a clear marker to the British government in his report when he suggested a "review...with respect to..the use of plastic bullets".

This latest incident makes it imperative that the use of these loathsome weapons are discontinued forthwith and we urge this course of action.

In conclusion we have emphasised the fact that in the two cases we mention and indeed in many others these weapons are deliberately targeted against children. We will therefore be raising this matter directly with the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva - quite frankly this abuse has gone on long enough!

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League.

Letter to US Ambassador in Dublin - 27-04-97

The United States Ambassador to Dublin
Embassy of the United States
42 Elgin Road
Dublin 4

Dear Ambassador,

I attach a copy of a letter of protest submitted to the British government in relation to an incident which resulted in a child being injured by a plastic bullet fired by British Security forces in N. Ireland.

The United States government supported the peace initiative in the North and also deployed one of its most respected political figures Senator George Mitchell to assist that process. The Mitchell report contained a clear indication to the British government that the use of this weapon should be discontinued.

In total seventeen people have been killed by plastic or rubber bullets in the past twenty-five years. Scores more have been seriously injured or maimed. Regrettably many of the injuries and eight of the deaths have involved children.

There is also strong evidence of the deliberate misuse of the weapon, with it being fired at close range and also at the head of victims. Information supporting this contention was circulated to the US Congress by the Irish National Caucus in April 1993.

We urge the United States government to do all in its power to convince the British government that this weapon should be withdrawn.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League

Letter to Committee on the Rights of the Child

Centre for Human Rights
United Nations Office Geneva

For the Attention : Sousan Raadi-Azarakhchi
Secretary to the Committee on the Rights of the Child

Dear Ms. Raadi-Azarakhchi,

I draw your attention to the attached correspondence, including a letter to the British governments Northern Ireland Office, concerning the use of plastic bullets by its Security Forces in Ulster.

Our purpose in writing to your Committee is to express our concern that in an alarming number of incidents these weapons are deployed randomly against groups of children. Indeed in the most recent incident 26/4/97 a thirteen year old child was hospitalised with head and face injuries. Since the introduction of the plastic bullet which replaced earlier rubber devices seven children have died and many more have been horrifically injured.

There is strong evidence that British Security forces deliberately misuse these weapons and that they are in some instances discharged at short range at the head or face of victims.

We urge your Committee to urge an end to the use of these weapons particularly in situations where children are involved there is no doubt that the deaths and horrific

injuries inflicted upon men, women and children by these weapons constitute a human rights abuse of significant proportions.

Thanking you in anticipation of your response.

Yours sincerely,

J. B. Moffatt
General Secretary - Celtic League

British "loan" the Manx people their own historical manuscript - 09-05-97

The Manx Museum have invited the President of Ireland to open the new multi-million pound "House of Mannanan" heritage centre in the Isle of Man this July. Pride of Place in the exhibits will be the mediaeval Latin text, "The Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles".

In securing its "loan" from the British Library, the Manx Museum have ensured no embarrassing demonstration mars the opening. Nationalists however will continue to campaign for the circumstances surrounding its "theft" by the English to be resolved.

The medieval Latin text is of singular importance to the record of Manx history, being the oldest written record of the Norse-Gaelic period.

The news of its loan to the Isle of Man's Manx Museum and National Trust by the British Library for the opening of the new multi-million pound Heritage Centre in July indicates astute political manoeuvring by the Manx Museum and its Director Stephen Harrison.

Two thorny issues surrounded the official inauguration of the new Centre. One was the choice of VIP to perform the ceremony. The other was the unresolved issue of the Chronicles. The Manx Museum have shown great imagination in resolving both issues.

The loan by the British Library is however just that - a loan. No time limit has been indicated and one can only hope that the loan will be of extended or indefinite duration. It will however at some stage end, and then the issue of the Chronicles and their ownership will again surface.

This is no "Elgin Marbles" issue. The Chronicles are, in terms of the British Library collection, insignificant. However they are of key importance in the Manx historical context. The Isle of Man and the United Kingdom enjoy good relations, have a shared head of State, and unless independence manifests itself this will remain unchanged. In these circumstances it should not have been beyond the wit of politicians and our cultural guardians to reach an settlement with the British Government and British Library.

The loan of the Chronicles is good news in the short term. It provides a breathing space in which the Manx government should initiate serious discussions to resolve matters. In the long term if the issue remains in contention all Manx interest groups should work to ensure their permanent return.

J. B. Moffatt pp. Celtic League Manx Branch 9/5/97

Ulster Elections -23-05-97

Sinn Féin has scored a further major political breakthrough in the North Irish local government elections. The number of seats held by the Party has risen as has its share of the vote. The Unionists have lost control of Belfast City Council and Sinn Féin is now the largest party on the Council. It seems likely the Unionists will attempt to form an alliance with other groups to keep Sinn Féin councillors out of key posts.

Although Sinn Féin's success has been mainly at the expense of the more moderate SDLP, the Unionist community are undoubtedly shaken by the Nationalist breakthrough and there have been allegations of electoral malpractice against Sinn Féin.

Gerry Adams has dismissed the complaints as "whining" by Sinn Féin's opponents and the N. Ireland Chief Electoral Officer, who supervised the ballot, says that whilst there has been vote tampering, the complaint applies to all parties and not just Sinn Féin.

Toxic Aircraft Danger - 19-05-97

Military jet aircraft crashes pose a hidden danger

Carbon based composite materials are highly toxic when burned: They chemically alter and are dispersed over a wide area at crash sites. The release of the material is biologically malignant and should be treated like asbestos.

The dangers were brought into sharp focus following a crash by a military aircraft in Denmark in 1990. Crash teams and investigators had to wear special protective clothing including dust helmets to avoid contact with particles from the composites in the aircraft's construction. The crash site was contaminated and had to be stabilised with resin.

The aircraft was an RAF Harrier GR 5 similar to that which crashed near Wittering in England in May, 1997.

Five years ago the RAF developed so called POST CRASH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (PCMTs) to deal with the consequences of these crashes, not just the immediate incident, but the sealing of the site and any downwind contamination. Despite the dangers to the public in the area of such incidents, no details have yet been widely publicised.

In 1994 the Celtic League, which monitors military low flying over the Celtic Areas of Britain, publicised details on this problem in a pamphlet, "RAF POST CRASH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES - ARE THEY ADEQUATE?" We called for evaluation of all crash sites in Wales and Scotland for post crash site contamination and we challenged the MOD to go public on the dangers - so far they have not complied.

Of all current RAF military aircraft the Harrier GR 5 has one of the highest levels of composite construction (indeed, it was the aircraft type we included to illustrate the

hazard in our report). However, other modern combat aircraft and jet trainers such as the Tornado and the Hawk also contain composite materials.

With RAF operations steadily on the increase over Scotland and the Mid Wales TTA (Tactical Training Area), it is time to warn the public of the less obvious dangers that accompany military accidents of this type.

NB: Celtic League report into POST CRASH MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES available on request

French xenophobia highlighted at Celts' conference

The plight of a Breton teacher criticised for teaching the history of his country was highlighted at a meeting of the Celtic League in Caernarfon this weekend (25/27 July).

Jacques Gaucher, who teaches at the primary school in St. Brieuc, was reprimanded for teaching Breton history. The inspector who investigated the complaint praised Mr. Gaucher's work but he was told to teach only French history in future. The incident followed a complaint from one parent.

Celtic League General Secretary, Bernard Moffatt, called the attitude to National minorities living within their frontiers "medieval" and said that, "the French government should be invited to join the rest of us living in the twentieth century and not the past." He went to say that French government xenophobia extended also to the National languages of groups like the Bretons, Corsicans and other minorities.

It was agreed to support Mr. Gaucher who was one of a number of Breton delegates attending the meeting. Later in the weekend the French again came in for criticism during the adoption of a resolution on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. As a resolution calling on the UK to honour past Labour Party commitments was adopted, the General Secretary referred the conference to the pledge of Jacques Chirac to ratify the Charter made on a visit to Brittany last year. Mr. Moffatt said:

"the French are a curious people they number tens of millions, yet are petrified of small million minorities within their borders - their President, by his actions, has proved himself to be a liar."

The terrifying saga of UK radioactive / munitions dumping

This document also contains:

[Did sub incident result in pollution?](#)

[Radioactive dumping 3 miles off Wales](#)

[Undersea cable could stir up trouble](#)

[Nuclear dumping scandal continues](#)

[Beaufort nuclear dumping confirmed](#)

[League seeks Irish help](#)

[UK admits inshore dumping of radioactive waste](#)

[The Bombs of Beaufort Dyke](#)

See also [Sellafield - A pollution nightmare](#)

Sub incident off Anglesey - What *did* happen? - 11-11-97

Last week's revelations about the dumping by the MOD of radioactively contaminated material off Holyhead (Anglesey) is not the first time possible contamination of this area has surfaced.

In 1986 the Celtic League revealed that the American nuclear submarine "Nathaniel Greene" had struck the sea-bed in the area, about fifteen miles further west off Anglesey.

The submarine of the 8,500 tonne "Lafayette" ballistic missile class was so severely damaged that it lay on the sea-bed for two days whilst a salvage operation was mounted in the strictest secrecy. It was eventually able to surface but had to be towed back to its base at Holy Loch. Damage was so severe that the submarine subsequently returned to its home base at Charleston in South Carolina where it was de-commissioned.

The US authorities maintained that there was no pollution but the extent of the damage sustained and the subsequent immediate decommissioning raise questions about just what did happen off the North Wales coast in March 1986.

J B Moffatt
Celtic League

More radioactive dumping in Irish Sea 07-11-97

Urgent need for complete list of dump sites and inventory of contents - 22 MOD dump sites already known should be checked for possible radiation waste disposal

The confirmation given in the UK Parliament (06-11-97) that radioactive material had been dumped in the Irish sea off Anglesey is alarming.

For many years, the Celtic League suspected that such dumping had gone on in coastal dump sites but our concerns, mainly concerning the Beauforts Dyke dump site and other explosive dump sites, were dismissed by the British government. Subsequently however the British did confirm that intermediate grade nuclear waste had been disposed and coastal sites near the Channel Isles and Beaufort Dyke are known to be contaminated.

Now we have further confirmation of disposal of radioactively contaminated missile distance indicator tags in 1974 in the Holyhead Deep area just 2-3 miles off the Welsh coast.

Celtic League are already demanding a list of locations around the Irish sea where disposal of other toxic wastes has occurred. In the light of this latest information we will also be contacting sympathetic Nationalist members from both Scotland and Wales asking them to request an urgent list of all coastal disposal sites and a complete inventory of their contents.

It is likely that the Holyhead revelations are the tip of an iceberg and a question mark must also now be placed upon other coastal sites such as the Firth of Clyde, Loch Linnhe, Milford Haven, Whitesand Bay Plymouth and the score of other sites identified two years ago by MOD.

Bernard Moffatt
Nov. 7th 1997

New explosive dump danger - 18-10-97

The decision to progress a electricity cable interconnector between Scotland and N. Ireland taken by Scottish Secretary Donald Dewar this week is bad news for coastal communities around the N. Irish sea.

The route for the interconnector is certain to involve excavation work through the infamous Beaufort Dyke munitions dump which contains all manner of deteriorating conventional and chemical munitions dumped over a fifty year period.

Last time work was undertaken in the area (involving construction of a gas interconnector) the beaches of the Clyde approach, SW Scotland, Antrim and the N. Isle of Man were seriously polluted as thousands of small chemical and toxic explosives devices were swept in. The pollution lasted for several years and although casualties were limited a considerable danger to the public was posed, injuries did occur and beaches and (in the Isle of Man) roads were closed.

It is by no means certain that the Dyke simply contains the type of devices experienced last time. Indeed the Celtic League which has campaigned for a clean up at the Dyke for over twenty years know there are potentially much more deadly weapons, such as "Yperite" or mustard gas, which were also deposited there in great quantities. The effects of this material when it was encountered by fishermen many years ago was very serious and deaths were only narrowly averted. There is also the danger of radioactive waste which the British now admit is dumped in the area.

Beaufort Dyke and its dangers have been well publicised and there is often a tendency if the publicity is sustained to grow complacent. We believe the decision of the British government based on narrow commercial interest exhibits just such complacency.

Once again these coastal areas have to pay the price for ill judged decisions taken in the safe environment of cabinet rooms in Edinburgh or London to benefit the Directors and shareholders of private utilities.

Bernard Moffatt

Secret nuclear dumping scandal continues

"For the communities around the Irish sea and on the west of Scotland however this scandal has continued long enough. Even this administration's attempt at openness is insufficient - what is needed is a full and independent enquiry under the auspices of a reputable International body such as the European Parliament."

It is quite clear from the statement issued by Jeff Rooker MP that the British are still either unwilling or unable to publish full details of their sea dumping programme for nuclear waste.

What is now confirmed is that, what was being referred to as low level nuclear waste, has had the category expanded to include intermediate waste.

The mystery seems to surround documentation on material dumped in the fifties and sixties. However it is clear, from information disclosed 15 years ago, that waste was dumped in undesignated areas.

The reference to the fifties dumping regime is ominous. Perhaps the greatest emergency the British nuclear industry faced was in 1957 and the years thereafter following the Windscale fire. There is no doubt that large quantities of low, intermediate and high level waste was required to be disposed at that time. The favoured method for swift disposal was sea dumping (the "out of sight out of mind" option) and it would be incredible if none of the material from the British nuclear industry did not find its way to both the Beaufort Dyke and other disposal sites off the west of Scotland.

Rooker has promised that documentation will be scoured and as new information is uncovered it will be revealed. It probably suits Rooker and his boss Jack Cunningham that information on this scandal is released on a drip feed basis.

For the communities around the Irish sea and on the west of Scotland however this scandal has continued long enough. Even this administrations attempt at openness is insufficient - what is needed is a full and independent enquiry under the auspices of a reputable International body such as the European Parliament.

We need to know what dangers for this and succeeding generations is posed by the reckless and seemingly uncoordinated British nuclear sea dumping programme.

J.B. Moffatt pp. Celtic League

Beaufort Trench - Nuclear fears now confirmed 13-07-97

New revelations will confirm nuclear dumping - Bombs, Chemical weapons now nuclear confirmed - Celtic Leagues long campaign vindicated.

It seems that finally there will be grim confirmation that the sea trench at Beaufort Dyke was used by the British government to dispose of nuclear material. The news is a total vindication of concerns raised almost 15 years ago by the Celtic League, when we first started to elicit details of the dumps contents.

Successive years saw earlier evasions and retractions by the British government. New information has uncovered the vast and deadly nature of the materials now listed as being disposed there. These latest revelations also confirm that successive British governments have been prepared to mislead not only Parliament but also the International community with evasions to the Irish government and lies to the IAEA.

Any sense of vindication of the early stance taken on this issue by the Celtic League has to be tempered by the thought that these latest admissions raise more questions than they answer.

Beaufort is now known to contain hundreds of thousands of tonnes of a vast range of material, 'simple' ordnance, chemical munitions and (now with this admission) nuclear material. Do we leave the dump undisturbed and wait until a problem arises? This is what happened with the chemical devices which still periodically drift to shore in N. Ireland. SW. Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Do we attempt to stabilise the dump and recover the nuclear material from it? In so doing might we disturb other and as yet unconfirmed disposed material. Any admission at this time advances the need for a serious debate on the best means of tackling this nightmare on our doorstep!

Bernard Moffatt

pp. Celtic League

League seeks Irish government help in sea dump enquiry

The Celtic League has asked the Irish government to include in its enquiries to the UK about nuclear dumping, a request for a full inventory of materials disposed in waters of the N. Irish Sea and off the west of Scotland and SW Ireland.

The League believe that material from the UK's chemical warfare programme, which officially ended in the mid-fifties, is still not accounted for.

Attempts to clear up the matter via correspondence with the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment at Porton Down have been inconclusive. There has been a reluctance to communicate on the issue and replies which have been received over the years have been contradictory.

Attached: copy of letter to Michael Woods, Minister for the Marine

Dear Minister,

I understand that you recently have established a task force to co-ordinate approaches to the British government concerning its sea dumping policy in waters off the west coast and in the north Irish Sea.

You will be aware, from the papers we supplied to your predecessor, that the Celtic League had a concern for sometime that the British government were being less than honest about the disposal of nuclear material in the Beaufort Dyke and elsewhere.

In parallel with our enquiries (to which the British provided dishonest responses) concerning disposal of nuclear material we were also probing the disposal of very dangerous chemical and biological warfare compounds. These were manufactured at Nancekuke (near Portreath) in west Cornwall.

The British government decommissioned the plant in the mid fifties and it was dismantled and 'cleared' over subsequent years. As sea disposal was the favoured option in this period for both the disposal of chemical / conventional munitions and nuclear waste, we not unnaturally concluded that some of the material was sea disposed. The British government, not surprisingly, indicated that the site was cleared without any environmental pollution risk and that no material was sea disposed. However, there was some confusion between correspondence in May 1991 which said that no material was buried on site and correspondence in April 1995 which indicated that material was buried on site. (I attach this correspondence for information). This seems to indicate that they were being less than open about the ultimate location of what must be some very nasty waste product.

We also know that as part of the mid fifties disposals off Donegal and Kerry the British government confirm that cargoes of ex WW2 chemical weapons were also accompanied on occasion by disposal on behalf of other UK government Departments. Not unnaturally, given the track record of previous British governments on this issue, the suspicion remains that this material was sea disposed.

We would be grateful if your enquiries to the British would stress the need for a full inventory of material disposed and also in addition to clarifying the question of nuclear waste resolve the mystery of the vanished material from Britain's chemical weapons programme.

J.B. Moffatt
13/7/97

Alarm as British admit nuclear waste in inshore dumps -20-05-97

New information mirrors early exposure of lies over chemical and nerve gas disposals.

The news released today (20/5/97) that the United Kingdom has disposed of three thousand drums of radioactive waste in the English Channel off Alderney is a worrying development.

The United Kingdom have long been suspected of dumping waste in the inshore dumps and this is the first solid evidence to confirm this practice.

Two years ago the British government denied that 2517 tonnes of "concrete waste" destined for a deep water site off Rockall which, due to bad weather, was dumped in the North Channel off Belfast Lough in 1981, were contaminated with radiation. The Celtic League had been investigating rumours of nuclear waste dumping and SNP MP Donald Stewart put down a question to the Scottish Secretary on our behalf in 1985. We were sceptical of the British explanation then and further clarification two years ago of experimentation with "concrete filled drums" to test disposal equipment which was advanced as the purpose of the operation seemed barely credible.

It is now a fact that several of the identified dumps on the British sea dump site list published some years ago are contaminated with radiation. Previously the British denied that the inshore dumps were used for either chemical weapons or radiation waste. The cover-up over chemical weapons has long been blown. Now it seems likely that the dumps such as Beaufort, which the British admit contain a staggering 700.000 tonnes of assorted munitions dumped over a fifty year period, contain a nuclear nightmare also.

The British may continue their nuclear denials but increasingly the question must be asked: Was the easy option of inshore dumping used at a time when Britain not only had the large scale low grade waste associated with its early clumsy approach to nuclear power but also other problems? Was it also the favoured option after the disastrous accidents at both Dounreay and Sellafield many years ago? If not, where has all the waste gone? Only a fraction of recent storage is held on land.

If our coastal waters hold this deadly secret it's time we were told!

Bernard Moffatt pp. Celtic League

The Bombs of Beaufort Dyke - 31-03-97



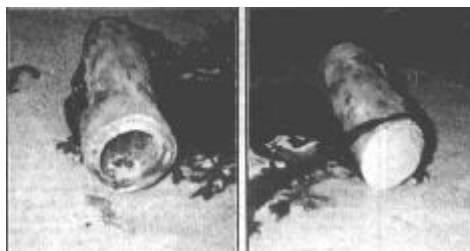
Caught in the act - British forces dump munitions

Will fatalities be needed before MOD address this legacy of thoughtless neglect - why no action on clean up?

The news that more chemical explosive devices have started to come ashore in SW Scotland and Cumbria establishes a pattern for the appearance of this material each year.

Whilst the recovery of explosive objects occurs throughout the year, our records indicate that serious pollution of the shoreline with these objects tends to happen in the February/March period and extend into the summer months. This was certainly the case in both 1993 and 1995, and it also appears to be the pattern this year.

As usual, the Coastguard mount their beach patrols and tend to have ensured, via warning and speedy disposal, that injuries are kept to a minimum.



Manx authorities' publicity photographs of incendiaries

Despite several thousands objects being dealt with in recent years, only a handful of injuries have occurred.

The sequence of events could however make us complacent about the dangers inherent in the leakage of material from Beaufort Dyke. What is clear is that a staggering quantity of both explosive and chemical material has been disposed of there. The phosphorous munitions which are presently causing the problem are containable if one keeps their distance and the Emergency services have a chance to

deal with them.



MOD photograph of shore-clearing shows scale of problem

It is, however, more than apparent that there are other and more nasty toxic devices in the Beaufort dump. The coastline in other areas is also littered with unexploded ordnance.

It is past time that the British government's MOD came up with a strategy to address the problem of the Irish sea munitions dumps. Why should the population of Ireland, Scotland, N. England and the Isle of Man have to live with this legacy of thoughtlessness and negligence?

Will action only occur when fatalities have resulted from the Bombs of Beaufort Dyke?

Please note. The bulk of objects washed up to date are phosphorous based incendiaries. They are uncased and become extremely unstable once exposed to the air. They can spontaneously ignite if disturbed and burn with a fierce heat that is capable of killing an adult.

"New Labour" crumbles before "Auld Orange" - 07-07-97

GARVAGHY - "all the terrible apparatus of the the police state"

This document includes:

[RUC unsuitable to police Ulster](#)

[Letter to Sir Patrick Mayhew](#)

[Letter to US Ambassador \(Dublin\)](#)

[Enquiry too late](#)

See also

[Campaign against Plastic Bullets](#)

[A.G.M. Resolution](#)

The decision of the past twenty four hours in relation to Drumcree have effectively written Sec of State Mowlam out of the political equation in Ulster. What one journalist, at her mid day press conference, accurately identified as the "corporate gutlessness" of herself and her advisers will come back to haunt her and Ulster in the coming months and years.

No one disputes that the decision both she and the RUC faced was difficult. Squaring the circle between unyielding factions is never easy. However, the fundamental

blunder she has made is to retract her guarantee to the people of the Garvaghy road to communicate her decision, when she took it, to them directly.

Pressed on this point she unconvincingly evaded the question by referring to the protracted nature of the negotiations which "went on into the early hours". Nationalists and Unionists observing this performance will jointly conclude this is a woman you cannot trust.

Garvaghy 3 was an undignified spectacle to those observing it and no doubt its impact internationally will do much to undermine the carefully cultivated gloss of evenhandedness in its Ulster dealings portrayed by the Blair government.

The overwhelming weight of security forces and the imagery associated with them brought to mind Churchill's comments in relation to Nazi Germany about "all the terrible apparatus of the the police state". The random discharge of baton rounds at close range, the overwhelming use of force also graphically re-emphasised that the role of the RUC in repressing the Nationalist community appeared closer to that portrayed by Sinn Fein and less that the British government would like us to accept.

The lasting impression of this day will not however be the violence of the early hours, the weighty repression of the morning or the swaggering lunch time passage of the last days of Unionism. It will be the blubbing evasiveness of Mo Mowlam, spluttering and blustering like so many before her, on the steps of Stormont.

Text of Letter to NI Secretary of State - 07-07-97

The Secretary of State for N. Ireland,
Stormont Buildings,
Belfast,
N. Ireland.

Dear Secretary of State,

I write to place on record our organisations concern at the decision taken by you, in consultation with the RUC Chief Constable, to allow an Orange march along the Garvaghy Road, Portadown on Sunday.

The march was clearly opposed by those who live in the area and the manner in which their rights were usurped was shameful. Moreover the sequence of events which has unfolded since indicate that this decision was fundamentally flawed.

There is no doubt that the agreement to allow this provocative parade to proceed has caused considerable damage to the hopes for a lasting peace settlement. There is obviously a need for the British and Irish governments to move speedily to redress this by urgently implementing a fully inclusive dialogue with all political parties in N. Ireland.

We would also place on record our surprise that guarantees, clearly articulated by you, to the residents of the Garvaghy road, which committed you to personally communicate your decision to them in respect of the march were not honoured.

Over the past twenty years the discharge of role by successive Secretary of States in N. Ireland has hardly engendered confidence.

The Celtic League, which has monitored the situation in N. Ireland for almost 30 years, did detect a sense of confidence in what appeared to be a new evenhandedness by your Office.

It is clear from comments by nationalist spokesmen in the North of Ireland that your actions have belied that confidence.

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt,
pp. Celtic League

Royal Ulster Constabulary unsuitable to police - 02-06-96

Two incidents on different sides of the Irish sea over the past seven days dramatically illustrate the general unsuitability of the RUC to continue its Policing role in the north of Ireland.

Over the past three nights there have been disturbances in Northampton in England involving groups of several hundred and necessitating the deployment of over 150 Police, some in riot gear.

Despite the protracted nature of the disturbances the Police have managed to contain there operation within the norms expected i.e. they have not seen fit to deploy let alone use firearms.

Contrast this with the brief disturbance in Ballycastle, in the north of Ireland last week. A very much smaller and short lived disturbance apparently necessitated the RUC to utilise the firearms they still carry as standard.

Because it was Ulster, the fact that shots were fired gained little prominence in the UK media.

No significant government politician in the N. Ireland Office saw fit to question the total lack of restraint exercised in this situation.

Great play is being made presently throughout the British Isles with almost unanimous support for the process of peace in Ireland.

Can there really ever be peace when the Police Force deployed in the Six Counties remain trigger happy?

J.B. Moffatt

Text of letter sent to Sir Patrick Mayhew, 13th July 1996

Dear Sir Patrick,

I write to express the concern of our organisation about the events currently unfolding in the north of Ireland which are directly as a consequence of the decision taken to allow the Drumcree march to proceed.

The "public order" argument advanced at the time this astonishing "U turn" was undertaken is one that the Chief Constable of the RUC and those he consulted with, including yourself, will have to justify. At least one person has already been killed

and many, including police officers, injured. The cost in damage, fear and intimidation can only be speculated on. The disastrous consequences of this decision are, quite understandably, being quantified in relation to the process of dialogue which both sides in the Ulster conflict had started to embrace. Hopefully the present situation can be stabilised and a more meaningful dialogue opened with all sides. Having been to the north of Ireland several times in the past two years I personally was struck by the relaxation that had occurred and the degree of normality that was returning to everyday life - this cannot be lost.

There is, however, another disastrous spin-off from Sir Hugh Annesley's misguided move and that is in relation to policing within the overall Island of Ireland. Whatever one's views of the RUC, I believe all would agree that the force is large, armed and well resourced. It is backed up, in relation to the civil order element of its work, by considerable numbers of military personnel. This substantial force has stood aside in the face of possible mob violence. What on earth do you believe is the message this sends to the organised criminal elements in both the north and the Republic?

The so called "Loyalist" gangs who make their living via extortion, drugs trafficking and vice now are aware that if they wear the orange sash, bang the Lambeg drum or wave the Union Jack, the RUC will run away or worse, as at Portadown, assist their progress. In surveying the wreckage of recent days, one could be forgiven for concluding that the RUC have awarded a spectacular "own goal" to those who seek its disbandment!

There is presently much speculation about the future of the RUC Chief Constable and calls from all sides for his resignation. This will mean little as he is due to retire shortly. There will undoubtedly also be calls for your resignation, again this is of little consequence to you as you also will shortly retire.

The people of Ulster and indeed the whole of Ireland cannot, however, retire from the mess that has been bequeathed to them. They will have to go on and we can only hope that there are sufficient numbers on both sides of the community with a will so strong for peace that they can extricate this situation. In the meantime it would assist if the British government would admit a mistake was made.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Moffatt

Text of Letter from Celtic League to U.S.A. Ambassador (Dublin) - 13-07-96

The Ambassador of the United States,
United States Embassy,
Ballsbridge,
Dublin 4,
IRELAND.

Dear Ambassador,

I attach a copy of a letter forwarded to the Northern Ireland Secretary setting out the concerns of the Celtic League following recent developments in the north of Ireland.

A considerable investment has been made by a wide range of individuals and governments, including the United States, in encouraging a dialogue to resolve the long running dispute in the six counties.

The recent inertia of the British government resulting in a resumption of armed struggle by the IRA had seriously frustrated the opportunity for peace. However nothing prior to the events in Portadown last week had seriously threatened to derail the process. This would now seem to be a serious possibility.

The spectacle not only of provocative marches but the scenes of RUC Officers bludgeoning aside peaceful nationalist protesters on the Garvaghy road could have been calculated to have produced the violent reaction the north is now enduring.

It is the view of the Celtic League that the majority of people in northern Ireland desire peace. That fact was clearly demonstrated when President Clinton visited Ireland. Your government moved swiftly to criticise bombings carried out by the IRA. Will you now set out a criticism of the United Kingdom after its disgraceful betrayal of the nationalist community. Peace in the north of Ireland cannot be achieved at any price and certainly not by allowing a substantial percentage of the population, the catholic community, there to be treated as second class citizens.

Given the strong traditional link between the United States and Ireland, and the good Offices your President has used to date, we urge your government to use every effort to assist in the retrieval of the Peace process and the establishment of inclusive dialogue.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Moffatt

RIOT GUN ENQUIRY TOO LATE - LETHAL WEAPONS MUST BE BANNED - 01-08-96

The British have announced an "enquiry" into the use of baton rounds by their security forces in Northern Ireland. The enquiry will be carried out by the UK's Inspector of Constabulary.

The move comes following fierce criticism of the RUC for its less than even handed handling of disturbances following the break up of a peaceful protest by residents of the Garvagh Road area of Portadown when Police forced through a previously banned Orange march.

The use of plastic bullets and their forerunners, the rubber bullet, has always attracted controversy. Of 17 people killed to date by the weapons, 16 have been from the Catholic nationalist community. Eight of those killed have been children.

Well documented cases of abuse of so called guidelines for the use of the weapons indicate that the many deaths and hundreds of serious injuries have been caused by the RUC discharging the weapons, in contravention of orders, at the upper body and head of demonstrators.

Only one RUC constable has ever been charged arising from the deaths and in that case (the death of Sean Downes in 1984) he was acquitted.

Despite calls by the respected US intermediary in N. Ireland, Senator Mitchell, that use of the weapons should be reviewed, it has taken the unprecedented discharge of over 6000 of the weapons against Catholic demonstrators during the recent disturbances to force the British to act.

The obscene misuse of the weapons to intimidate Catholic Nationalist demonstrators was carried by TV stations world wide and it was obviously this highly visible "slap in the face" for the Mitchell report which forced the review.

Along with others committed to peaceful change in N. Ireland, the Celtic League will campaign for their withdrawal. A [resolution](#) to this effect will be moved at the Celtic League AGM in Brittany on August 10 1996.

J.B. Moffatt, General Secretary.

Anti-money laundering campaign continues

Includes:

[Money laundering legislation still inadequate](#)

[Response from Irish Minister for Justice](#)

[Further evidence of laundering](#)

[League will not be deflected from campaign](#)

[Call for crackdown by Manx authorities](#)

Legislation to combat money laundering still inadequate - 12-8-97

Comment in recent weeks via both the newspaper and broadcast media indicates that the problem of money laundering is being taken seriously by the Manx (Isle of Man) authorities and new legislation shortly to be introduced will undoubtedly give practical intent to government commitment. Their actions parallel steps being taken in other jurisdictions.

Yet significantly there is still an omission in that the Manx government, along with others in off-shore dependent territories which service the international finance business, will not name banks caught with "funny money".

A recent UN. report estimated (conservatively) that drug trafficking, fraud, pornography, prostitution, smuggling and corruption generate global revenue of up to £1000 bn. Given the quantity of money to be dispersed and cleaned no off shore jurisdiction can claim to be devoid of the problem.

Legislation, constantly updated, to deal with money laundering is necessary but legislation in itself is not a solution. At best it makes more difficult and expensive the operations to launder the £1000 bn the UN estimate circulates yearly.

Can the Banking trade itself be relied upon to go that extra mile to avoid this money, whilst free of the ultimate stigma of exposure? The Celtic League re-iterate its call for Banks in the money centres found to contain laundered funds to be named either by their own enforcement authorities or International agencies.

J. B. Moffatt

pp. Celtic League 12/8/97

Irish Government Initiative on Money Laundering Undermined - 28-12-96

British Home Office Minister on record as saying "no intention of intervening with the governments of the Channel Isles and Isle of Man over money laundering."

The Irish government's Minister for Justice has responded to concerns expressed by the Celtic League over lime use of Tax havens to launder the profits of crime, particularly drug related crime.

The Celtic League wrote to both flie British and Irish governments in July alleging that there was evidence that the Financial Services Centres in Dublin, the Isle of Man and Channel Isles were being used to conceal and launder the income from the drug barons.

In a press-statement issued at the time, we specifically cited the refusal of the Manx authorities to name a Bank via which criminal elements had laundered millions of pounds of drug money which was subsequently seized by United States Drugs Enforcement Agency officials.

In coorrespondence to the Celtic League ([attached](#)) Irish Justice Minister Nora Owen TD sets out a comprehensive package of legislation, some adopted only in recent months, aimed at combatting the problem. The Irish government's positive attitude contrasts sharply with thc United Kingdom's. In a reply from the British Home Office in August the Constitutional Policy Directorate, which handles relations with the Channel Isles and Manx dependencies, would only say that the respective islands were being asked to give consideration to "passing all-crimes money laundering legislation." However in the same week (early August) that this statement was received, Home Office official Baroness Blatch on a visit to the Isle of Man said that the British had "no intention of intervening with the governments of the Channel Isles and Isle of Man over money laundering."

As the Irish government attempts to make life tough for the bankers of the drug barons, the United Kingdom still shows no inclination to plug loopholes in jurisdictions within which it has interests.

The Celtic League intends to write to the Finance Ministers of all EU countries and the European Commission highlighting this dangerous anomaly between member States.

J.B. Moffatt,
General Secretary

Response to General Secretary from Irish Minister for Justice re - money laundering.

29th November, 1996.

Dear Mr. Moffat,

I am directed by the Minister of Justice, Mrs. Nora Owen, T.D., to reply to your letter. A package of tough Legislation including measures to seize and deny the so-

called drug barons of their assets and tackle their networks head-on has recently been passed in our Parliament. Examples of these legislative measures are:

The Criminal Justice (Drug Trafficking) Act 1996 which provides for detention of up to 7 days for drug trafficking offences, allows for the presence of Customs Officers at interviews of suspects and allows inferences to be drawn by a Court from the failure of an accused to mention particular facts when being questioned by a Garda.

The Proceeds of Crime Act, 1996 which provides a powerful new mechanism for the freezing and forfeiture of the proceeds of crime.

The Disclosure of Certain information for Taxation and Other Purposes Act 1990 provides for more effective exchange of information between the Gardai (National Police Force) and the Revenue Commissioners.

A number of measures to prevent money laundering have been taken under the Criminal Justice Act 1994. A specific offence of money laundering has been created and financial institutions are now required to report any suspicious financial transactions to the Money Laundering Investigation Unit in the Garda Bureau of Fraud Investigation. There have been 300 reports of such transactions made to the Gardai by Financial Institutions and these are currently being investigated.

A major development in recent months has been the establishment by the Government of the Criminal Assets Bureau. This new body, which has staff drawn from the Gardai, the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Social Welfare, will ensure closer co-operation between State agencies in dealing with money laundering as a result of drug trafficking and organised crime. The Criminal Assets Bureau Act, 1996 has put the Bureau on a statutory footing.

On the 3rd September this year, Ireland ratified the UN Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. As a party to this convention, Ireland will be able to play a full part in international co-operation against drug-trafficking, ranging from practical co-operation on drug trafficking at sea to judicial co-operation in obtaining evidence and confiscating the proceeds of drug trafficking.

Further recent initiatives include the establishment of a Garda National Drugs Unit, a review of dance and pub licences to minimise drug dealing and abuse in such venues, measures to deal with the use of drugs in prisons. The Ministerial Task Force on Demand Reduction have announced new treatment, education prevention and rehabilitative measures. The provision of additional powers allows the Naval Service, Customs and Excise personnel and the Gardai to deal with drug trafficking at sea.

Taken together the measures outlined will greatly enhance the powers of the State in tackling the problem of money laundering. The Minister has asked me to assure you of the Government's total commitment in the fight against crime.

Yours sincerely,

Private secretary

Laundering Concerns Vindicated - 16-10-96

Further revelations in the United Kingdom newspaper "The Observer" indicate the deficiencies in regulatory control in the offshore financial centres. The new revelations totally vindicate the concerns expressed by the Celtic League earlier this year when we called for vigorous action to address money laundering and other abuses also demanding less secrecy in the Banking system..

A scandal currently rocking the Channel Islands dependency of Jersey seems set to involve figures in senior political positions the Observer article states that, *"Jersey's effective 'prime minister', Senator Reg Jeune OBE, its Chancellor Pierre Horsfall, and its Chief Judge Bailiff Sir Phillip Bailhache, have been embroiled in the Cantrade scandal involving allegations of racketeering, non disclosure of interest and suppression of parliamentary free speech"*

It seems unlikely given the close ties between the financial services centres particularly the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles that some of the "fall-out" from the affair will not land on Manx shores. The new revelations are particularly damaging as senior figures from both the USA and UK are quoted criticising the tax havens.

New York District Attorney John Moscow is quoted as saying, *"It is unseemly that these dependencies should be acting as havens for transactions that would not even be protected by Swiss bank secrecy laws. One has to wonder why Swiss banks would set up subsidiaries in these jurisdictions"*

Like the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man government has actively courted Swiss Banks and in September 1994 Manx nationalists who picketed a function for a visiting delegation of Swiss bankers came in for swingeing criticism. In hindsight the nationalist warnings were prophetic as subsidiaries of Swiss banks seem to be at the centre of the current Channel Islands scandal.

More worrying for the Manx authorities are quotes attributed to the Secretary of the Bank of England, Sue Thornhill, who said last week, *"unless we clean up and keep clean our offshore centres then we endanger the reputation of the United Kingdom"*

Scandals of the type now unfolding coming so close to a possible change of government in the United Kingdom are sure to fuel uncertainties about the future of the finance sector. In an aside to the main point of the Observer article its author, John Sweeney, places on record the Masonic Links of Jersey's Chief Minister, Reg Jeune. In this respect the Channel Isles seem to parallel the Isle of Man where many senior figures, including outgoing Chief Minister, are members of the, not so secret, society of Freemasons.

J. B. Moffatt

CRUSADE AGAINST MONEY LAUNDERING WILL NOT BE DEFLECTED - 01-08-96

The Financial Services sector has not done itself any favours with its somewhat "knee-jerk" response to concerns raised by the Celtic League about money laundering (Ref "Manx Independent" *Business News* 16-07-96). Those people who purport to speak out on its behalf would do well to ponder on two points.

The Celtic League, to a degree, has had warnings it issued in the past echoed by the regulatory and enforcement authorities - Manx Independent Oct. 6 1995 - "He (FSC

Chief Executive) agreed with press comments by Celtic League spokesman Bernard Moffatt that detection of money laundering by Eastern Europe mafiosi could bring violent punishment for all involved". In the same article, D.I. Geoff Allen was quoted as saying "Russian criminal money had infiltrated the financial system of both the UK and the Isle of Man." Also, the Manx regulatory agencies were crass when they refused to release details of banks which had held the accounts through which the moneys recovered recently by the US DEA had passed. This blanket of secrecy was certain to cause concern.

It is with a degree of satisfaction we note that within days of our comments about the need for greater European Police co-operation and our publishing the text of a resolution to go before the August meeting of the League, in Brittany, these comments were being echoed by the Irish government.

The Celtic League will certainly not be deflected from pursuing this issue, either by the surprising tone of remarks, some provocative others more restrained, from spokespersons for the sector. It is a mark of the sector's sensitivity over the issue that such negative and intolerant attitudes to our expressions of concern is forthcoming. However, as an organisation we will not be drawn into trading insults over what is a very serious issue. The steps put in place to address this issue will be pursued. Contacts have already been established with sympathetic Parliamentarians in Britain and Ireland. It is likely that on the Breton visit, the host branch will arrange meetings with Breton based deputies of the French Assembly. In addition, a steady programme of dissemination of information continues.

Enquiries have been received from various sources and information exchanged with journalistic contacts. The financial services sector will ultimately do itself nothing but damage if it continues to rubbish the growing concerns about money laundering articulated by the League and others. As usual, *it doth protest to much* - why is there something to hide?

J.B. Moffatt, General Secretary

CALL FOR CRACKDOWN ON MONEY LAUNDERING

Celtic League Press Information - 08-05-96

The theft of over £1,000,000 from a Securicor van in Belfast some weeks ago by a para-military gang, gave spectacular publicity to what is by now an almost routine "money making criminal machine" in the Province. Protection rackets, robberies, drugs etc. are all part of a criminal fraternity which immediately conjures up visions of caches of money or "pots of gold" all over the City. What do these criminals do with the vast amounts of cash they generate some of which, readily identifiable, can be traced?

The answer of course is that they launder it and fortunately for them Ireland, with its own financial services zone connected to the easily accessible offshore tax havens in the Isle of Man and Channel Isles, is well placed to service these crooks. The Celtic League is a seasoned critic of the financial services sector now established in Dublin and the Isle of Man. In February of 1991 we specifically raised with the Manx Government's Chief Minister the question of the laundering of monies from para-military sources in Ulster through the Island. Our concerns were brushed aside only to

see later in that year confirmation when Ulster newspapers indicated RUC concerns that accounts in Manx and Channel Isles Banks were suspected of being used by these groups. The Manx government remained complacent about shady transactions within its jurisdiction even when the doubts of its own regulatory body the FSC, and its lack of staff, were exposed in an article in Private Eye magazine on 24/5/91.

The Manx government proudly proclaimed that "the world will get the message the Island is a no go area for money launderers" as it enacted amendments to its domestic Prevention of Terrorism Bill in 1992. The Celtic League remained critical, however, and its criticism was echoed by the Manx Nationalist Party, [Mec Vannin](#), produced a detailed report on the Finance Sector in 1994. This contained the cryptic comment that there was, "evidence that the smiling face of the finance sector masks a deeper layer of out and out criminal activities," and went on, "no authority, least of all the Manx Government has systematically investigated the underworld of the Isle of Man finance sector".

Heady stuff!; but in the view of some undoubtedly coloured by the fierce opposition of nationalists to the sector. Unfortunately for the Manx government, the next critique was to come from an establishment source. In October of 1995 the head of the Island's fraud squad, Det. Insp. Geoff Allen confirmed that money from criminal sources had infiltrated the Manx financial system. Speaking at a conference on money laundering held on the Isle of Man in October of 1995 he confirmed that illegal funds from both Europe and Latin America had passed through the Island. Meanwhile the head of the Island's FSC, Jim Noakes, was quoted as saying at the same conference, "Criminal business is already embedded in the financial system and some of us may already be working for criminals without knowing it. It's our problem - if we claim to be an international centre we are involved".

These honest and frank admissions were swiftly swiftly buried by the finance sector's PR machine and the Manx government. However, nothing has changed and in the current Annual Report on the Manx Police in the section on Financial Crime buried on pages 49/50 of the sixty page document, the same Police Officer is cited bemoaning the lack of even a temporary Clerk to handle the growing workload of the section. He also confirms that the section has had no changes in personnel over the past year. The Manx government, like others globally, does not seem to have the inclination or will to devote sufficient resources to policing its financial services. The regulators and policemen themselves admit the sector is targeted by criminals. Gangs from as far a field as Moscow and Columbia are reported to have used the Manx financial centre - fertile ground indeed for any group in Belfast looking for somewhere safe to stash a £1,000,000. - *J.B. Moffatt*.

France and UK called upon to honour language charter

This document includes:

[Labour promises signature - action awaited](#)
[French renague on language promise](#)

Language Charter that Labour should ratify

A call for the UK Labour government to ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages has been made.

It was pointed out that in September of last year, Chris Smith MP had written to League members saying "I have now heard back from Robin Cook, but you will be pleased to know the Labour Party are in full support of this Charter".

Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair and Foreign Secretary Robin Cook are now to be requested by the League's General Secretary to honour their pledge and sign up to the 23 Article Charter.

Last year the Celtic League attacked French President Jacques Chirac for reneging on a pledge to commit France to the Charter made whilst on a tour of Brittany and Breton delegates to the AGM urged that any British ratification should also be used to renew pressure on France (see below).

Ruling blow to Breton Language - 22-02-97

Chirac accused of reneging on promises made to ratify Languages Charter

Language campaigners and intellectuals have expressed dismay at the decision of France's senior judicial body, the Conseil d'Etat. It has ruled that the French constitution was incompatible with the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The charter was passed in Strasbourg in November 1992 and states, "that the protection and promotion of regional and minority languages in the different countries and regions of Europe represents an important contribution to the building of diversity".

The Conseil d'Etat, which is made up of political appointees from all parties, has argued that the 1992 constitution of France states that "the language of the republic is French" and therefore signing the charter, which would provide the many minority languages with both active and financial support, is incompatible.

The latest move has drawn criticism of French President Jacques Chirac who when pressed recently on the issue of ratification said, "C'est dans la poche" (It's in the bag). Now he is accused of reneging on promises made when he visited Quimper last year and expressed his wish that France should fall into line with other European countries in recognising minority languages.

Corsicans, Alsatians and Basques all have their own languages, but the Bretons are likely to be particularly incensed because the Breton language during the past decade has enjoyed a positive renaissance and this latest move is sure to reinforce divisions between the French and Bretons. The centre-right MP for Finistere has already gone on the record saying that the decision "stresses the inability of France to respect her own minorities".

The General Council of the Celtic League will be issuing a protest to the French government over the ruling, and National branches in Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, Mann and Scotland will be asked to voice protest and also seek support from language groups. The issue will also feature on the agenda of the Celtic League AGM, which is to be held in Wales this summer.

J. B. Moffatt, General Secretary, Celtic League.

Health risks posed by UK surveillance equipment - 10-08-97

Letter to Irish Minister

The Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Government Buildings
Dublin 2,
Ireland.

Dear Minister,

At the Annual General Meeting of the Celtic League held in Caernarvon, Wales on the 25 -27 July the following resolution was adopted:

This AGM: Urges that the Irish British intergovernmental conference establish an independent scientific enquiry into claims that radio surveillance and electronic equipment used in British bases in S. Armagh poses a threat to public health.

The background to this resolution is the reported concern of residents living in the S. Armagh / N. Louth area about possible harmful side effects from the concentration in this area of British Army military installations which utilise a wide range of pulse emitting radar and surveillance equipment and communications micro waves.

The Celtic League corresponded with the Irish government in 1995. We are well aware that in the Dail on 9 March 1995 your predecessor replied to a question on this issue and that in general the government of the day were dismissive of the concerns raised.

The Celtic League were disappointed that the Irish government on that occasion did not take seriously the very genuine concerns of ordinary people faced with the uncertainty the unnatural environment the array of electronic fortifications used by the British Army engender.

Despite the conclusion on that occasion that there was no threat to health we understand that from a scientific point of view "the jury is still out" as to the long term impact of this type of equipment.

Our resolution is straightforward and simply sets out to ensure that every option is considered. If, as we suggest, a survey is carried out by an independent scientific body commissioned by the joint governments, any conclusions would be widely accepted.

Trusting the present Irish government will support this suggestion and undertake a more thorough investigation of these matters than its predecessor.

Yours sincerely,

J. B. Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League
4/8/97

Letter to Irish Minister for Justice re Josephine Hayden

The Minister for Justice,
Department of Justice,
72-76 Stephens Green,
Dublin 2,
Ireland.

Dear Minister,

I write to express our organisation's concern at the continued detention in Limerick jail of Josephine Hayden. This prisoner has, I understand, suffered two heart attacks in as many months and yet the facility which the Irish State has to release on temporary licence has not been actioned.

Whatever the hospital facilities at Limerick Jail, and I understand these are not good, the practice of confining a prisoner with such a vulnerable cardiac condition is at best imprudent and at worst inhumane.

I urge your Department, as a matter of urgency, to review the circumstances of the detention of this prisoner with a view to granting early temporary release on health and humanitarian grounds so that she can obtain such specialised treatment as her own GP determines is necessary.

I would conclude by reminding your Department that, in addition to its duty to contain securely those people sentenced by the Courts, under International law it also has a duty of care of those it holds. Quite patently good judgement is not being exercised in this case.

Yours faithfully,

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League
29/7/97

Manx Government Departments reminded of language policies - 10-08-97

The 1997 AGM of the Celtic League "deplored" the failure of some Manx (Isle of Man) government departments to give prominence to the Manx language on their signs and vehicles. The Isle of Man Constabulary (Department of Home Affairs) were noted as an example.

Delegates from Brittany, Ireland and Wales expressed surprise at the situation as a report from the Manx delegates in an earlier conference session had acknowledged the support for Manx and its progress in the Islands Schools under the auspice of the Department of Education and its Manx Language development team.

League Assistant Secretary, Mark Kermode, explained that whilst some departments had a creditable record, the resolution was aimed at reminding those who thought they could ignore the policy of the Manx government on the issue.

Fisherman lands 500lb surprise - 10-08-97

Old Range poses danger to fishermen - Call for action from British government.

Crews of fishing vessels are being put at risk from explosives which "seed" a rich fishing area of the North west of the Isle of Man. Vessels fish in the area which was until four years ago used by NATO as a live sea-bombing range. Following the closure of the range the Celtic League called for a clean up of the site saying that the area was littered with unexploded munitions. Subsequently a Manx government undersea survey established that the area was indeed heavily contaminated with unexploded devices of up to 1000lbs littering the sea bed.

Yesterday (Monday 4 August) a Manx fishing boat had a narrow escape when it dredged up a 6 foot long parachute mine, with parachute still attached. The bomb was (the MOD say) unidentifiable but the description matches types used in simulated attacks by the USAF prior to the attack on Libya in the mid eighties. Bombs of this type were dropped, silently and with deadly intent, killing many civilians.

The bomb was lowered to the sea-bed and destroyed by a military team from Faslane in Scotland. There is no doubt the crew had a lucky escape. Had the device exploded it would have destroyed the vessel.

A Home Office Minister (Lord Williams) due to visit the Isle of Man next week will be quizzed by the Manx government over nuclear dumping in the Beaufort Dyke area of the North Channel. The Celtic League say that he should also be pressed to announce action to clean up the disused NATO range sea bombing range and end the danger to fishermen.

J.B. Moffatt
pp Celtic League

Flight EI712 - Celtic League campaigns for truth

This document includes:

[Questions still unanswered 30 years on](#)
[Further evidence to support missile responsible](#)
[AGM calls on Irish to honour enquiry pledge](#)
[Irish government promises enquiry into EI712](#)
[UK almost certainly involved in aircraft's loss](#)
[Continued silence over air crashes](#)

See also

[Aircrash casefile](#)

EI-712 - British protests have a hollow ring - 21-03-98

The Ministry of Defence are quoted in the British media today as once again discounting any possibility that a British missile caused the crash of an Irish airliner 30 years ago this month.

The Aer Lingus Viscount, with sixty one people on board, crashed mysteriously from 18,000 feet close to the British missile test site at Aberporth.

In their latest rebuttal however the British are once again moving the goal posts. They now insist that the British missile range was closed only on the day of the crash. Six years ago they were emphatic that the range was closed "for the weekend 23/24 March". This statement by junior Defence Secretary Kenneth Carlisle has since been proven inaccurate and Aberporth certainly was operational into part of the 23rd.

Let us therefore consider those facts which are not shrouded in ambiguity.:

- ☐ 1) The British were having problems testing missiles at the time.
- ☐ 2) The Aberporth range danger area was extended after the crash.
- ☐ 3) Debris from target aircraft has been found near the crash site.
- ☐ 4) Two of the rescue ships log-books have been lost (HMS Invermoriston and Uplifter).
- ☐ 5) The MOD do not know where the Aberporth range safety vessel Hector Gull was on Sunday 24. (Strange, as virtually all other available shipping was assisting at the crash site). The MOD are so anxious to place the Hector Gull away from the range that they say they have "a record of her leaving the range on the evening of Friday 22nd March". This is strange, as we now know the Range was operational into Saturday the 23rd of March.
- ☐ 6) Civilian rescue craft (lifeboats) were kept away from the crash site by naval vessels.

Sorry, Mr. Robertson, but there are still too many unanswered questions about the loss of EI 712 and your ministry's possible involvement!



Further evidence implicating missile testing - Feb. 1998

We analyse photographic evidence that link missile target aircraft to the crash site. Strangely the official enquiry did not ask for detail of the target aircraft or their deployment.

This March sees the thirtieth anniversary of one of the most mysterious and serious air crashes to have occurred over the Irish sea. On the morning of March 24 1968 an Aer Lingus airliner crashed near Tuskar Rock. All 61 on board died. The involvement of the British missile range at Aberporth has long been attributed to the crash, but despite substantial circumstantial evidence the British maintain their story that the range was not operational on the day.

The Celtic League have been assessing and exploring peripheral evidence and once again the trail leads back to Aberporth.

In the analysis and conclusions of the official Irish government enquiry published in June 1970, much attention focused on the evidence of eye witnesses. It was clear from this evidence that two aircraft were present in the area on the day. One aircraft seen very much further west of the impact location of the Viscount was described in some detail and it is this aircraft we have focused on.

Witnesses variously describe the aircraft as travelling fast and having bright red colouring on wing tips, tail and fuselage. The colouring identification is crucial in that it does not equate with the green and white colouring of the Viscount airliner. Our research however indicates it was the colouring used on unmanned Meteor U Mk. 15

and U Mk. 16 target aircraft operated from Llanbedr in Wales and attached to the Aberporth test programme.

Witnesses who saw the aircraft, over Fethard-on-Sea, which subsequently crashed also observed peculiarities in the aircraft. It appeared "partly enveloped in mist" or "as if on fire" but with no smoke. Again we have ascertained that the Meteor U Mk. 15 were fitted with small acquisition flares below the jet pipes and these, when operating would have created the effect observed.

Finally in the context of this mystery aircraft, reference is made in the official report to debris in the sea off Fethard-on-Sea, many miles from the crash site of the Viscount aircraft. A vessel was also reported (although the official report was not able to identify it).

In 1993, Deputy Hugh Byrne set down a question in the Dail in an attempt to clarify its identity, asserting that a British naval vessel was reputed to have recovered an object from the water. The Minister for Defence (David Andrews TD) denied any evidence of this. However, if a Meteor unmanned target had been in the area and had crashed, one of the standard procedures was for the range vessels to recover cameras which were mounted on the target aircraft. These recorded the progress of the missile test. Again our photographic evidence clearly shows the detachable camera pods fitted to a Meteor U Mk. 15 at the time.

Meteor debris has since reportedly been recovered in this area which would indicate that at sometime, Llanbedr based target aircraft have strayed far from the Aberporth target containment area. This squares with other evidence uncovered by a South Wales journalist who found British government reports expressing concern that testing frequently strayed outside the target area. It also revealed that missiles had difficulty locking-on to target aircraft.

If, as we now believe, a missile failed to lock-on to its target and instead locked-on to the Aer Lingus Viscount, that tragic accident may well have been recorded on the target aircrafts cameras, hence the scramble to remove debris from the sea many miles west of the crash site.

The jury is still out on the crash of EI 712 and the tragic loss of 61 lives. The British government may believe that by stonewalling the issue, and with the passage of time it will be forgotten. But there are still many unanswered questions and the finger still points to British missile testing in that area at the time.

Usefully for the Irish government, should it wish to reopen enquiries into this matter, the identification and service record of all the Meteor target aircraft at Llandedr will be well documented. Strangely, the official enquiry in 1970 did not ask for detail of the target aircraft or their deployment.

If these records could be provided by the British government, it would be a start. The Celtic League are cynical enough to believe, however, that like certain crucial ships' log-books, they will have gone missing!



The Celtic Leagues Annual Meeting in Caernarfon this weekend (25/27 July, 1997) endorsed the request made by the Celtic League General Secretary for the Irish government to honour its pledge to re-open the enquiry into the crash of Aer Lingus Flight EI-712 in 1968.

All sixty-one people died when the Viscount airliner plummeted from 18,000 feet near the Aberporth missile testing range. Delegates from the six Celtic countries and also representatives of Celtic expatriate groups were told that action by this present Irish government, provided it received reasonable cooperation from the British, could resolve the mystery.

The riddle of the missing records from naval ships, in the area at the time, and also the question mark over the involvement of the MOD's Aberporth missile range would only be resolved by a new enquiry the meeting concluded. The Taoiseach had acknowledged (23/7/97) the communication, and enclosures, from the League and has referred the request to Public Enterprise Minister, Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, TD.



Irish Sea Airliner Tragedy - New enquiry promised - 24-03-96

Fianna Fail will re-open investigation into Airliner loss and 61 deaths - New evidence on Aircraft Mayday theory - Mystery flight of missile base aircraft to Ulster on day after crash

The Celtic League welcomes the news published in the Irish media that Fianna Fail have given a written commitment to "conduct their own fresh investigation" into the crash of an Irish airliner almost thirty years ago.



UK almost certainly involved in airliner's loss

The United Kingdom is almost certainly involved in the loss of Irish airliner EI 712 near the Aberporth missile testing range on Sunday March 24, 1968.

The Viscount aircraft was on a routine flight from Cork to London. All 61 people, died when the aircraft lost contact with ATC and plunged from a height of 20,000 feet into the Irish sea. Over the years, despite continued speculation about the involvement of UK naval units aircraft and missile range activity, the UK remained silent. After continuous campaigning by organisations, such as our own, and individual relatives of those lost they did reveal information. Crucially some base logs covering several days appear to have been written up in a contemporaneous manner. Other key naval log books from Royal Navy units in the area of the crash, including ships attached to the missile base, cannot be found and the missile range safety vessel cannot be accounted for over the entire weekend of the crash.

New information challenges a long held contention that voice tapes contain the last message from the aircraft and, instead, the theory is advanced that the message comes from a second mystery aircraft seen by witnesses to crash near the Saltee Islands some miles from where the wreckage of the airliner was found.

The theory is given some credence by mysterious mayday messages picked up almost three hours after the airliner and its crew had perished. Ordinarily such rumours

would carry little weight but on this occasion the Office commanding one of the rescue vessels at the scene (HMS Hardy) has apparently corroborated the story.

Debris from a British Gloster Meteor aircraft was found near the Saltees Islands three years ago and the Celtic League is aware from its own research that the Meteor was used at the time to "shepherd" jindivik target drones from the base. Indeed aircraft of this type were in use from Llanbedr (the Aberporth support airfield) on March 22nd and the day after the crash March 25th. Also on the 25th extracts of logs in our possession show that a communications aircraft an Anson made a mystery trip to the north of Ireland, returning the same day.



Continued silence over air crashes -26-02-97

Were three airliners (Irish, Norwegian & Italian) the victims of British and American warplanes or missiles and was their fate hushed up to prevent embarrassment to NATO at the height of the Cold War?

Records have been lost or only recently declassified - Log Books have been lost - a strange series of violent deaths has occurred - damage to military aircraft in the area is revealed years later.

Throughout the Cold War period, western governments and NATO used every opportunity to highlight incidents in which the Soviets shot down military reconnaissance or unarmed civilian airliners. The most infamous incident involved the Soviets deliberate destruction of a Korean airliner in the 1980s although in the period from 1950, *any* incident for which the Soviets could be held culpable was exposed. More recently, Arab countries, particularly Libya, have been linked to the destruction of airliners and serious loss of life.

Three crashes on which the NATO bloc are particularly silent, however, involve the loss of an Aer Lingus Viscount (Irish Airlines EI-712) airliner over the British Aberporth missile range in March 1968, the destruction of a Italian DC-9, near Sicily, in 1980 and the crash of a Norwegian airliner in north Norway in 1982. A total of 157 people died in the crashes.

The Celtic League has been examining all three incidents and its conclusions are set out below:

The United Kingdom is almost certainly involved in the loss of [Irish airliner EI 712](#) near the Aberporth missile testing range on Sunday March 24, 1968.

Equally disturbing is the loss of an Italian airliner off Sicily in June 1980, 77 passengers and four crew died in the incident. The aircraft a DC 9 was on an internal flight for the now defunct Italian domestic carrier Itavia from Bologna to Palermo. In this case, strong evidence points towards the involvement of US naval units in the area and there is considerable grounds to believe the aircraft was struck by a rogue missile fired from a US aircraft off the aircraft carrier Saratoga. In the case of the Itavia crash the accident deaths themselves have been followed over the years by a bizarre series of deaths: Up to 11 people connected to the crash investigation. These have not been natural deaths and many have died in violent or strange circumstances.

An example was retired General Roberto Boemio, who was chief of staff of military air traffic control for southern Italy at the time of the crash. Records from tracking stations he controlled could have been crucial but, on the eve of one of a series of enquiries into the crash, Boemio was stabbed to death outside his home in Brussels in Jan. 1993. His death followed those of two key radar controllers: Capt. Maurizio Gari, head of radar control centre at Poggio Ballone, Pisa and an apparently fit man, died suddenly of heart failure in May, 1981 at the age of 32. Alberto Mari Dettori, radar controller, Poggio Ballone, was found dead hanging from a tree in March, 1987.

The Norwegian airliner, which crashed at Mehamn in north Norway in 1982, was for many years believed to have been damaged by baggage falling out of a hold. This improbable suggestion was recently challenged when it was revealed that an RAF fighter on exercise in the area landed shortly after the incident with collision damage. The MOD have confirmed an aircraft was damaged but say the machine (one of four Harrier aircraft) suffered ricochet damage from fired munitions. They also discount claims that the aircraft may have been simulating attacks on the civil aircraft. Rather pompously, the MOD state RAF aircraft have never deliberately practised interceptions on civilian aircraft.

The Celtic League recalls similar denials being issued in the 1980s about the British Royal Navy and allegations that its submarines were simulating attacks on small civilian surface vessels. An initial RN denial was exposed when photographic evidence supporting the allegations was revealed.

It is past time that an International enquiry was held into these suspicious airliner crashes so that the mysterious deaths of the passengers and crew is explained.

The Celtic League re-iterates its call for such an enquiry.

J. B. Moffatt
General Secretary

RAF is putting lives at risk in Celtic countries

This document includes

[*Call for moratorium on low flying*](#)

[*Letter to Minister for Defence*](#)

[*George Robertson MP fails to act over low-flying hazard*](#)

[*RAF maintenance at "full-stretch"*](#)

[*League scores victory in safety campaign*](#)

[*Media silence over Hawks' grounding*](#)

See also:

[*Aircraft crash sites pose health risk*](#)

Low moratorium - Feb. 1998

Many aircrew have died in operational training. Unless Robertson acts, this flawed policy will also cause civilian deaths.

The Celtic League have called on Defence Secretary George Robertson to instate a moratorium on low flying by military aircraft following events in Italy last week in which a US Navy jet caused the deaths of 20 civilians. As a comparison, the US Navy jet was at 300' (100m) - the RAF is permitted to fly as low as 100' (30m) during low-flying exercises and complaints are regularly made that aircraft go below this!

The League cite a litany of crashes over the years and also accuse Air Force Chiefs and the MOD of failing to tackle a lack of discipline amongst aircrew.

Areas of mid Wales, the Borders and Scotland are used extensively for military low flying and the Celtic League have long maintained that an incident, such as that in Cavalese last week, involving serious civilian loss of life is inevitable unless the problem is addressed.

The tactical strategy which underpins low flying is often cited as an imperative by the RAF/MOD when pressure groups call for change. However following the Gulf War establishment voices also questioned its wisdom with figures such as Margaret Thatcher and Gulf War leader General de la Billiere critical of attrition amongst low flying Tornado attack aircraft.

The RAF also has serious personnel and maintenance problems and in the spring of 1997 the Chief of the Air Staff admitted that the Air Force was at "full stretch" and further commitments could threaten safety".

The MOD has shown scant regard for aircrew safety over the years with poorly maintained, obsolescent aircraft being pushed to the limit. Many aircrew have died in operational training.

The Celtic League fear that unless Robertson acts now, this flawed policy will also cause civilian deaths in those areas where military low flying is carried out.

Text of letter to UK Minister for Defence - 2nd Feb, 1998

Mr. George Robertson
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
London.

Dear Minister,

We write with reference to last week's tragic accident at Cavalese in N. Italy in which 20 people died following an incident involving a low flying US Navy aircraft. We understand that the Italian government has now moved to curtail military low flying.

For many years now a variety of pressure groups has cited the dangers posed by military low flying, particularly in areas such as mid Wales, the Borders and the South West and Highland areas of Scotland. During this period, a series of incidents has occurred. Aircraft have crashed near villages, debris from crashing aircraft has fallen on to main roads and a number of mid air collisions have occurred. It is only by a fortunate coincidence that no serious tragedy, on the scale of that at Cavalese, has been avoided thus far.

During this time, the scale of the lack of discipline exhibited by military flying personnel is demonstrated by the fact over a twenty year period, despite a complaint rate of 100,000, effective disciplinary action has only been taken in three instance (source: your own Department's figures).

We urge you, in light of the Cavalese tragedy and the undoubted threat that operational low flying by military aircraft in the areas identified poses, to call a moratorium on low level operations and, as a first step curtail, all flying training below 1000' except in Air Traffic controlled zones.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

Low flying Robertson Condemned

A resolution at the AGM of the Celtic League, held in Caernarfon, on the weekend (25/27 July, 1997) pledged to continue to publicise the dangers posed to the health of those in rural areas of mid Wales, Scotland and the Borders by low flying.

George Robertson MP was condemned for failing to take action to end the nuisance despite clear evidence from independent research about the health problems caused. The meeting was told some Labour MPs who were outspoken on the issue appeared to have been quieter since they achieved power.

Suggestions that the amount of low flying should be "spread more evenly" across the UK and use made of facilities in Canada were branded as insensitive to those in mid Wales and the Highlands, and grossly offensive to the native people of the Goose Bay area of N. America. The comments had been made in a House of Commons debate in early July in the context of the ratio of sorties over Northumberland.

The League's General Secretary said their was only one "easy fix" for this problem and that was to push training levels for combat jets above 1000'

RAF at "Full Stretch" -06-04-97

British Ministry of Defence gerrymander statistics and withhold ageing files on aircraft safety

The admission by the Chief of the Air Staff that the RAF is at "full stretch" and further commitments could threaten safety" once again albeit in a restrained manner highlights concerns expressed over many years by the Celtic League.

A spate of aircraft accidents across Scotland, N. Ireland and Wales has left us in no doubt that the operations by the RAF and other services are not only compromised by personnel cuts and maintenance deficiencies but also are exacerbated by the operational lifetime of some of the types in Service. Accidents like the Chinook destroyed at Kintyre (29 died) indicate that even after rebuild, aircraft incorrectly maintained are lethal. Other types, such as the Tornada and Hawk, have been dropping from the sky with amazing rapidity over the past 15 years. Indeed, for no explained reason, RAF Hawk trainers operating mainly over Wales have a worse record than the same type in service overseas.

Meanwhile the MoD, who were three years ago scouring the second-hand helicopter market for medium lift helicopters for use in Ulster, had a welcome reprieve with the subsequent ceasefire there. Although now ended there has not been a return to the levels of security pre 1994 and the "Fred Karnos" circus of ageing helicopters that the RAF and British Army deploy continue their tasks.

The MoD also has a track record of gerrymandering the accident figures the most blatant example of this was the decision (unpublicised) taken in 1990 to end publication of Category 3 accidents (since that time only information on Cat 5 and 4 out of the defined Cat 1-5 occurrences is publicised).

Nor is the MoD's sensitivity confined to recent years. Astonishingly, although aircraft accidents caused by low flying have been of major concern, with innumerable Parliamentary questions asked, for over 20 years much information on this comparatively mundane topic are still classified as too secret to reveal!

League scores victory in air accident investigation - 11-03-97

See also [Media strangley silent](#) below

In an unprecedented move to allay fears for the safety of Welsh people following RAF Hawk safety investigations, the U.K. Ministry of Defence has released accident summaries to the Celtic League.

Celtic League General Secretary, Bernard Moffatt, is "shocked but delighted" at the move which follows 15 years of campaigning on the use of Celtic countries for military exercise. It is the first time he has known such a thing to happen.

Celtic League research into Hawk safety has revealed a disturbingly bad comparison with Finnish hawks which have a different specification and ,overall, fly in much worse conditions than the RAF models that fly at "minimum height" over the Welsh countryside. the Finns have lost 7 (13%) as compared to the RAF's 20%. This figure does not include the RAF's non-total loss statistics.

In February of last year, there was a fatal accident with a Hawk jet at RAF Valley (Anglesey). An inquest revealed that a vital linkage to the control surfaces of the aircraft had not been connected. This has been followed by the news that RAF Hawks were grounded in February following the discovery of dangerous cracks in the hydraulic control unit in an aircraft see below).

British Defence 'Hacks' Strangely Silent as Top Gun Base Grounds Major Export Earner - 12-02-97

The United Kingdom's sole training base for fighter aircraft was brought to a standstill last week when all aircraft were grounded in a maintenance scare after a fault was discovered on a Hawk trainer.

The issue generated little interest in the mainstream British media. It was, however, of more than passing interest to the Celtic League which, for over twelve months now, has been trying to seek information about maintenance and safety standards for the RAF Hawks.

The aircraft operates extensively from their base at Valley in north Wales. They also use a base in the Isle of Man and other airfields and weapons firing ranges throughout Wales. The Celtic League believe that their operations pose a threat to the population of these areas. Over 20% of the aircraft that the RAF operate have been lost in accidents, whilst the MoD's bizarre method of categorising accidents helps to conceal much greater problems.

The incident with the Hawk trainer is part of growing evidence that safety standards within the RAF are lax. Standards and maintenance problems, for the British military, were highlighted only ten days ago when a British TV documentary alleged pilots killed in the Kintyre Chinook accident, in which 27 died, had taken out increased insurance. The Hawk, a British Aerospace product, is sold world wide by the British government and featured in many of the arms deals negotiated in the days of the Thatcher government. The warplane is sold to all manner of despotic regimes and is used in its military role against the civil population of East Timor by Indonesia. The Indonesian regime currently has pilots training on the aircraft at Valley - doubtless morale amongst trainees has dropped somewhat in the past few days.

Despite the aircraft's continuing problems, its value as a Defence commodity to the United Kingdom (a \$1 billion contract with Australia is currently being negotiated) ensured that, last week, the mainstream British media and its Defence correspondents, usually only too willing to sing the aircraft's praises, were strangely silent.

It was left to the Welsh regional paper, the "Western Mail", to focus several articles on the issue which reported concerns voiced about safety by the Celtic League and Plaid Cymru, the Welsh Nationalist Party.

J.B. Moffatt - General Secretary

Celtic countries used to train Indonesian killers

This document includes:

[*Sale of Hawks to Indonesia condemned*](#)

[*Manx government issues bland excuses*](#)

[*UK MOD admit training Indonesian killers*](#)

Sale of Hawks condemned

The 1997 AGM of the Celtic League condemned UK plans to complete an order for Hawk warplanes which will be used to further Indonesian repression in East Timor.

Representatives pledged all Celtic League branches to oppose the sale. The League's General Secretary told the meeting that the decision showed Robin Cook's recent commitment to respect and campaign for International Human Rights was a farce and the UK was showing the same contempt as the Indonesians for the rights of native peoples.

The League's Welsh and Manx branches were urged to continue to publicise the use of the RAF base at Valley to train personnel for the murderous Indonesian regime.

RAF Valley uses facilities in other parts of Wales, and Ronaldsway on the Isle of Man.

Manx government prevaricate over training issue

RAF will continue to be allowed access to Island airfield facility to train Indonesian military thugs.

The Manx government has replied to correspondence from the Celtic League concerning the use of Ronaldsway Airport in the Isle of Man by Hawk trainers from RAF Valley in Anglesey.

The Celtic League had asserted that the facility should be denied on moral grounds as Valley was being used in a contract to train Indonesian air crews. We enclosed graphic detail of the Indonesian human rights record in the occupied East Timor territory and also cited the distress the probable usage by Indonesian military personnel had caused to Island resident 'Minna' Rennie whose son, a journalist for Channel 9 TV Australia, was brutally murdered by the Indonesian military in 1975.

Mr. David North, Manx Minister of Transport has, unconvincingly, asserted that the Manx authorities cannot identify the nationality of aircrew using the facility and, again unconvincingly, cited safety considerations as justification for continuing the RAFs usage. Mr. Norths weak evasions are a stark contrast to the attitude of Mrs. Rennie who despite being in her mid seventies is determined if necessary to travel to Australia to publicise the murder of her son and other journalists by the Indonesians.

Meanwhile a parallel query to Welsh Secretary William Hague has been passed to the Ministry of Defence for "direct reply". Last month the MOD initially denied that aircrew were being trained at Valley but subsequently this was 'corrected'.

The League had supplied similar graphic evidence of Rights abuse to the Welsh Office and indicated that the arrangement to train Indonesian military personnel at was morally offensive to the Celtic people.

J.B. Moffatt,

General Secretary.15/8/96

MOD "own up" to training of Indonesian Military - 24-09-96

"Precise details" of multi million pound training deal with Indonesian military regime withheld.

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that Indonesian aircrew are trained at an air base in Wales. The conformation contradicts earlier denials that were given to UK journalists when the Celtic League made the allegation some months ago.

The MOD say "precise details" of the training are "confidential between governments" however it is certain that the aircrew use the base facility at Valley, and the airfield at Ronaldsway in the Isle of Man for simulated landing approaches. The League also believe that units from Valley including Indonesian aircrew are detached to firing ranges in the S. Wales area where training in the ground attack capabilities of the aircraft are given.

The Celtic League has criticised both the UK and Manx governments over the training at a time when the Indonesian human rights record and oppression of the indigenous people of East Timor are under scrutiny. The Hawk is believed to be a key component of the Indonesian military's counter insurgency effort in the war in East Timor and human rights activists attacked and disabled a Hawk aircraft destined for the territory at B. Aerospaces Warton (Lancashire) plant in January 1995.

The MOD insists that there is "no evidence that British supplied defence equipment has been used in East Timor". This statement however flies in the face of all the evidence. Reputable British journalists have reported watching bombing raids carried out by the British Aerospace supplied aircraft. During the repression in Indonesia over 200,000 people, a third of the indigenous population, have been killed in one of the most brutal acts of genocide since W.W. 2.

The Celtic League will continue to press the MOD for specific detail of any offensive training provided to Indonesian crews and will try to establish if Indonesian crewmen are allowed to fly solo operations to firing ranges at Pembrey in Wales.

Meanwhile the Manx government which has to date refused to accept that Indonesian aircrew could be identified with the Valley based aircraft using the airfield at Ronaldsway will again be asked to withhold the facility.

For one Manx resident the argument has more than a moral imperative. Seventy Five year old Minna Rennie's son Malcolm was murdered in 1975 when, as a journalist with Australian TV station Channel 9, he and another colleague filmed atrocities committed by Indonesian invasion forces in East Timor. Mrs. Rennie feels bitter that the British and Australian governments have ignored the deaths and now trade with her son's murderers!

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary

Treatment of Political prisoners

This document includes:

[AGM condemns treatment](#)
[Letter to UK Home Secretary re Irish prisoners](#)

Irish & Basque prisoners plea

The British and Spanish governments were accused of using Irish and Basque political prisoners as bargaining tools in their disputes in N. Ireland and the Basque country. The prisoners should be repatriated to their homelands.

The call came at the 1997 AGM of the Celtic League. The conference said that both governments are ignoring International standards on the detention of prisoners by deliberately locating them in prisons distant from their families and so frustrating access to them.

The League are to write to all European Union governments urging them to prevail on the London and Madrid governments to act "with more political maturity on the issue".

Letter to UK Home Secretary re political prisoners

The United Kingdom Home Secretary,
The Home Office,
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT

Dear Home Secretary

I draw your attention to the attached resolution which was adopted at the Annual Meeting of the Celtic League in Caernarfon on 25-27 July 1997 and specifically the section relating to Irish prisoners.

This AGM:

Requests that the governments of the United Kingdom and Spain to pay due regard to paragraphs 43(1), 65(c), 66(b), & 68 of "The European Prison Rules" in promoting the rights of prisoners to have reasonable access and communication with their families.

Urges these governments to cease locating (Irish and Basque) political prisoners in prisons distant from their home countries and effectively using them as bargaining tools in conflict resolution.

I believe the text of the resolution is self explanatory and would urge the United Kingdom government in line with International standards to repatriate Irish prisoners to their home area where they have family and social connections.

For information I refer you to the report of the Council of Europe - European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) made after a visit to Spain in 1994 in connection with the problem of Basque prisoners:

"Humanitarian considerations, not to mention the objective of social rehabilitation, speak in favour of prisoners serving their sentences in the region where they have family and social ties.

In this connection, the CPTs delegation observed that many prisoners were serving their sentences in establishments situated a long way from their families' homes"

I believe these comments are equally appropriate in relation to those prisoners serving sentences in British jails for offences connected with the conflict in N. Ireland.

I trust the British government will review its policy and exercise a more humanitarian policy.

Yours sincerely,

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary
4/8/97

cc. Sec. of State for N. Ireland
The United Kingdom Foreign Secretary
Council of Europe (CPT)

Edinburgh Gaelic Education Under Threat 12-09-97

Edinburgh city council have announced that they intend to take measures to restrict the availability of Gaelic medium primary education in Edinburgh. At a recent meeting, the council's Education Committee approved a report which stated that "early discussion has taken place with the Head Teacher and officers of this Department on the establishment of an upper overall limit, eligibility for placement at the unit and related issues. These matters will shortly be the subject of wider consultation".

If implemented these measures would have disastrous effects on Gaelic Medium Education throughout Scotland. At a time when Gaelic is undergoing a revival, the establishment of an upper limit for Gaelic medium education in Edinburgh would serve to keep the numbers of Gaelic speaking children artificially low in the capital and would deny many parents the choice of Gaelic Medium Education for their children. The motivation for this capping of Gaelic Medium Education is purely financial.

The Tollcross Gaelic medium unit is the only Gaelic primary in Lothian and has traditionally served children from all areas of south east Scotland. When the council refers to "eligibility for placement" it is thought that they have geographical factors in mind. Children from the Borders, West Lothian, Midlothian and East Lothian in addition to Edinburgh attend the unit. Any attempt to restrict access to the school to Edinburgh residents alone would leave most of south east Scotland without any Gaelic Medium Education provision.

Comann nam Parant, the national Gaelic parents support group, have described this development as "worrying" and have stated that this measure will have implications far beyond Edinburgh. Comann nam Parant, along with the Scottish branch of the Celtic League, and all other Gaelic bodies are pledged to fighting The City of Edinburgh Council's plan.

Please write to the following people stating your opposition to an upper overall limit on numbers in Gaelic medium education and stating that any child should be eligible for placement in Gaelic medium education.

Councillor Elizabeth Maginnis,
Chair, Education Committee,
City of Edinburgh Council,
George IV Bridge,
Edinburgh.

Brian Wilson MP,
Minister for Gaelic,
Scottish Office,
St. Andrews House,
Edinburgh,
EH1 3DG.

The Scottish Branch of the Celtic League would welcome copies of your correspondence.

Mystery deaths at sea should be solved - 12-09-97

This document also contains:

["Pescado" verdict re-opens questions over losses.](#)
[Trawler wreck should be preserved as memorial](#)

British, Irish & the EU should reopen enquiry into "marine tragedies that cost so many lives and caused so much suffering to those left behind".

If the openness of Britains "New Labour" government is to mean anything it should draw back the curtain on a dark episode from the closing period of the Cold War.

In the period between 1979 -89 there were scores of accidents at sea caused by the submarine activity of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact navies. In British coastal waters there were a significant number of such incidents. The problem ultimately led to new codes of practice being introduced by submarines and UN conventions to address the issue. With the departure of both the US and Russians and the general decline in British undersea power the problem disappeared.

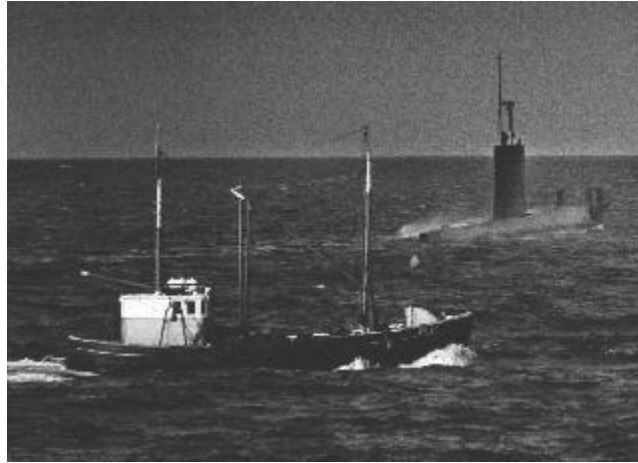
In its wake however were left the unexplained deaths of scores of fishermen many of whom disappeared without trace together with their vessels. The tragedy affected coastal communities in Ireland, north and South Wales, Scotland and Brittany. The most suspicious incidents occurred either in submarine "choke-points" or in designated exercise areas.

Some incidents such as the Welsh MFV (Motor Fishing Vessel) Inspire loss in 1988 point unerringly towards involvement by the Royal Navy. The MFV Mhari L from Kirkcudbright in SW Scotland disappeared in almost perfect weather in an area frequented by US Subs. Some, like the MFV Cite D'Aleth, a large deep water boat from Concarneau in Brittany with a 10 man crew, managed a Mayday but most vanished without trace.

Perhaps now Cold War tensions have eased the British and Irish governments could jointly address the question of this sequence of marine tragedies that cost so many lives and caused so much suffering to those left behind? With the involvement of a body such as the European Parliament a proper independent enquiry might learn the fate of some of those lost.

NB. A number of Breton vessels were lost in the Pembroke Strait area, "Cite D'Aleth", "La Course" and "Galv ar Mor": A total of twenty three men not accounted for in an area known to be used by the British and French navies for "war games".

The Celtic League produced a dossier covering period mentioned and earlier incidents with specific details that list over 160 incidents.



HMS Porpoise photographed off Isle of Man

Some question if tragedies of this type could be concealed - We refer to the sinking of the MFV Sheralga. This Irish vessel from Co. Louth was dragged under by the British submarine HMS Porpoise. For over two weeks the British maintained no submarines were in the area until Celtic League produced the above photograph of HMS Porpoise taken just hours before the incident in the Irish sea. The sub was snapped by a family enjoying a day out in the town of Peel.

Trawler should be retained as memorial mystery sea dead - 12-09-97

It comes as no surprise that authorities wish to dispose of, on the grounds of cost, the salvaged Trawler Pescado. The vessel has been stored at Devonport dockyard for four years whilst an enquiry into the loss has been ongoing.

Controversy has surrounded the loss of the vessel, off Cornwall in 1991, with suspicions of both a natural tragedy and a collision or snagging by a submarine.

Whatever the truth of the Pescado loss it should be maintained as a monument to other mysterious losses. The vessel is undoubtedly an embarrassment to the Department of Transport and its Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) for it is a physical reminder of the MAIB's inability to resolve the mystery of over a score of suspicious Trawler losses in British home waters during the closing stages of the Cold War.

Submarine activity, confirmed in some instances, is also suspected to have caused the deaths of up to one hundred fishermen over a ten year period. Fishing vessels and their crews from Scotland Wales Ireland & Brittany perished, some disappearing without trace, many in good weather conditions in known submarine activity areas. With the end of the Cold War US and Soviet submarines cutback their confrontation around the British Isles and bases closed. Pointedly all the suspicious incidents then ceased.

Last month the Celtic League called for investigations to be re-opened. We now re-iterate that call and hope that John Prescott, who often boasts his seafaring links, has the commitment to end these mysteries and so resolve a long agony for relatives of those lost.

Prescott could also concentrate his attention on the lamentable record of MAIB in resolving sound cause or reason for these sinkings. Their ineptitude during this period may have cost lives that might have been saved.

J B Moffatt
General Secretary

Pescado Verdict Reopens Mystery of Missing Vessels -22-02-97

The decision of the Court of Appeal to quash the verdict on the owner of the Motor Fishing Vessel (MFV) Pescado is sure to re-open the controversy surrounding it and other suspicious sinkings.

Much play was made in the Pescado case about the seaworthiness of the vessel and its crews inexperience. Attempts to "hang" its owner using this indictment appear to have failed.

The Celtic League monitors military activity and, over twenty years up to 1993, we have built up the most comprehensive dossier of over 150 incidents involving submarines and MFVs. Included in this total were twenty suspicious sinkings and disappearances and over 150 deaths. Whatever the circumstances of the Pescado, what was clear to us in relation to most of these incidents was that the vessels, from Scotland Wales, Ireland Cornwall & Brittany, were solid, seaworthy and crewed by experienced men.

More pointedly, when the Cold war ended and the US and Soviet navies left waters around the British Isles, the number of incidents involving MFVs and submarines dramatically declined.

In 1993 the Celtic League ended its campaign for International action to close waters around the British Isles to submerged exercise activity. By this time, considerable action by both the Royal Navy and Internationally had been taken to address the problem.

The campaign "ended" with the laying of a wreath in a submarine exercise area in the Irish Sea, the scene of many of the sinkings. The wreath contained the names of the twenty vessels and though our campaign is over the mystery of their loss and the many deaths remains.

It is still not too late for an International enquiry to resolve the fate of some of these vessels and ease the grief of those left to mourn their loss at sea. If the Pescado verdict focuses attention on this hidden tragedy it will be a good thing!

J. B. Moffatt, General Secretary.

UK Military Pollution

This document includes:

[British Army flouts environmental responsibilities - 8th August '98](#)

[Letter to UK MoD re Land Quality Assessments - 8th August '98](#)

[Letter to George Foulkes MP](#)

[Letter to UK Mod re Armagh pollution -8th August '98](#)

[Letter to Irish Government re UK military pollution - 8th August '98](#)

[Cleanup underway](#)

[League seeks progress report](#)

[UK misleads Irish Government over military pollution](#)

[Military pollution campaign vindicated](#)

[Britain's Military not so "green"](#)

"Pollution dosen't matter because we can get away with it."

The above quote is from an article by a British Army Royal Engineer Officer, 2nd Lt. Verity Orrell-Jones BEng, who was highlighting the indifference shown by many of her colleagues to environmental matters.

She was arguing that the Army should change its ways and adapt to meet environmental targets set by civil legislation. The debate about the green credentials of the British military was joined by the Celtic League in the early part of this decade.

We suggested that all the British services were responsible for breathtaking irresponsibility in relation to environmental standards. Although our initial concerns were evaded, by 1996, the British MOD were forced to admit to possible pollution at a staggering six hundred military locations and some remedial work was put in hand.

One of the areas we cited was N. Ireland where due to the large military presence and operational conditions even the poor standards set in Great Britain were not met. Again the MOD promised action and surveys and clean ups were scheduled at several bases. This month's focus on the pollution problem at small border facilities such as that at Faughil in S. Armagh indicate however that the Army has still not cleaned up its act.

"It doesn't matter we can get away with it," still seems to be the order of the day as the MOD flout their own environmental mission statement.

J B Moffatt pp Celtic League

Text of Letter UK MoD re Land Quality Assesments - 8th August '98

S. J. Hall
ENV Pol(Sec) 2
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON

Dear Mr. Hall,

I wrote to the Minister c/o ENV (Pol) 2 earlier this year. A copy of my letter is attached.

I was responding to your communication of the 3/9/97 concerning pollution of military sites and Land Quality Assessments being carried out by the MOD.

I would be grateful if you could respond to these queries and also if information on the progress of MOD environmental remedial work could be provided.

I accept that it might be time consuming and expensive to respond to all public queries on this issue by supplying full copies of the Land Quality Assessments (should these indeed be bulky documents), however I would ask that in the interests of openness the MOD should make summaries available.

I would draw a parallel here with MOD policy in relation to military air accidents where the full report is not available free of cost but a summary of the investigation is always readily supplied.

I have requested information on the progress of site assessment and remedial work in Scotland, Wales and N. Ireland and indeed have identified some particular bases we are interested in. I do hope you can be more forthcoming with this information.

In September 1996 I understand that the MOD Estates organisation Surveyors let out contracts for surveys of potential contamination on some 600 military sites focusing initially on 60. Can you indicate to us if this is the case and if so do the successful contractors not supply reports and are these available?

I am writing to you separately about a specific contamination incident and if this query is outside your brief would ask that you refer it on as appropriate.

I will also be forwarding a copy of this letter to Mr. George Folks MP, who we contacted with our concerns in 1996 and who was instrumental in initiating the action by the former Defence Secretary Mr. Portillo. I will be asking Mr. Foulkes to use his good offices with the Defence Secretary to ensure the information we have been seeking is placed in the House of Commons Library so that at the very least it is available to MPs.

Yours sincerely

J. B. Moffatt

Text of Letter to Mr George Foulkes MP - 7th August '98

Mr. George Foulkes MP
BY FAX

I attach a letter to the MOD Environmental Policy unit concerning the pollution of military lands and the quality assessment and remedial work which was announced following your intervention with the former Defence Minister Portillo and Soames.

I am bitterly disappointed that despite requests for specific information the MOD still seem to wish to keep this under wraps.

As indicated in the letter I can accept that to supply vast amounts of copious reports could be both time consuming and costly and have suggested that perhaps the MOD could provide summary information on the work undertaken to date identifying briefly the nature of the contamination and what remedial action if possible is being undertaken.

I hope you can assist by inducing the MOD to be more open. No great issue of National Security is at stake in this and in the long term it will probably enhance the MODs "green credentials" if it does "open the books".

Yours sincerely
Bernard Moffatt

7/8/98

Text of Letter to UK MoD re Armagh Pollution incidents - 7th August '98

S. J. Hall
ENV Pol(Sec) 2
Ministry of Defence
Main Building
Whitehall
LONDON

Dear Mr. Hall,

I understand from the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Committee that a serious pollution problem exists at a Military Base/Observation post situated on Faughil mountain in the S. Armagh Border area overlooking Co. Louth in the Irish Republic.

The facility there has apparently been in place for over twelve years and the area around the base is allegedly contaminated with sewage, and possible other domestic waste from kitchen and drain out-falls.

Given that various fuels and lubricants are also stored on site, in ad hoc facilities, there is a possibility of surface and sub surface contamination by these material together with the other contaminants has occurred on the hillside below the base.

It is apparent that the group have had little success to date in eliciting action from the authorities to address this problem. They have quite properly raised the issue with both civil and military authorities in N. Ireland. The civil authorities would seem to have difficulty accessing this facility and the MOD (NI) admit there is a problem.

I understand that the MOD Environmental Policy Statement indicates that:

The Department:

- *"ensures compliance with the letter and spirit of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (which applies to all existing personnel, Service and civilian) and with all other existing environmental legislation"*

I am also aware that the policy allows the Crown to invoke exemptions in certain circumstances and given security implications this derogation may have been applied to this site. However there is absolutely no excuse today for the proper assessment and clean up of this installation to be effected and we would hope the Ministry will prioritise this.

Referring again to the MOD Environmental Policy Statement, a section indicates that the MOD should "strive to be a good neighbour at home and abroad". Sadly in this respect the MOD has failed to meet its obligations to the people of this area by responding positively to their concerns and again we would trust that this deficiency can be addressed.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt Secretary General
7/8/98

Text of Letter to Irish Government re UK MoD pollution - 7th August '98

An Tanaiste
Office of the Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Government Building
Dublin 2 IRELAND

Dear Sir,

I corresponded with your Office in 1996 (see attached) concerning pollution around military bases in the N. Ireland.

At that time the issue was raised with the British Authorities via the Anglo-Irish Secretariat and certain assurances given in relation to one site, the Army base at Bessbrook in S. Armagh.

The MOD confirmed to us in September 1997 that the promised remedial work had been undertaken at this site and at others in N. Ireland and we are currently asking for further information on this.

After correspondence between the League and a community group in S. Armagh I have written to the MOD in London concerning very bad pollution at a Military Observation base on the Armagh border (Faughil Mountain). Given the copy you forwarded to us of the MOD Environmental Policy Statement it would appear that they are not meeting their own standards in relation to this and possibly other small sites in the Border areas.

Land contamination from even a small facility can, if not remedied, spread over a considerable area. The British Army's own report some years ago by 2nd Lt. Verity Orrel Jones RE highlighted this. The pollution, once it permeates to the water table, can disperse over an even greater area and causes a pollution legacy which can last for generations.

We would ask you to use your good Offices with the British authorities to have immediate remedial action taken at Faughil mountain and also to seek an assurance that the Land Quality Assessment programme currently under-way at military sites in

Gt. Britain and N. Ireland be extended
to these smaller installations.

Our organisation will be pressing this last point with the Ministry of Defence.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

Secretary General
7/8/98

Environmental Clean Up Underway - 22-09-97

An environmental survey and clean up the MOD initially denied is now firmly underway - but it maybe many years before the full result is known. The Celtic League welcome a more open policy - though serious question-marks still remain.

In the early 1990s the Celtic League were concerned at reports emerging from the newly freed eastern bloc countries about environmental damage caused by the military. We speculated, accurately as it transpires, that Western military countries would also have a bad record.

We first raised concerns in 1991 about possible pollution at the missile testing establishment at Aberporth in Wales. Then, in 1993, we learned that uncirculated reports by both the British Army and RAF confirmed widespread pollution at military sites.

Despite protracted correspondence the MOD indicated they had no knowledge of the document. However we uncovered enough information to produce a pamphlet Britain's Military Not So Green in which we asserted that there is pollution on a large scale, around military sites. We specifically identified the missile sites at Aberporth and Benbecula and also bases in N.Ireland and specifically the Bessbrook heliport in S. Armagh. Still British government denials continued with Nicholas Soames rejecting a question laid down on our behalf by (then) Labour back bencher George Foulkes. Eventually, after further publicity and parliamentary probing, Defence Secretary Portillo conceded there was a problem and indicated that land quality Statements were to be undertaken for up to 600 sites.

The MOD have confirmed that a clean-up has taken place at the S. Armagh (Bessbrook) base, they also indicate that work is proceeding elsewhere in N. Ireland. They further indicate a pollution assessment is to be undertaken at RAF Aldegrove - this is interesting as we understand that bases such as Aldegrove came in for criticism in the confidential RAF report, prepared about five years ago, which has still not been released.

We have also received assurances that former MOD sites operated by the DERA are to be checked. These include the missile testing establishments at Aberporth and in the Hebrides however there are also a range of installations in S. W. Scotland. The MOD say:

"DERA's programme (of land quality assessments) is also prioritised based on an assessment of environmental risks and future use of specific sites"

The worrying factor here is that in fact DERA are carrying their own in house monitoring with no apparent external scrutiny - because of the secret nature of some their research.

The Celtic League will be taking up on an MOD invitation to supply Land Quality Statements for some specific sites. The invitation to offer these is a refreshing about face on the attitude at MOD under the previous government, although the indication that a charge will be levied suggests that some at the MOD still want to keep this information under wraps.

Progress report sought - 03-08-97

The Celtic League are seeking information from the Defence Minister on the progress of environmental surveys around military sites. The previous government was forced to concede there was a problem when the League passed a copy of its report, compiled in 1994, entitled "Britains Military - Not So Green" to Labour MP George Foulkes last year.

The League are also pressing for information on the progress of work to rectify pollution problems at Bessbrook military base in S. Armagh and are calling on the British government to use the improved security situation to undertake a proper appraisal of all N. Ireland military sites.

Bessbrook and two other sites (missile ranges) in the United Kingdom were specifically mentioned in the Celtic League's original pamphlet.

MOD CONFIRM POLLUTION AT BASES IN N. IRELAND -20-09-96

The British Ministry of Defence have misled the Irish government when replying to a query about environmental pollution around military bases in N. Ireland. The Irish government had raised the issue at an inter-governmental conference earlier this year at which they tabled a report prepared by the Celtic League entitled ["Britain's Military not so Green"](#) which alleged large scale pollution around bases.

In a reply to the Celtic League from the office of the Tanaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Irish officials tell the League the British denied the report's contention saying it contained "a number of generalities concerning the Ministry's (MOD) environmental credentials for which no supporting evidence is provided".

The Northern Ireland based British Officials were apparently unaware that the Leagues "generalities" were based on a general report prepared by a British army engineering Officer in 1992 which the MOD had attempted to suppress. They were obviously also unaware that illustrations in the League publication were taken directly from that report.

In August, the MOD were eventually forced to confirm the substance of League concerns after questions were tabled for us by English Labour MP, George Foulkes. The Celtic League has since passed further information to English Labour

environment spokesman, Michael Meacher. The MOD are now to carry out surveys across the United Kingdom. No specific mention, however, was made of the considerable installations in N. Ireland. The Irish government confirm in their correspondence to the League, that installations in N. Ireland are to be upgraded. They also have confirmation from the British that the base at Bessbrook in S. Armagh was, as we alleged, polluted by fuel solvents.

Bessbrook was one of three bases singled out for special attention in our report published in 1994 - the others were the missile testing facilities at Aberporth in mid Wales and Benbecula / South Uist in the Hebrides. The League are disappointed that the British military in N. Ireland continued to maintain the fiction of responsible environmental practice when all the evidence both there and in Britain pointed to the opposite.

In their haste to conceal this record, they have committed the ultimate *faux pas*: Condemning a report by the League, which is based on the British Army's own findings!

J.B. Moffatt pp. Celtic League

League's campaign over military pollution vindicated - 01-09-96

"Hundreds of land quality surveys to be undertaken - Celtic League welcomes conclusion to five year campaign"

A five year campaign, by the Celtic League, aimed at achieving environmental assessments around British military installations has been vindicated. The Ministry of Defence are to conduct "land quality surveys" at 600 sites throughout the UK.

It was in 1991 that the Celtic League first contacted the M.O.D. addressing specific questions about the storage of fuel at missile testing establishments and the carcinogenic dangers of any contamination from this source. The MOD were dismissive but the campaign was stimulated when the League learned, in 1993, that two surveys conducted in parallel by the British Army and RAF had found serious levels of contamination around a wide range of bases and airfields.

Despite attempts to gain access to the reports, we were again stonewalled by the Ministry. We supplied detail of one of the reports compiled by a 2nd Lt. Verity Orrel Jones and referred to its publication by the Royal Engineers. Curiously the MOD still prevaricated advising that the Army "are unaware of such a report". We say curiously because it transpires that the reports author (now promoted Colonel) received an award for the work. In 1995, in the face of continued MOD intransigence and having gathered the information elsewhere, we published detailed accusations about the military pollution record.

Finally, three months ago, we asked (U.K) Labour MP George Foulkes to elicit the information the MOD were withholding. Mr. Foulkes initial approach was rebutted by Under Secretary Nicholas Soames. In a reply on 24th of June, Soames said evasively "My Department does not normally undertake surveys of land beyond the perimeter of sites it occupies ". Apparently the MOD has now decided to come clean and not only should an apology be on its way to George Foulkes, but the information sought

should be published. More pertinently, a thorough in depth survey of MOD lands is to take place so that once and for all the legacy of years of environmental neglect can be assessed and rectified.

The Celtic League will be continuing to monitor matters with a keen interest in seeing that the broad range of bases in Wales, Scotland & Cornwall are assessed. We also are keen that any assessment should include bases in Ulster - left out of previous random samples.

J.B. Moffatt

BRITAIN'S MILITARY - NOT SO GREEN - 01-08-96

In 1992 the Celtic League began a report into the environmental effect of British Military installations on the Celtic countries.

Despite a steadfast refusal by the MOD to release information to us in 1995, the formation gathered was published in the (abridged) report below. We have obtained some of the information the MOD had refused to release by other means.

Recently we enlisted the support of Scottish Labour MP George Foulkes who has promised to demand that the documentation on this matter suppressed by the MOD be placed in the House of Commons members Library.

Our campaign continues July 1996.

Most complaints about military activity in the Celtic areas relate to the more visible aspects of behaviour, yet there is an obscure but perhaps more lastingly damaging spin off from the military.

As society has become more environmentally conscious, the attitude of the military has remained unmodified. There is a vast range of military installations throughout the Celtic areas of Great Britain and the Six Counties. These bases have been polluting the environment for years and, despite the legislative changes forced in civil society by greater environmental consciousness, there is little sign of changing attitudes in British MOD thinking.

At the beginning of the decade, the MOD position was that the military still enjoyed "Crown immunity" from the application of environmental protection legislation. Whilst consideration was being given to lifting the exemption in the "future", the Ministry of Defence still believed that exemptions would be required in specific instances; most commonly on the grounds of "national security".

The Ministry of Defence, in the name of the Secretary of State for Defence, can be prosecuted. Apparently, should the prosecution be successful, no penalty can be imposed. There is a basis in law for individuals to be held responsible for pollution incidents (e.g. Camp or Station Commanders) and also for individual members of the public to mount private prosecutions but, for various reasons, neither of these provisions provides realistic safeguards.

For the purposes of brevity, we will consider a particular situation that causes serious environmental pollution that, although stemming from single and at times small sites, can cause long term damage. Most of the military bases contain either temporary or purpose built fuel dumps, many of which have obsolete infrastructure. In addition to

the storage of petrol and diesel fuel oils, these contain lubricants, anti-freeze and de-icing compounds. Some store specialised fuel formulas.

The military have accepted privately for sometime that these dumps are prone to leakage. Four years ago, both the Army and the RAF investigated the problem with a view to both assessing its extent and developing procedures to deal with it. Unfortunately, this research has not been given widespread circulation and, despite a year long correspondence with the British Ministry of Defence, we have been unable to acquire copies of any reports associated with it.

With storage of fuel in the circumstances outlined above, the leakage over a period of years can lead to decades of contamination.

The characteristics of oil and petrol mean that they are not immediately broken down or dissolved but rather they float. As seepage or spills continue the mass congregates and then in turn this mass reacts in three ways:

- 1) Toxic vapour and gas fumes contaminates the area above the mass.
- 2) A slow dissolving process takes place.
- 3) The dissolved product from (2) mixes with the ground water and pollutes the immediate water table and any water courses.

The effect of the last characteristic is to extend the pollution far beyond the confines of the base whose source as the cause of the pollution is not easily identifiable.

In addition to the fuel oils, the other compounds (anti-freeze, de-icers etc.) behave differently, but the end result is similar.

As indicated, many installations are obsolete and it is questionable if they meet environmental standards set by civil society. In Ulster there was (and still is) the complication of the security situation. We can take Bessbrook in south Armagh as an example. It is sometimes described as the "busiest heliport in Europe". It must contain large supplies of a wide range of the fuels and compounds mentioned. Its problems are exacerbated by its size and the security situation.

Extreme variations to the "dirty" rule are also likely to be found in less operationally trying bases than south Armagh. Test establishments such as the rocket ranges in the Hebrides and the massive Aberporth facility in mid Wales are undoubtedly long overdue for independent environmental assessment.

The MOD have carried out internal and "discreet" investigations some years ago. The consensus then was that the view within the three services was that "pollution doesn't matter because we can get away with it ". As all other facets of public life come under increasing pressure from domestic and European law to clean up their act, it's time the British Ministry of Defence cleaned up theirs!

NB. Landowners or community groups living in the proximity or adjacent to military installations who have pollution problems caused by hydrocarbons, other solvents or any undetermined factor can contact the League with brief details of the problem.

Nuclear installations threaten health of Celtic Nations

This article includes:

[*Converted Ro-Ro vessel transports nuclear cargo*](#)

[*Shellfish focus attention on Sellafield pollution*](#)

[*French action prompts Sellafield concern*](#)

[*BNFL's two-fingered insult*](#)

[*Summer sea-current traps more than prawns*](#)

[*Dounreay's dangerous condition*](#)

[*Sellafield pollution set to increase.*](#)

See also:

[*Radioactive waste dumped with munitions*](#)

[*USA and UK fly nuclear material over Ireland*](#)

Sellafield's dangerous cargoes

"This mode of transport on vessels whose crews are not specifically trained or experienced in the handling and management of radioactive materials, and which are not specially adapted for this extremely hazardous cargo is deemed safe by the British."

The news that standard Ro-Ro ferries are being used to transport substantial quantities of plutonium through the Irish Sea shows the staggering indifference which the British government shows to coastal communities in the area. Anything, it seems, which facilitates the operation of the Sellafield reprocessing plant is permissible, and the Company's track record of accidents and pollution of the marine environment is ignored.

Ro-Ro ferries have a questionable safety record following several notable failings and great loss of life in recent years. To quote the IMO, Ro-Ro vessels are 'exceptionally vulnerable to human error' and yet apparently this mode of transport, on vessels whose crews are not specifically trained or experienced in the handling and management of radioactive materials, and which are not specially adapted for this extremely hazardous cargo, is deemed safe by the British.

BNFL are not sufficiently competent to operate the land-based plant securely, and this is best evidenced by the news last week that accidental discharges from Sellafield had occurred for the past two weeks and are continuing. Such incompetence in the shore-based operation hardly engenders confidence in their ability to contain a disaster at sea if one of these ferries should founder.

The consequences of such a sinking would undoubtedly be disastrous.

The Celtic League will be writing to both the Irish and Manx governments urging the most vigorous protest, both directly to the British, and also to International agencies such as the IMO and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

These dangerous cargoes must be stopped!

Sellafield - Focus on shellfish pollution - 22-09-97

Britain likely to face bill for clean up as International Community realises damage BNFL is causing to shellfish stocks - Meacher gaffe proves our claim that British Government policy to monitor the plant is "all at sea".

The Celtic League has consistently alerted communities around the Irish sea to the danger posed by Sellafield and at our AGM in Caernarfon in July (25-27) we once again called for urgent independent assessment of the Plant.

We followed this up in August (12/8/97) with a call to British Environment Secretary, Micheal Meacher, to improve coordination of monitoring of the Plant, We specifically highlighted the problems caused by the accumulation of Technetium-99 in shellfish, particularly Lobsters. Lest anyone think our concerns are alarmist they should be aware that this month (September) the Irish and Danish governments will highlight these concerns at the OSPAR talks in Brussels.

Technetium accumulation in shellfish is only a recently determined phenomena. The Lobster is now 92 times as radioactive as it was four years ago and is 30 times over the EU limit for consumption after a nuclear accident. Technetium 99 is a man made substance which is a by product of the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. It lasts more than 100,000 years in the environment and accumulates in the thyroid, one of the most vulnerable human organs.

The confusion surrounding the British Environment Department's announcement that it was to end sea disposal of nuclear waste does not place any limit on Sellafield's ability to keep pumping out this poison. Indeed, the embarrassment for Meacher of having his Department correct his earlier statement on the issue confirms our view that British monitoring and control of Sellafield is an uncoordinated mess. British Environmental groups such as Greenpeace seem to believe that Meacher's stance at Oskar talks this week marks a major shift in British government attitudes to Sellafield. Action, however, speaks louder than words and until the British act to curtail discharges their stance is meaningless

J B Moffatt - Geeral Secretary.

French nuclear alert prompts Sellafield concern - 12-07-97

French take action as radiation levels rise and leukaemia clusters reported - British remain stoically indifferent to Irish sea communities concerns about Sellafield - BNFL record does not engender confidence

The nuclear alert in the Channel this week, when the French government banned (10/7/97) fishing and swimming in waters near the C. de la Hague nuclear re-processing plant, must raise similar questions about safe radiation levels around the north Irish Sea Sellafield Plant.

If dangerous levels of radiation have been found in both sea water and sediment at C. de la Hague what confidence can we have in the assurances we periodically receive about Sellafield.

The BNFL operation is much more substantial than the French operation and its authorised and accidental discharge record also compares unfavourably with that of the C. de la Hague plant.

To give the French government its due, it has acted. The British government however, shows no sign of reacting to the repeated concerns of the Irish and Manx government and various local authority and campaign groups around the Irish sea.

In another parallel with the north Irish Sea situation, leukaemia clusters are now also reported around the Cap de la Hague plant. The British government still steadfastly refuses to accept the very serious fears and concerns of the people its nuclear industry is poisoning around the Irish Sea.

J.B. Moffatt

Text of Letter to UK Minister of the Environment

The Environment Minister,
Rt.Hon. M. Meacher MP,
Department of the Environment,
2 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 3EB.

Dear Minister,

Recent research indicates that plutonium from Sellafield is now being found in the teeth of children (see attached). The contamination levels are higher in children who live close to the plant but are also significant in samples taken up to 225 km from the facility.

Last month the Manx authorities identified another, new, aspect of pollution caused by the plant when they identified (and I quote from their release).

"Local seafood contained a low level of radioactivity associated with discharges of effluent from Sellafield. Recent changes in BNFL's reprocessing operations have altered the composition of this effluent, increasing the quantity of moderately toxic isotope Technetium-99, which is known to accumulate in shellfish, particularly lobsters. Future monitoring will be extended to investigate the predicted increase in technetium levels in the Irish sea."

It is therefore quite clear that the pollution from the plant is:

1) Continuing 2) Extensive 3) Contaminating both the Land Air and Marine Environment 4) Entering the food chain and contaminating humans and animals.

The plant does therefore, despite the slick PR which the operator extends, pose a considerable threat to health of large numbers of people around the N. Irish Sea.

Concerns about Sellafield, and its poor operational record, are well documented and this letter is not aimed at adding to these. Our purpose in writing is to point out a quite disgraceful shortcoming from an Environmental point of view which your Office should address.

A variety of bodies monitor radiation developments in the area adjacent to the Plant. In the United Kingdom alone government Departments in Scotland, N. Ireland and England compile information.

In addition both the Isle of Man and Irish governments carry out monitoring exercises and many NGOs maintain a watching brief on the Plant.

Despite the undoubted dangers it poses, as far as we are aware, there is no overall body established by the British government to monitor this disparate research*.

Could we ask that the British government, through the Department for the Environment, takes urgent action to rectify this.

Yours sincerely,

J. B. Moffatt
12/8/97

* The NRPB does not fulfil this function.

Sellafield's wider danger - 09-05-97

BNFL pushing for higher discharge levels - new evidence of Northern hemisphere pollution - Irish sea contamination increasing - Contempt for safety standards

The people of the Irish sea area are well used to pollution alerts and breaches of good safety practice by the Sellafield reprocessing plant. They also face the added danger from the large number of other British nuclear plants which surround the region.

This week's news that pollution from Sellafield is increasing in parts of the Arctic region give an added impetus to our work of opposition to the plant. European Regional concerns about the nuclear menace are sure to be sharpened by this latest revelation. We along with other Sellafield opposition groups should harness these concerns to build a truly global strategy of opposition to the plant.

In the past ten years the Irish and Manx governments have co-operated in their policy of opposition to Sellafield and it is really via these governments that significant progress will be made. The two "anti-Sellafield partners" should be actively canvassing the Canadian, Soviet, Icelandic and Nordic governments to join in a combined campaign against the British government and BNFL.

BNFL is laughing at the environmental groups and it is contemptuous of the derisory fines imposed upon it for safety breaches by the British Courts. For the first time in a decade pollution levels are up and the Irish sea, always under threat, now faces its greatest danger as BNFL push to have discharge levels further relaxed.

The new evidence from Canada indicates that we do not face this new threat alone. If the governments in those countries (Canada, Iceland, Norway, the Russias etc) which ring the Arctic ignore what is happening at Sellafield today they will regret it in years to come.

Sellafield is like a "creeping Chernobyl". Its pollution now poses a threat to the whole northern hemisphere.

BNFL Cumbria Grant Two-Fingered Insult to Opponents - 06-04-93

Whitehaven Court "punishes" BNFL with £20,000 fine as it "gives away" £5.4 million!

Irish Sea from Dublin to N. Channel becoming Cesspit for BNFL

See also [Mixed blessing of summer currents](#)

In a cynical attempt to deflect public opinion BNFL announced the injection of 5.4 million pounds into the West Cumbria Development Fund. Press releases from Sellafield were dispatched to media sources around the United Kingdom.

The move undoubtedly was an attempt to deflect any criticism (in Cumbria at least) which accrued from the decision of a Whitehaven Court to fine the accident prone plant for serious breaches of safety regulations. However, it also undoubtedly sends a two-fingered signal to both the Courts and those that oppose its operation that the total fine imposed for the safety breach, £20,000, is a derisory sum to an organisation that can gift millions on the lame-duck Cumbrian community.

At the present time, BNFL are seeking further sanction to continue discharges of radioactive waste via pipeline to the Marine environment. The permission, if granted, will further increase already indisputably high levels of nuclear waste pollution in the N. Irish sea.

The waters from Dublin bay to the N. Channel are, unless this madness is challenged, likely to become a cesspit for BNFL.

What diplomatic steps are available to the Irish or Manx governments? Some years ago both governments effectively derailed popular movements in both Ireland and Mann by taking a firm position of opposition to the plant and promised "to campaign for its closure". Their protests to Whitehall go unheeded. Those whose environment is being poisoned by the British government inertia and BNFL's Corporate neglect need to be aware of what strategy the Irish and Manx governments now propose to get their message across.

J.B. Moffatt

Summer "GYRE" a mixed blessing - 31-12-96

Circular current retains fish larvae and food on which they feed for vital spawning period - it also retains Sellafield pollution.

New evidence about tidal flow in the N. Irish sea that question previous theories about how pollutants are flushed from the that sea will reawaken concerns about the long term implications of radioactive contamination of the marine environment.

Oceanographers used to believe that the Irish sea was perpetually flushed by a steady northward current however new information indicates a circular current (or gyre) which forms in the Irish sea between May and October. The gyre is caused by Summer heating and effectively circulates sea waters for that period and Scientists say the current apparently loops back on the Irish east coast. This may have some dramatic effects; retaining larvae of the Dublin Bay prawns and the microscopic algae on which they feed. The impact of the new information is still being studied but it also

has implications for better understanding the dispersal of other fish species such as cod and herring which spawn when the gyre is present.

The ominous down-side to this new information is that the Summer gyre, whilst retaining this marine life which otherwise would be flushed out of the Irish sea also retains oil, chemical and other pollutants including the Sellafield pollution. It may also explain the low levels of radioactive pollution recorded on the Irish coast north of Dublin.

On the positive side, oceanographers say the circular current should keep radioactive material from travelling much further south - cold comfort for those of us who live in the waters of the north Irish sea.

J.B. Moffatt
General Secretary

Dounreay - New revelations about pollution from British nuclear plant

British cannot be trusted to conduct honest enquiry into pollution incidents.

The shocking revelations that the United Kingdom has been operating a fast reactor at the Dounreay facility in Scotland in a semi crippled state since 1962 is certain to raise further questions about the ability of the UK to supervise its nuclear industry.

Documents recently revealed quote a litany of accidents and leaks from the plant which is a smaller "brother" to the massive BNFL facility in Sellafield in Cumbria.

Ten serious radiation incidents damage to plant, leakages and an explosion at the experimental nuclear site's waste shaft are catalogued. In the latter incident it is now revealed that contamination was over six times higher than the UKAEA admitted at the time.

More ominously the damage to Dounreay's reactor in the 1960s could cause problems and even a reactor fire whilst decommissioning is underway.

The items now catalogued include:

- 1) Early 1960s (1962) reactor overheats - damage to breeder blanket and fuel pins - problems still ongoing.
- 2) 1977 Waste Shaft explosion - radiation released now admitted to be six times higher than earlier feared.
- 3) 1981, 26 workers contaminated in radiation release.
- 4) 1982. serious contamination of three plant operatives.
- 5) 1984 serious contamination of one plant worker.
- 6) 1995 plutonium blow in the reprocessing plant the unit was evacuated as radioactivity reached 20 megabecquerels - 10,000 times the safe working level.

The new information also makes clear the lengths that the nuclear industry goes to to conceal the truth. about its record.

Tony Benn, British Energy Minister from 1975 to 1979 says "My experience was that you could not rely on a word the management of the nuclear industry said. Either I was not given information, the information was inaccurate, or I was simply lied to".

The recent revelations about Dounreay seem certain to lead to further calls for an enquiry into the British nuclear industry. The Labour party in the UK is calling for an enquiry into Dounreay's safety record.

The fact is however that some of the worst cover-ups over the nuclear industry's record occurred when Labour was in power and in recent years their front bench has included lobbyists and apologists for the industry.

The Celtic League believe it is past time an International enquiry was held into the British nuclear industry and the contamination it has caused to the Celtic areas of the western British Isles. Until such an enquiry is held and the industry brought under external scrutiny the peoples of this area are at further serious risk.

J.B. Moffatt

Sellafield discharges to increase - 02-06-96

Fish and shellfish in the Irish sea contain radiation, including plutonium ,as a result of discharges from the Sellafield nuclear installation (formerly Windscale) on the north-western English coast. However, the levels are not above danger limits set by the EU, according to a recent Isle of Man (Mannin) government report.

Unfortunately, discharges from Sellafield, which have fallen steadily since the 1970s, will increase over the next few years as re-processing of spent fuel gets underway at the plant.

The Celtic League believes the that indication that the fishery resources of the north Irish Sea are currently safe is an even stronger reason for curtailing the discharges from the British nuclear plant. If allowed to continue its operation, either by way of the projected increased discharges or via accidental discharge of dangerous levels (for which Sellafield is notorious), the plant will pose a threat to the marine environment.

Meanwhile, the Celtic League has endorsed the call by Manx Nationalists for the Isle of Man government to abandon any plans to install an interconnector (via undersea cable) to the UK grid.

The Manx Nationalist Party, [Mec Vannin](#) has condemned the plans saying:

"An interconnector between the Isle of Man and the UK will not mean cheap power. It will mean for the first time, our needs, in part, are met by the worst global polluter known to man: The nuclear industry. The UK system is dependant both from its own domestic industry and via the UK/France interconnector, on power generated from nuclear sources."

The Nationalists have also indicated that the construction of any interconnector facilities on the Island would be provocative and would become a focus for direct action by militant environmentalists.

In addition to concerns about the ongoing seepage of waste from Sellafield, recent plans by the nuclear industry to trim down on staff prior to privatisation raise another alarming prospect. Ominously, the scheduled redundancies will include key management safety posts, putting a question-mark over future safety standards at the various nuclear installations and power plants that litter the Irish sea area.

J.B. Moffatt, General Secretary, Celtic League.

UK /USA use Irish airspace for nuclear air cargoes - 22-08-97

The confirmation, by the Ministry of Defence, that military transports and civil transport charter aircraft routinely carry nuclear material across the Atlantic is grim corroboration of what organisations such as the Celtic League have warned about for years.

Confirmation also of the flight paths across Wales indicate that the British & US governments have no respect for borders or boundaries.

There are three main Air Traffic routes for this trans Atlantic lethal cargo. Over S. Wales and via the Irish Republic - in the Cork/Wexford area, Mid Wales and again via the Republic - close to Dublin, and across the Central Irish sea and in to the Atlantic airways via the North of Ireland.

The British Ministry of Defence have rejected calls by British CND to end this dangerous practice.

The Irish government could help all the communities of the western British Isles by insisting to the British and US that aircraft with this dangerous cargo keeps well clear of its air space. The British (and US) would then be forced to divert these aircraft over potentially less hazardous open sea areas.

The Celtic League will be writing to the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs in Dublin urging such a course of action. (see below)

J B Moffatt pp Celtic League

An Taoiseach
Mr. Bertie Ahern
Government Buildings
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
Ireland

Dear Sir,

I refer to the confirmation by the Ministry of Defence in the United Kingdom that cargoes of nuclear material are carried by Military transport aircraft between the United Kingdom and United States.

From the routes so far identified it seems almost certain that these cargoes routinely cross both the airspace of the Republic of Ireland and also N. Ireland.

As I am sure you are aware an accident with one of these cargo aircraft would involve a horrendous environmental implication and indeed would very likely cause pollution on a scale which was irrecoverable.

We urge your government to contact the United Kingdom government and ask them to ensure any such cargoes in the future are kept out of Irish airspace.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
pp Celtic League

24/8/97

cc. Department of Foreign Affairs

Breton meeting promotes separatist links - 15-10-97

Nationalist delegates from both the Celtic League and [Mec Vannin \(the Manx Nationalist Party\)](#) were guest speakers at the Annual Congress of the Breton independence movement POBL last weekend. (Oct. 11/12).

The separatist struggle in western Europe was firmly on the agenda and the devolution developments Scotland and Wales and the peace process in the north of Ireland featured in the Celtic League presentation. The League highlighted the success of both constitutional methods and direct action in advancing self determination for the Celtic Nations.

The League also stressed the advantages to be gained via broader co-operation of the National movements in western Europe in the breaking down of repressive centralised control. The "Nation State" concept espoused by The United Kingdom, France and Spain was declared an irrelevance as Europe approaches the millennium.

The Spanish government, in particular, came in for [strong condemnation](#) for its repression of the Basque National Movement and the "show trial" of leaders of the Basque party Herri Batasuna which was initiated in Madrid the previous week.

This latest initiative is one of a number being undertaken to strengthen links both across the Celtic countries and to the broader separatist movement of western Europe.

New information technology and in particular the Internet has both eased communications problems between the groups and allowed for faster and uncensored communication of ideas, campaigns and programmes.

The Way Forward - 15-10-97

Paths to Independence in the New Europe

Speech to the 15th Annual Congress of *Partie pour l'Organisation d'une Bretagne Libre* - POBL - Mur de Bretagne, 12th October 1997.

by Bernard Moffatt, General Secretary, The Celtic League

Comrades,

It is with great optimism and pleasure that I address this meeting at this time, because never has recent history afforded us with so many opportunities as are currently before us. I say this, not only with reference to the progressive steps towards national determination within the sphere of the British isles, but also because the reawakened arena of Europe has given many the chance to continue the push for the realisation of nationalist goals in a new and meaningful way. Before I elaborate, I would like to stress the two main themes of my address.

Firstly it is clear that the diversity of nationalist groups across Europe provides us with our first opportunity for strengthening our position. Never has it been so important to grasp the significance of this diversity. It affords us the scope for interaction and mutual support on a much larger scale than previously envisaged. The challenge is to utilise our common goals and come together to exchange ideas, tactics, strategies, support networks in short to increase the pressure we can exert by standing together with other nationalists in pursuit of our goals. I stress this, because the crucial effect of constant interaction with others necessarily rejuvenates and radicalises any movement. And we, as long standing nationalists must continually be aware of the need to change, to move, to rethink and keep ahead. This is the main point to grasp. The days of stagnant, purely cultural nationalism are over. Now is the time to adapt and act, because now is the time that nationalism is most relevant. But only we can make it so.

So secondly in relation to this, I stress the importance of utilising any means that is available to us, in order to achieve our goals. It may be that exploiting the constitutional frameworks imposed on us produces advantageous results from time to time. It may be that passive resistance and civil protest can effectively take us towards consolidating our positions. Utilising the electoral processes at all levels constant scrutiny of government action, can all garner results. But are we prepared to stop there? Or can we take the risks associated with pushing protests beyond the legal limit when faced with impossible and unreasonable clampdowns on our rights and aspirations?

Comrades, as I describe some of the gains the Celtic nations have made towards a national re-birth, I would ask you to bear these key words in mind **METHOD** and **PURPOSE**. Ask yourselves what is at the root of success? What can we learn from this? How can we develop this? What is the way forward?

Lets take method first. There are two roads to travel here. Constitutional nationalism has arrived at the position of achieving at least three devolved governments within the Celtic sphere (Isle of Man, Scotland & Wales), and in the case of Northern Ireland we are seeing a state of affairs that seems certain to provoke change. This is no mean feat, despite devolution only being a partial form of self-government. Devolution as solution has been around since towards the end of the last century as a serious option, and only now are we seeing it come into effect. Only now has the weapon of elections been effectively utilised as the ultimate form of protest. Scotland & Wales most devastatingly ejected every last politician opposing some form of self government from their midst thereby ending any opposition to devolution. It turned speculation into real action. Frustration finally overcame apathy to produce the most startling, widespread and popular attack on the Union ever seen. The question we now have to

ask is will devolution be enough? Many believe that it merely a sap to fob off any real progress towards national self determination. For instance Republican Sinn Fein are understandably suspicious of British motives in this area of policy, and doubt the sincerity or the practical value of any such "half measures", when the real goal is the continued pursuit of the centuries old struggle for independence. The Manx government is already admitting that the only further practical step is complete independence from Britain, and they join the myriad nationalist groups (E.g. SNP, Plaid Cymru, & Sinn Fein) who already see devolution as a logical step on the road to full independence. Obviously constitutional efforts must work towards this through practical plans for the economic realisation of this adding substance to the political theory.

Again unity is key here between the different nationalist groupings. Each of us, at differing stages of national realisation must have a practical support network to facilitate the exchanging of ideas, advice and co-operation. This is not only key in developing ways forward, but also resisting the encroachment of our rights from repressive governments. For instance, the strengthened position of more Celtic countries will obviously have a positive effect on the claims of Breton and Cornish nationalists strengthening their position and providing a base of support for them to draw upon. Again Ireland is now bolstered in its goals by the whole devolution debate, forcing government acceptance at long last of republican groups and their position.

The republican movement in Ireland provides a good example of the effectiveness of combining constitutional and anti-constitutional methods. It also spotlights the whole tactic of illegal engagement in political activity. The effectiveness of this strategy is not in its success rate, but simply its endurance. It is no longer important that the IRA win in a conventional military sense only that they are not beaten. In effect, this is winning: The loss of face by the British inability to ably defeat the IRA is crucial. IRA dependence on ordinary civilian support betrays the fact that indigenous support for this kind of struggle is constant and widespread further adding weight to claims of popular struggle. Military struggle, waged concurrently with struggle in the constitutional arena, has proved for the republican political movements and the various groups engaged in armed struggle, to be massively effective. It has allowed them to survive differing political climates by emphasising one area or the other, depending on the need, and surviving intact and more effective. It is encouraging that their campaign has evolved in efficiency and professionalism, and clearly shows the possibilities of this course of action.

A factor in this has been their constant interaction with other dispossessed and oppressed peoples, most famously the ANC and the PLO. It has placed the Irish struggle at the forefront of world attention for nearly thirty years without relent, and ensured the continuing scrutiny of the British government - its methods and conduct- by the entire international community.

Of course, Ireland provides an example of anti-constitutional activity taken to its logical extreme, but as the republican movement has shown, less intense anti-constitutional methods than purely military action can produce great effect and change. It can be no coincidence that strong protest and subversive action marked the period up to devolution in Wales & Scotland. Wales, in particular, saw a targeting of property owned by the English, and indicated a level of serious frustration previously

ignored and denied by the British government. We again witnessed this in the Isle of Man, on a smaller scale, but it evoked a huge demonstration of public sympathy and support, and re-energized the indigenous Manx people. The phrase Enough is Enough springs to mind - all national peoples can justifiably ignore and frustrate repressive government, when that government continually ignores and frustrates those people and their claims. Remember we don't have to win on their terms just endure on our own. In this way we attract attention and support.

Beyond the Celtic countries, we again see this at work. The Basques endure, dogged in method and approach, and persistent in upholding their rights and traditions despite the most intense pressure against them. And once more, we are struck by their effort to make a link between their struggle and other oppressed national groups. The message is clear. Our purpose is to utilise every feasible method available, and exhaust every avenue of communication that strengthens and revitalises those methods. It is our duty to connect and interact with other like-minded peoples, to unite, and nurture each others causes. The work of those within the Celtic nations has done much to enlighten and support each of our causes, and Celtic nationalism is a success story that can only grow stronger. As each nation strikes out to take one step nearer its goal of national self-determination, it can exchange its experiences and move onwards, more surely.

To do this, to emphasise the links between nations, is to achieve a shared sense of will, a solid base in addition to that of home. But beyond Celtica, we have a rich source of friendship and support, and one we would be foolish to ignore. When we reconsider the few obvious examples I have just outlined of the benefits of interaction, then it is plain that the way forward is through increased co-operation and communication, particularly across Europe.

The European context is vital. As we find ourselves moving towards an increased EU dominated future, then it is important we adapt and grasp the new ways of exerting pressure and manipulating this power, to support and uphold our rights. The subtleties of approach can only be gained by a sharing of experience by nation groups. Indeed Scottish nationalists now see independence within Europe as a goal to reach for. I find this path a little dangerous - replacing the UK within an even more huge and unwieldy government framework? Is this the point? But surely through shared discussion and the dissemination of ideas and strategies, Europe's nationalist groups can come up with the right methods to agitate and gain any advantages to be had. To close, I would again stress the words METHOD and PURPOSE, and add another UNITY. These three words hold the key to the answer to the question What is the way forward? I hope that in the future, we will see the peoples of Europe, on a regular basis, co-operate and move forward together.

Briefing note from Celtic League to European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment - Delegation to the Isle of Man.

Introduction

The Celtic League welcome the decision of the ECPT to send an enquiry team to the Isle of Man to examine Prison Conditions. Before commenting on our concerns I would set out some information on the Celtic League and its objectives. I attach a

document The Aim and Role of the Celtic League which sets out both our remit and structure (appendix 1). We have a central co-ordinating Committee, branches in the six Celtic countries and campaign and monitor a wide range of issues.

We have a particular interest in monitoring human rights and possible violations in respect of these areas. The periphery of Europe, such as the Celtic areas, often tends to be ignored by mainstream campaigning organisations and the result of this is that countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Isle of Man and Ireland have tended to be less than positive in the area of social reform policies, particularly regarding human rights, fundamental freedoms and penal policy.

The United Kingdom and Isle of Man governments operate punitive domestic legal systems that impinge on the treatment and rights of detainees, both sentenced and remand. In addition all three countries place the resourcing of the penal system as a very low priority, nowhere more so than the Isle of Man.

Because of the deficiencies we perceived, in 1994 the Celtic League prepared a paper, which called for respect for Human Rights on the Celtic Fringe. This was adopted by our annual conference.

In the context of its remit the Celtic League communicates its concerns to various European and International bodies. For example in respect of your own organisation complaint has been made on behalf of its Irish branch over persons detained in N. Ireland. A complaint is also contemplated in respect of a female prisoner, currently detained at Limerick Prison, in the Irish Republic and denied appropriate medical treatment. In addition concern has been expressed to the French government about the trial and detention of a number of Bretons.

I outline these points to establish clearly that the Celtic League's concern about the provision of facilities and treatment of offenders in the Isle of Man stems from our monitoring of policies practised across what I will term the "Celtic Fringe" of Europe. It is not solely directed at the Isle of Man or its government. Penal policies in these areas have developed because the authorities concerned believed that they were sufficiently divorced from scrutiny that they could perpetrate a regime of neglect that in our view borders on inhuman and degrading treatment of offenders.

In 1996, at its Annual General Meeting in Inverness, the Celtic League adopted a resolution which called on its General Secretary to submit a report to the United Nations concerning the deaths in custody and the conditions at the Isle of Man Prison. It was also agreed that this communication should express concern about the imprisonment of children. Subsequently having become aware of the remit of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture etc, it was agreed that the complaint would be directed to that organisation.

The Isle of Man Prison and General Prison Policy.

Factually, the situation the Isle of Man government now finds itself in is not disputed. They have neither the prison infrastructure nor staff to deal with the various categories of offenders who pass through the system. The existing building, which is a composite Male, Female and Child Prison is many years old. It is devoid for the most part of decent facilities and not designed for the numbers it is required to contain. If you have examined the prison you should be aware that since the scandal and enquiry

into both the deaths in custody and the imprisonment of a twelve year old girl some improvements have been made and some unsuitable areas have been closed.

I would like the Committee to visualise what conditions must have been like in the institution only two years ago in the period before the unfortunate suicides which in part led to the modest improvements now achieved. Even after the two suicides the Isle of Man government did not take dramatic steps to improve the situation. The operation of this institution continued as it had always done under a veil of secrecy. Requests from the media to access the facility were denied and the Isle of Man government operates a policy of open abuse and hostility towards any NGOs (Non governmental organisations) such as the Celtic League or Manx Council for Civil Liberty which have expressed concern.

Following the media focus caused by the imprisonment of a twelve year old child and the subsequent report into the deaths of Paul Volino and Henry Richards the Isle of Man government has indicated that there will be reform. Certain modest steps have been taken, mainly a reaction to the pressure on numbers of inmates and ratio of Staff.

There is however, still no definite commitment to develop an enlightened penal policy and the Committee should note that the Islands Civil Liberties group (MCCL) has recently condemned the punitive use of hand restraints in the Prison a practise, which the Isle of Man government sanctions.

Conclusion

The Celtic League believe the Isle of Man government should:

- a) place the issue of reform of both penal policy and the construction of new facilities for the detention of offenders at the top of its list.
- b) review the disgraceful practice of imprisoning children.
- c) develop procedures for use within the prison which are based on reputable International guidelines e.g. European Prison Rules.
- d) end its hostility towards NGOs and recognise that a willingness to allow constructive criticism adds to the value of any debate on Prison policy.

In the context of (a) the Island should look closely at alternatives to custody so as to ensure that reform and not punishment of offenders is the underlying principle of criminal justice policy.

J B Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League, September 1997.

British Army helicopter support was "on the ropes" - 15-11-97

This document includes:

[British helicopter crisis](#)

[Kintyre crash should focus on overall safety record](#)

British Army were "on the ropes" with RAF and Army Air Corps unable to sustain air operations as British desperately sought junk helicopters worldwide.

The current, November 1997, issue of "Saoirse" (journal of Republican Sinn Féin) has seized on revelations by the Celtic League about the critical state of British Army helicopter support facilities in N. Ireland in the early 1990s. The League first revealed the extent of the British Army problems in 1993. We published detail in our magazine CARN of (British) Ministry of Defence attempts to procure second-hand junk helicopters in the third world and Australia.

The story recently resurfaced in the influential English Guardian newspaper when it was revealed, in a bizarre new twist, that the British tried to purchase, from India, helicopters originally supplied by their own Overseas Aid Department.

The scandal was hushed up by the British Labour government but now "Saoirse" has highlighted the issue as an illustration of how close the IRA were to breaking the British Army's ability to sustain its garrisons in areas of South Armagh and the west of Ulster.

In 1994 the Celtic League published a centre spread in the mainstream republican newspaper "An Phoblacht". With the same article in Republican Sinn Féin's journal, "Saoirse", we set out in detail the difficulties the British garrison were having in the border areas where travel by road by the military was impossible. We indicated that the helicopter logistical tight-rope which supplied the border garrisons was about to be severed - paradoxically the original cease fire was declared at this time.

Now some in the republican movement are querying if, with the British "on the ropes", the cease fire should have been declared - only time will tell!

Bernard Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League

Kintyre crash should focus on overall safety record - 11-11-97

The Commons Defence Select Committee should focus on the overall record of British Military helicopter operations. They should expose a cover-up that has cost lives in Wales, Scotland and Ulster.

The UK House of Commons Defence Select Committee will turn its attention this week to the Kintyre Chinook helicopter crash, in which 25 senior intelligence figures died together with all four crew men.

The latest move comes after further revelations about faults with the helicopter type.

The Chinook is, however, the most sensational scandal in a series involving the procurement, maintenance and operation of British support helicopters as the British struggled to meet commitments in N. Ireland and elsewhere over the past 15 years.

The Commons Defence Committee would be better tasked to addressing the overall picture rather than facilitating a drip feed of information to the public in a process which appears to involve more damage limitation than openness.

Over the past few years the Celtic League, which monitors all military activity across the Celtic areas, has pieced together an alarming picture: Overworked and poorly maintained equipment, procurement problems and no fleet wide upgrades for some ageing types, lessons and safety recommendations from earlier incidents ignored.

Whilst modern machines like the Chinook HC2 were experiencing difficulties, MOD officials were scouring junkyards worldwide and were prepared, had the deal been clinched, to press into service seven obsolete Australian Air Force Chinook HC1s. Fortunately for both the aircrew who would have manned them and the troops who would have flown in them, the deal fell through. At Padarn Lake, Wales in 1993, an elderly Wessex helicopter plunged into a lake whilst ferrying several air cadets on an air experience flight. The accident was eventually ascribed to faulty maintenance and yet this helicopter type, which had no fleet wide upgrade in over thirty years of service, was already the subject of check recommendations after a crash in 1990. These recommendations appear to have been ignored and three of the teenage cadets died.

A more blatant example of enquiry reports being ignored occurred in 1995 when a Gazelle helicopter crashed in the Wye valley: The crew were killed. The aircraft, it transpired, was not fitted with a radar altimeter despite a earlier crash enquiry in 1993 making this recommendation.

Returning to the troubled Chinook, last year, again in Wales, a crewman was killed when he fell from an aircraft over the Pembroke, Castlemartin, range. The door on this recently modified HC2 machine had inexplicably detached. Again, the vexed subject of the security of helicopter doors was well known following earlier tragic crashes.

In correspondence in July 1996 the MOD told us:

"I can assure you that the circumstances of all aircraft incidents are investigated and any significant lessons learned are circulated widely within the service".

However, our analysis is that this is not the case.

More disturbingly, however, as in the Chinook enquiry and other sensitive military air crashes, there is a reluctance to publicise accurate information. In August 1996, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence, Earl Howe, tellingly stated in correspondence to the Celtic League:

"All occurrences are of course investigated in a manner appropriate to their circumstances and significance. Details of each occurrence are maintained within the Royal Air Forces flight safety organisation. It is not however my Departments policy to make public detail of aircraft statistics relating to them.... I can assure you that this is not an attempt to 'cover up' the existence of such incidents and neither is it a reflection of my Departments investigative process."

It had however taken the intervention of Nationalist MP Dafydd Wigley to elicit a reply to our concerns and despite what Earl Howe said at the time, we still believe there was and is a cover-up of which the Chinook crash at Kintyre is the most serious manifestation.

The Defence Select Committee might like to extend its remit and encourage a public revelation of that which the MOD wants to hide.

J B Moffatt
Celtic League

British Army helicopter crisis exposed - 31-10-97

British security forces were "on the ropes" in respect of air support operations in early part of the decade - The British government was so stretched militarily by developments in Ulster in the early 1990s that it attempted to buy junked helicopters originally supplied by Britain to India as overseas aid.

The saga of the £65 million pound helicopter aid scandal is now under investigation and was reported on September 19th, 1997 in the English "Guardian" newspaper.

In 1993 the Celtic League learned of the bizarre shopping excursions worldwide, which included trips to Bombay by officials of the MOD and also an attempt to purchase obsolete versions of the Chinook helicopter from the R. Australian Air Force.

By 1994, the situation had become so critical that the MOD deployed Royal Navy Sea King helicopters to the Province after a gap of 15 years. The crisis for garrisons in S. Armagh and the west of the Province, followed a disastrous engagement, in September 1993, between helicopters and IRA units armed with heavy machine guns in South Armagh. The engagement, in which the Republicans used both 7.62 and 12.7mm (1/2") machine guns, resulted in a review of tactics for heli-borne operations and also up-armouring of machines and weaponry. The Celtic League exposed the situation in May 1994.

The complete collapse of the British Army's ability to maintain its garrisons in some areas was only averted by the first IRA ceasefire. The embarrassment of the period for the British government, suppressed at the time, now seems to have come back to haunt them.

J B Moffatt

Military monitoring - a twenty year campaign - 11-11-97

See also:

[Submarine campaign](#)

[Microwave health hazard](#)

[Bombing range danger](#)

[Dumping in the Beaufort Dyke](#)

[Campaign against low flying](#)

[Health threat from crash sites](#)

[Aer Lingus flight a victim of military testing?](#)

[UK MoD trains and supports genocide regime](#)

British helicopter force in crisis
Military bases cause environmental pollution

The General Secretary outlines briefly some facets of the Celtic League's Military Monitoring campaign. Started almost by accident it has become one of the League's great success stories. Often ridiculed, in the early days, our claims about the problems caused to fishermen by submarine operations, and our concerns that large quantities of military chemical weapons had been disposed at sea, have been vindicated by the passage of time.

Introduction

The callous murder of a twelve year old girl by the British Army in South Armagh, was to lead to one of the longest running and most successful campaigns the Celtic League has ever undertaken.

Majella O'Hare was walking with friends near her local chapel at Whitecross in South Armagh. Initially military sources blamed the IRA, but eventually it was admitted that she had been killed by a burst of fire "accidentally" discharged by a British army patrol, her and her friends had just walked by.

Manx nationalists in Mec Vannin and members of the Mannin branch of the Celtic League had watched developments in North Ireland, particularly in relation to the use made of the Isle of Man as a base to support operations there. However no campaign of opposition had been initiated, The Majella O'Hare killing altered all this, and the nationalist grouping, the Celtic League & AMA (Anti Militarist Alliance), was established which pledged to campaign until all bases had been removed from the Isle of Man.

In August 1982, the Mannin branch having enjoyed some local success with the campaign, urged the Celtic League Annual Meeting, held in Dublin, to adopt a general policy to "monitor the development of military activities and installations in the Celtic countries". The remit was also to include monitoring of the environmental impact.

Campaigns

The NATO Range.

*See also **Bombing range danger***

When the general military monitoring strategy was adopted by the League, the Mannin branch had some years of local campaigning behind it. The RAF range of the north west of Mannin, used extensively by NATO, was one of the first targets. Leafleting and a vociferous campaign of monitoring low flying, produced early results and low flying by military aircraft below 2000 feet was banned over the Island's land mass. (This is still one of the few such bans on RAF activity over the United Kingdom and Isle of Man). In 1988 after almost ten years of opposition the Isle of Man government was forced to scrap plans to expand the range facility - a move it was making at the behest of the British government - and in 1993 the range closed and the last British facility was dismantled. A pollution legacy lives on

however, and the Celtic League are now campaigning for compensation from the British to clean up 30 square miles of sea bed of the north coast.

The British Army Leave Mann

In parallel with the bombing range campaign, a systematic programme of opposition to British Army use of Mann for military exercises was maintained. The observation of "goings on" in and around the military base at Jurby produced some interesting information. Units from North Ireland periodically used the base, particularly in the mid seventies, and helicopter traffic and fixed wing Beaver spy planes were frequent visitors from Aldegrove near Belfast. In 1988 after much concern had been expressed about British army behaviour in a "Home defence" exercise held on the Island, the British Army quietly left.

The Submarine Problem

See also [Submarine campaign](#)

"An Irish fishing vessel has sank after a mysterious collision in the central Irish sea area of Co Louth". BBC Northern Ireland radio made this announcement one morning in April 1982. The announcer went on to quote Royal Navy sources as dismissing suggestions that one of their submarines had been involved. No Royal Navy submarines had apparently visited the Irish sea for several days. The Celtic League not only knew this was a lie but we had graphic evidence to confirm it. A photograph of the Royal Navy submarine HMS Porpoise, on passage towards the area the Sheralga went down, taken just hours before the sinking. The Sheralga incident led to further examination of the record of all submarine operating powers in the waters around Britain and Ireland. Comparatively swiftly, we built up a dossier of over 150 incidents, disappearances, sinkings & snaggings of vessels. We engaged in vigorous correspondence with government and International agencies, and with good support from MPs in the United Kingdom and TDs in the Irish parliament, succeeded in having the matter raised at the United Nations. Eventually the International Maritime Organisation introduced two specific resolutions to address the problem. Officially, the League ended this campaign three years ago when the AGS Mark Kermode laid a wreath to the memory of over 100 fishermen on a dozen vessels, believed lost in submarine related collisions.

That photograph of HMS Porpoise also cost the British Ministry of Defence dear. In 1988, six years after the sinking of Sheralga, several hundred thousand pounds in compensation was paid to the owner and crew.

The Breton Connection.

Very little opportunity presented itself to give practical support to our opposition to French military activity, although several of the submarine incidents monitored involved Breton vessels. However visits by French naval vessels always attracted protest, and in the early 1980s the crew of the French minelayer Narvik, paying a courtesy visit to the tiny fishing village of Port St. Mary in the Isle of Man, were greeted by such protesters (see photo). Later visits by French vessels used the harbour at Douglas, where the French could avoid such opposition by tying up in the security area of the Port.

Micro Wave Links - To Irish Neutrality.

One of the issues used to illustrate the advantages of a coordinated monitoring campaign, when the League AGM considered the issue in 1982, was the revelation by the Mannin branch that the UK's Air Defence System was using facilities in Ireland to relay information from its main radar station, at Bishops Court in Ulster.

The Mannin branch had stumbled on the information when investigating why heavy capacity micro wave links were being constructed, linking Bishops Court through Mannin to the Lancashire coast. Several articles subsequently appeared in the Irish media. However the Irish government rejected the claim that the traffic constituted a breach of its neutrality.

The Sea Dumps

See also [Dumping in the Beaufort Dyke](#)

"He swelled up like a balloon, turned purple and shed all his skin including his scalp." Reports like this, after a Breton trawler was contaminated by mustard gas in 1969 after fishing in the Beaufort Dyke area, led us to the assumption that not all the materials deposited were as inert as the authorities would have us believe. For over twenty years the Celtic League has campaigned for information about the contents of Beaufort Dyke and other sea dumps. Fifteen years ago we expressed concern that in addition to chemical weapons, nuclear material had also been disposed of at sea in these inshore areas. In 1993 we stepped up the campaign and called for Irish government support at a special Dublin Conference, the theme of which was "A Dangerous Legacy in Our Seas". Nothing, however, could have prepared us for the scale of the environmental disaster the British have created - to which a solution has still to be determined. From 1995 onwards there has been a stream of confirmatory evidence that vindicates our campaign. A staggering one million tonnes of explosives and chemical waste have been deposited in Dumps around the Irish coast and in Beaufort Dyke. In 1997, the British also owned up to the disposal of nuclear waste. The monitoring of this eco-disaster led to the development of cooperation with local authorities, in the areas affected by material seeping from the sea dumps. This campaign will continue for many years to come.

Army Bases and Military Pollution - One in the Eye for Portillo

See also [Military bases cause environmental pollution](#)

The Celtic League, after extensive research during 1992, determined that a serious pollution problem may have occurred around a wide range of used and disused military bases. We became aware that the MOD were suppressing two reports (one concerning Army bases, the other RAF airfields) which were highly critical. Requests to have the information released led initially to blanket denials that the reports existed. However using information from the Army document in 1993, we published our findings.

The issue was taken up on our behalf by George Foulkes MP (a good supporter in a number of monitoring campaigns we pursued). The rather bumptious junior Defence Secretary Nicholas Soames, initially denied our claims. However when we passed our report via Foulkes to Portillo, the Defence Secretary had to do a u-turn on earlier government comment and announce a staggering 600 "land quality statements" on military bases and installations.

The range of other Monitoring activities was, and is, extensive. Monitoring and campaigning against [low flying](#) in Wales and Scotland; publicising suppressed information about the problems caused by [carbon fibre pollution](#) at aircraft crash sites; investigating the operation of British military forces in Ulster and exposing the humiliating attempt by the MOD to buy second hand helicopters world wide, to shore up its [faltering helicopter force](#) in North Ireland, prior to the 1994 cease-fire; continuously probing and exposing facets of the still mysterious crash of an [Aer Lingus airliner](#) over the British Aberporth missile testing range in 1968 (this resulted in a release of papers and official logbooks ahead of the thirty year rule); opposition to extensions to the Aberporth missile complex; attempting to unravel the mystery of the disposal of weapons manufactured in Britain's chemical weapons complex at Nancekuke in Cornwall, which closed many years ago. All these are just a sample of the elements that have made up our military monitoring in recent years.

The Celtic League have not worked alone. No record of our work is complete without acknowledgement to people like George Foulkes (Labour MP), Donald Stewart (SNP) in Scotland, Dafydd Wigley and Dafydd Ellis Thomas (PC) in Wales, and Hugh Byrne (TD) in Ireland. These are just some of the parliamentarians who helped us. Also action and interest by various Irish governments ,and by International bodies such as the IMO have been invaluable. Over the years a greater degree of openness, in particular by the British government, has also assisted - however it is pertinent to qualify this by saying information has invariably been proffered to avoid or deflect media embarrassment.

The campaigns would have not have progressed without good publicity and a stream of press releases over the years, which produced a good take up by both the National media in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, London and also news media world wide.

The submarine monitoring campaign and the Chemical weapons dumping issue were picked up globally, and this in turn assisted our efforts.

Twenty years after it began, our Military Monitoring campaign continues.

J B Moffatt, October 1997.

Further more detailed information on individual campaigns is available from the Celtic League.

ext of letter to UK Minister re military exercise in Irish Sea - 12-11-97

Secretary of State for Defence
c/o Ministry of Defence
Secretariat (Air Staff) 2b
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW 1A 2HB
12th November, 1997.

Dear Sir,

I refer to air exercises currently underway in the N. Irish Sea area, and your use of facilities in the Isle of Man.

Concern has been expressed to our organisation about noise pollution in the north of the Island around the former Jurby airfield, extending into the late evening, associated with the exercises and involving Hercules Transport and mixed helicopter traffic.

The right of the United Kingdom government to make use of military facilities in a dependant territory is questionable within the context of International law, although doubtless your government will aver that it has the permission of the domestic authority it sustains in the dependency.

However, our concerns about the conduct of the exercise based on the reports received are more fundamental.

I understand, from conversation with the RAF authorities this evening, that it is nominal practice in the United Kingdom to give substantial advance warning about each low flying exercise and also extend specific information to the political member in whose constituency the operations take place. In exercises in Wales and Scotland, the public are provided with information on where complaints about alleged low flying can be made, and indeed how claims for compensation can be processed. There are other safeguards - and yet none of these seem to have been applied to your exercise in the Isle of Man.

I would therefore like you to clarify the following points:

- ☐ 1) When were plans for this exercise formulated?
- ☐ 2) What are its objectives?
- ☐ 3) How many aircraft by type are deployed?
- ☐ 4) Which of these aircraft/helicopters are deployed over the Isle of Man, specifically in the Jurby area, and how many sorties were made?
- ☐ 5) What were the operational time parameters for operations over the Isle of Man?
- ☐ 6) Bearing in mind that Jurby is a disused airfield, what facilities for crash rescue, fire cover and air traffic control were provided?
- ☐ 7) Bearing in mind that low flying outside the special rules zone around Ronaldsway Airport is forbidden to military aircraft (see attached [Parliamentary answer](#) 28/4/82), who granted permission for the exercise and took the decision to unilaterally lift the prohibition?
- ☐ 8) Why was no consultation undertaken with the people of the Isle of Man prior to the prohibition being lifted?

In conclusion, I would observe that the manner in which you have conducted these air operations, and the double standards used compared to similar operations over the UK, highlight the disdain with which you regard both the position of an autonomous devolved government, and the people it represents. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence is promoting itself as a body that regards the views of the Manx people as irrelevant, unimportant and beneath contempt. I would strongly advise that the Ministry rethink its decision on this matter and take the necessary steps to avoid criticism of its policy and policy-implementing strategy. Otherwise, the British Government is allowing itself to be open to attack on the wisdom of circumventing existing convention it has with a dependent territory.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
General Secretary, Celtic League.

UK Parliamentary Question reference low flying over Isle of Man - 28-04-82

Questioner: Mr. Dafydd Wigley, M.P. for Caernarfon (Plaid Cymru)

□ *To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether any assurances have been given by his Department regarding low flying by aircraft over the Isle of Man.*

Answer from Mr. Jerry Wiggin for Ministry of Defence -05-05-82

Military low flying is forbidden over the land areas of the Isle of Man.

Celtic League Alba Branch News - 19-02-98

The third copy of Stri (the Celtic League Alba branch magazine) is finally finished. In this edition there is an interview with Peadar Morgan (Comann an Luchd-Ionnsachaidh's director) and an article by Wilson McLeod on "Gaelic and the Race Relations Act in Gaelic". In English too we have a history of Esperanto, Gaelic campaigns, the Tamil nationalist struggle and much more.

Members of the Celtic League Scotland branch get Stri free in addition to Carn (the Celtic League's international magazine which includes information about the six Celtic nations and languages in English and the six Celtic languages).

Carn 100 is also now ready and is a special issue this edition to mark the magazines 25th anniversary. For this reason, there are essays on the Celtic languages and nationalist movements since Carn began. There is also a poetry supplement including poetry in all six Celtic countries and translations between these languages. For example, Aonghas Dubh MacNeacail is included in Breton as well as Gaelic.

Naidheachd a' Chomainn Cheiltich

A chairdean,

Tha an treas leth-bhreac de Strì (iris meur Albannaich a' Chomainn Cheiltich) deiseil mu dheireadh thall. Anns an eagraan seo, tha agallamh le Peadar Morgan (stiuriche Chomann an Luchd-Ionnsachaidh) agus aiste air "Gaidhlig agus an Race Relations Act" le Wilson MacLeod anns a' Ghaidhlig. Tha torr againn anns a' Bheurla cuideachd a' gabhail a-steach eachdraidh na Spraintis (Esperanto), iomairtean Gaidhlig gu leor, gluasad naiseantach nan Tamileach agus iomadh rud eile.

Bidh buill a' Chomainn Cheiltich ann an Alba a' faighinn Stri saor is an asgaidh cho math ri Carn (iris eadar-naiseanta a' Chomainn Cheiltich anns a bheil fiosrachadh mu na sia duthchanan agus cananan Ceilteach anns a' Bheurla agus sna sia cananan Ceilteach).

Tha Carn 100 deiseil a-nis cuideachd agus 's e eagraan sonraichte a th' againn an turas seo a chionn 's gu bheil an iris air a bhith tighinn a-mach airson coig bliadhna fichead. Air an adhbhar seo, tha aistean air eachdraidh nan cananan Ceilteach agus nan gluasad

naiseantach Ceilteach bhon a thoisich Carn. Tha supplement bardachd ann cuideachd a' gabhail a-steach bardachd anns na sia cananan Ceilteach agus eadar-theangachaidhean eadar na cananan sin. Mar eisimpleir, tha Aonghas Dubh againn ann an Breatnais a bharrachd air a' Ghaidhlig.

Urgent action required for Language Charter - 28-04-98

European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The Herald (23/04/98) carried a story entitled "Gaelic Faces Ulster Threat". It stated that a leaked document from the Northern Ireland Office suggests that it is now unlikely that the government will ratify the charter in respect for Irish or Scottish Gaelic despite the views of the Gaelic community and the minister for Gaelic. The leaked memo, drafted by Tony Canavan, senior civil servant at the Northern Ireland office says:

"Welsh clearly will be specified. Mr Wilson [the minister for Gaelic] - other Scottish Office Ministers have not yet considered the issue - is keen to specify Gaelic also at the time of ratification. This could present serious problems for us. If Irish was the only Celtic indigenous minority language not to be specified, nationalists and Irish language supporters would be critical. A special position for Welsh is justifiable as the Welsh Language Act 1993 effectively created bilingualism.

OUR PREFERENCE SHOULD THEREFORE BE FOR IRISH AND SCOTTISH TO BE UNSPECIFIED, AT LEAST AT THE TIME OF RATIFICATION."

This must not be allowed to happen! Scottish Gaelic is not a pawn in the Irish peace process and should not be denied official status merely because of the prejudice of Ulster unionists against Irish Gaelic. If the charter is not signed for this reason, there is very little chance of Comann na Gaidhlig's broader "Secure Status" package for official status ever being supported by the government.

ACTION:

Please write to some or all of the following:

- Your M.P, House of Commons, London, England SW1A 0AA.
- Donald Dewar, Secretary of State for Scotland, House of Commons, London, England, SW1A 0AA.
- Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Northern Ireland Office, 11 Millbank, London, England SW1P 4QE.
- Robin Cook, Foreign Secretary, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, London, England, SW1A 2AH.

Sample letter:

Dear sir/madam,

I am highly concerned by the report in the Herald which suggested that it is unlikely the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages will be signed for Scottish Gaelic due to current events in Northern Ireland. I support the signing of the charter for Scottish Gaelic as does the Minister for Gaelic, the Gaelic language organisations and the Gaelic community as a whole. Scottish Gaelic should not be a pawn in the

Northern Ireland peace process and I call upon you to ensure that the charter is signed for Scottish Gaelic regardless of the decision made regarding Irish.

yours faithfully, etc.

PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO WRITE TO SOME OR ALL OF THE ABOVE

As ever, the Scottish branch of the Celtic League would welcome copies of your correspondence.

Alasdair MacCaluim

fon: 0131 652 0240

4/2 Sraid Mhioltain (Milton St.), Cnoc na h-Abaide (Abbeyhill), Dun Eideann (Edinburgh) EH8 8HF.

Alan Heusaff

23rd July 1921 - 3rd November 1999



TIRELESS FIGHTER FOR CELTIC UNITY DIES

Alan Heusaff, a founder member and long time Secretary General of the Celtic League, has died at his home in Spiddal, Co. Galway, Éire.

Alan was born in Brittany in 1921 and was active in cultural movements as a youth, eventually joining the Breton National Party in 1938. In the wave of French xenophobia which followed the second world war and the hostility towards minorities in France, he left the country and, with many other Bretons, settled in Ireland. After a University Degree course he joined the Irish Meteorological service with which he remained until his retirement.

The Breton community in Dublin immediately became the focus for inter-celtic organisation and an embryonic inter-celtic movement was established publishing, *An Aimsir Cheilteach*. Formed in 1947, this functioned for several years. In 1961 the pan Celtic movement reorganised with the formation of the Celtic League in 1961 at Rhos in Wales. Alan Heusaff was a founder and the first Secretary General of the League and remained in that role for twenty five years.

He was a tireless campaigner for all the Celtic countries and meticulous in ensuring that meetings of the League were held on a rotational basis annually in all the countries whatever the logistics problems. He also established the inter Celtic quarterly journal CARN, which has been produced now for almost thirty years, and provides information in both English and all the Celtic languages on the Celtic scene.

Latterly, as Secretary of the League's International branch, he carried on liaison with the Celtic diaspora and also acted as contact for the League's United States branch. Well organised to the end, just months before his death Alan arranged the transfer of records, on both his work for the Breton movement and the Celtic League, to the University of Aberystwyth. He was also in the process of handing over his present League duties to a newly appointed International Secretary.

Alan Heusaff was fortunate in that he was able to see in his lifetime some of the devolutionary moves which have occurred in the Celtic countries. However, he believed that the only future for the Celtic countries was as independent partners in a Celtic confederation.

In the days immediately prior to his death, he was liaising with me over the arrest of activists in Brittany, campaigning against the waveband reallocations being forced on an Irish language radio station and also promoting the rights of a Scottish child to be taught through the medium of Gaelic. He recognised the value of the big issues without forgetting the small. He saw and appreciated the worth of the large Celtic countries without forgetting the efforts to maintain political identity, culture and language in the smaller countries like Mannin (Isle of Man) and Kernow (Cornwall).

Alan Heusaff may have died but the ideals he epitomised and the campaign for freedom within the Celtic countries that he and the other founders of the Celtic League promoted will go on until their goal is realised.

J.B. Moffatt - General Secretary, Celtic League.

TRIBUTE TO NATIONALIST LEADER

Grave-side oration pledges to continue the quest for political and cultural freedom for the Celtic peoples.

Nationalists from Scotland, Brittany and Mannin joined family and mourners at the funeral of Alan Heusaff in Co. Galway on Saturday, 6th November 1999. The parish church at Spiddal was packed for the funeral service. His coffin was covered with the flag of his native Brittany and several wreaths with the symbols of the Celtic nations.

At the grave-side Michael Mac Aonghusa and Secretary General of the Celtic League, Bernard Moffatt, paid tributes to the work of Alan Heusaff for the inter Celtic cause and the Breton National Anthem was played.

Both men outlined the debt that the inter Celtic movement owed to Alan Heusaff and others who promoted freedom for the Celtic countries. His commitment had been selfless for over sixty years.

The Secretary General said that it was fortunate Alan had lived long enough to see the moves towards devolution in Wales, Scotland and the other Celtic countries and also the reconciliation in Ireland which should at long last unite the divided country. He also said that Alan Heusaff's lifetime of work would be continued by the present membership of the Celtic League.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General, Celtic League

Newslist Messages for February 2000

AIR-MISS OVER ANGLESEY

It is scandalous that the British Ministry of Defence have kept quiet about an air-miss involving two RAF Hawk trainers over the airfields complex on Anglesey in March last year.

The Celtic League recently expressed concerns about RAF operations involving the Hawk trainer. We specifically cited air activity in and around the Valley complex, which abuts Irish sea air routes, and the Wylfa nuclear power station. The aircraft also use the civil airfield at Ronaldsway in the Isle of Man and the base was the subject of controversy over the training of Indonesian personnel as part of a contract by Britain which supplied Hawks used for repression in East Timor.

The MOD, in correspondence last month,* responded to our concerns and confirmed several accidents in recent years but were tight lipped about the Anglesey air-miss in which it appears that an RAF Hawk from the satellite airfield at Mona drifted off course and came within 100' of collision with another trainer from Valley.

It speaks volumes for the air traffic control system covering Anglesey that controllers did not wake up to the incident and only the action of the pilots averted disaster.

In November, following an air accident near a nuclear power station in Scotland, we wrote to both the MOD and Irish and Manx governments about the possible dangers posed by air activity near nuclear plants. Amongst others we cited the North Wales training complex at Valley.

Both the Irish and Manx governments have echoed the Leagues concerns over this issue. A letter from the Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs* set out that "the Irish government have grave concerns about the operation of the British nuclear industry, and the additional risks posed by hazardous flying close to these facilities are potentially very serious".

Anglesey resident and member of the Stop the Hawks campaign Rev Emyln Richards has called for an end to the RAF pilot training in the area.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
9:2:00

* MOD & Irish/Manx government correspondence referred to will be faxed on request

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SOLWAY HARVESTER SPECULATION UNHELPFUL

Speculation and an interim report by the MAIB into the sinking of the Scottish Fishing Vessel the Solway Harvester are unhelpful say the Celtic League

Within hours of a Manx Government Minister outlining how unhelpful speculative comment over the Solway Harvester tragedy was the MAIB issued an interim report which by its very nature is disturbingly speculative.

The comments about the absence of a hatch cover, deficiencies over the life rafts and the level of training may not have been directly aimed to impugn the deceased men but the blunt nature of the comments conveys that effect.

Whatever befell the Solway Harvester obviously occurred at dramatic speed and it is doubtful that had all the omissions catalogued by the MAIB been complied with anyone would have survived the disaster. There are obviously still serious unanswered questions concerning the sinking that will only be resolved after the vessel is raised.

So what are the motives behind the release of this interim report by the MAIB? The position is that the original United Kingdom government stance was to leave the wreck of the vessel on the sea-bed. At that stage it was not even contemplated that a recovery of the mens bodies would be attempted. In that situation the MAIBs ability to arrive at a judgement would have rested on that evidence which could be gathered from the sequence of events before the incident and any video evidence acquired by remote control submersible. It would not therefore even have had the evidence it has now when it concluded its final report.

The firm intervention by the Manx government has radically altered the position and it has so to speak put MAIB 'on the back foot'.

In any case as evidenced by comments in parliament last week the reputation of the MAIB is not particularly sound and this interim report may be an attempt to recover the initiative over the sinking and its investigation.

However, there is a lack of confidence in the pronouncements of the British government and their handling of enquiries into a wide range of disasters. The day before the MAIB issued its statement the UK Defence Secretary was on his feet reassuring the House of Commons that a British submarine had not been involved. This very likely is the truth. But his assurance is devalued somewhat by the fact that the British government and the MOD have been known to cover-up in the past.

As the Manx Agriculture Minister said this week speculation over the issue is unhelpful and deeply distressing to the families of those who died. To put it bluntly the MAIB comments fall into that category. When the Manx governments initiative to recover the wreck is effected then, and only then, might we find the reason for this tragedy.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

23:2:2000

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McBRIDE MURDER - JUSTICE MOCKED

The Celtic League have accused the British Army and Ministry of Defence of mocking justice and putting themselves above the law in relation to the case of the two Scottish guardsmen Mark Fisher and James Wright. The retention of the men by the British Army is the subject of a further review.

The original decision to retain the two murderers of Belfast man Peter McBride was taken after their premature release from custody.

Subsequently, in the High Court Mr. Justice Kerr described the decision as "flawed" and the review decision was quashed. However, the MOD confirmed in November 1999 that the case would be subject to further review by "Army Board members who have had no involvement with the previous decision".

At the time the Celtic League wrote to the MOD expressing our view that the relevant section of Queens Regulations did not allow for the appointment of multiple panels and we accused the MOD of perverting the regulations. The MOD however rejected this assertion.

The League also asked the UK governments Attorney General if the MOD action was lawful. In a somewhat reluctant reply the Attorney General has endorsed the MOD action action. It seems therefore all echelons of the British establishment endorse this new opportunity for Fisher and Wright to avoid the consequences of their horrendous crime. Indeed, the only establishment figure to emerge from this situation with any credibility is Mr. Justice Kerr who exposed the original Army decision for what it was a "white-wash".

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
23/2/00

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PUBLIC ENQUIRY CALL OVER CUSTODY DEATH

The Celtic League have asked the Home Secretary to give further consideration to establishing a public enquiry into the death of an Irish man Richard O'Brien. Mr. O'Brien died after being arrested in April (4th) 1994 and whilst being restrained by three officers of the Metropolitan Police. The cause of his death was given as "postural asphyxia". Three police officers were later cleared of alleged manslaughter.

The Celtic League at its annual general meeting last year passed a resolution supporting calls, by Irish Community Groups in the UK, for a public enquiry. However, in December the Home Office in response to correspondence from the League said the Home Secretary did not consider that the case of Mr. O'Brien met the "criteria" for a public enquiry.

In its latest approach to the Home Office the League point to the conclusions and recommendations in a recently published report by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) which visited the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man in 1997. Publication of this report had been delayed because of objections from the British government who sought to have it amended. The report comments on the O'Brien case, amongst others.

The report is also critical of procedures for pursuing complaints and also refers to restraint procedures and training.

The Celtic League have also indicated that the current level of deaths in police custody in England & Wales despite a slight decline still gives cause for concern.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League
25:2:200

Text of letter set out below:

The Home Secretary
Jack Straw MP
c/o Home Office
Operational Policing Policy Unit - Powers and Procedures Section
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

Dear Sir,

We wrote to you in November of last year conveying the text of a resolution adopted by the Celtic League at its 1999 AGM.

The resolution supported calls for a public enquiry into the circumstances of the death of Richard O'Brien, an Irish man who died in the custody of the Metropolitan Police.

The Home Office reply to us in December set out the background into the investigative procedures followed in such cases. We were also furnished with supplementary information detailing the statistics of deaths in custody for the period April 1998 to March 1999. However, the response rejected calls for a public enquiry.

I am aware that the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) recently published its report following a visit to the United Kingdom and Isle of Man. That report comments, in several sections, on the O'Brien case, and others, raising questions about the procedures for pursuing investigations into such cases. It also comments on the efficacy of current

procedures governing guidance on the use of restraint techniques by police officers and training in restraint techniques provided.

In the light of the CPT comments and recommendations will further consideration now be given to establishing a public enquiry into the O'Brien case?

I refer above to the information you supplied on deaths in custody. The Home Office letter pointed to a slight fall (4) in such deaths over the previous annual period. However, our analysis of the data indicates that 25% of deaths of those in custody occurred in the Metropolitan Police area. Does this not give you continued cause for concern?

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League
24/2/00

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MARINE ACCIDENT BODY REFUTES LEAGUE CRITICISM

The Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, Rear Admiral J S Lang, has refuted criticisms of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) issued by the Celtic League ten days ago.

The Chief Inspector says, in correspondence to the League, that whilst he welcomes "informed criticism" that the League are likely "not to be aware of the many changes introduced since the Branch (MAIB) was first formed and certainly since the Marchioness investigation" which the Celtic league had commented on in its statement.

Rear Admiral Lang also goes on to correct what he sees as a misconception the Celtic League has over the recovery of the bodies of mariners he says, "As I am sure you are well aware there is not one single accident investigation in, as far as I am aware, the world charged with recovering bodies from an accident site.. We are no different. My sole task is to investigate accidents and informed opinion on our work leads me to believe our efforts are appreciated"

The Chief Inspector encloses substantial detail on safety surveys concludes with an offer to meet to provide any further clarification.

The Celtic League had criticised the MAIB and its predecessor the Marine Directorate of the Department of Transport for failing to "satisfactory explanation or substantive remedy" in several significant cases involving the loss of motor fishing vessels with substantial loss of life. The Chief inspector however alludes to recent relations between Fisherman's organisations and communities and observes that this leads him to believe our work is being more appreciated than perhaps you give us credit for".

J B Moffatt

Secretary General
Celtic League

25:2:2000

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REID ACTION ENDORSES FISHERY GERRYMANDER

The 1999 AGM of the Celtic League unanimously adopted a resolution from the Scottish branch calling for the return to Scottish jurisdiction of 6000 square miles of sea which was transferred shortly before the Scottish parliament was established to England.

The move effectively snatched some of the most lucrative sea fishery areas of eastern Scotland. It also established the ridiculous position of Scotland having two territorial sea boundaries with England one covering oil and gas and the other revised delineated fishery boundary.

When we communicated with First Minister Donald Dewar on this issue, shortly after the AGM, his office advised that the Scottish parliament had debated the issue and rejected a motion calling on the UK government to reinstate the original boundary. Since that time however the Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs Committee has issued a report calling for one boundary governing oil, gas and sea fisheries.

However, the Secretary of State for Scotland John Reid has rejected the proposal in a move which has provoked attacks on him by SNP fisheries spokesman Richard Lochhead. Mr. Lockhead said: "John Reid's arrogance is breathtaking and his determination to do as little as possible for Scotland beggars belief".

The Celtic League endorse that view. Quite frankly the sooner that Reid is ejected from the Scottish political scene the better. This will probably come via his elevation to the House of Lords which Prime Minister Blair is anxious to fill with trusted "yes men".

Interestingly, the boundary move via the device of the hastily adopted Scottish Adjacent Waters Boundaries Order 1999 in the short term is unlikely to restrict access for Scottish fishermen to sea fish in areas allotted as UK quotas by the EU.

The move does however indicate a long term worry on the part of England about Scottish independence this would seem to be the only logical reason for this gerrymander of the fishery boundary.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

27:2:2000

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GAELIC TV - POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM BROADCAST COUNCIL LEADER

The Chairman of the National Broadcasting Council of Scotland has assured the Celtic Leagues Scottish Branch that the Broadcasting Council of Scotland "is working to ensure that management protect the commitment to developing Gaelic services on both digital and analogue channels".

The Scottish Branch Secretary Risnìdh Mac Aoidh had written to Sir Robert Smith seeking support for the establishment of a Gaelic television channel.

Sir Robert also advises that "progress is being made to extend the Radio nan Gàidheal transmission reach" and indicates that proposals to carry that service on the Internet will be advanced in the coming months.

The Scottish Branch had also raised issues relating to the provision of broadcast news services for Scotland and Sir Robert indicates that all the points raised in the Leagues correspondence will be brought to the next meeting of the Broadcasting Council for Scotland.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

27:2:2000

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SELLAFIELD ROOT AND BRANCH SHAKE UP NEEDED

It's less than 10 days since the Chief Executive of BNFL indicated his determination not to resign in the unfolding scandal over falsification of safety data. Latest media reports however say that if he does not jump this week he will be pushed.

Ironically, it was probably a cutting attack from the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) itself now under scrutiny, which accused BNFL of systematic management failures, and new evidence that the safety scandal extends beyond the Japanese contract that will seal Taylor's fate. There was something distinctly uncomfortable about seeing junior grades of process workers at the plant disciplined and sacked whilst senior management sat tight. It is obvious that in an industry of this type, which should be a leader in safety consciousness, any shortcomings identified warrant a shared accountability by management.

Nor should the NII believe that its production of an unusually swift condemnatory report gets it off the hook. It is reassuring therefore that United Kingdom government ministers are pressing for radical changes at Britain's nuclear watchdog.

The Chief Minister of the Isle of Man this week joined Irish and Icelandic government spokespersons in condemning the plant. Most of the countries and people that have Sellafield for a neighbour are thinking that if the company misled two of its most significant customers over safety matters can we believe anything said on safety.

There really needs to be a "root and branch" shake up over safety within the UK

nuclear industry and that includes senior heads rolling at both BNFL and the NII.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

27:2:2000

Newslist Messages for March 2000

A WARNING FROM HISTORY

As the US Navy prepares to utilise military ranges at Cape Wrath next week protesters and the people of Scotland should be aware of the Long term legacy of US military use of bombing and gunnery ranges.

Scottish anti-military campaigners will receive aid from a distant source when Caribbean Islanders from Puerto Rico join them in opposing US navy exercises to be staged at a designated bombing and gunnery range of northern Scotland next week. US exercises have been switched to Cape Wrath because of opposition to the US Navies use of military firing ranges off Puerto Rico.

The small Puerto Rican independence movement has managed to make the ranges issue something of a cause celebre and the US anxious to avail of opportunities to diffuse the issue have accepted an offer from the Blair government of the MODs Scottish ranges.

Scots well used to bases and ranges as a legacy of the Cold War in which Scotland became a fortress for NATO may initially be largely undisturbed by the prospect of this latest US invasion.

But the Celtic League, who have campaigned for a quarter of a century to stop military activity in the Celtic countries can reveal the folly of allowing the US armed forces a free rein on 'isolated' military ranges.

In the early sixties the US Armed Forces began utilisation of increasingly inactive former WW2 bombing ranges at Jurby off the NW Isle of Man. This occupation was maintained for almost thirty years with intensive use by USAF fighter-bombers flying from bases all over NW Europe. Eventually opposition to range extensions from nationalists and fishermen's groups forced the ranges closure. However, the legacy of this period is an area of 75 square miles of contaminated sea-bed in one of the most fertile shellfish areas of the Irish sea. Despite calls to the UK government, who administered the ranges, no clean-up is being effected. Fishermen regularly have to take their chance working amongst unexploded munitions as they dredge for scallops and other shell fish.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

2:3:2000

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WARNING OVER DEFECTIVE MILITARY HELICOPTER

Not the first time the MOD have continued to operate suspect choppers.

Aircrew had fears about the Chinook prior to the crash at Kintyre which killed 27 - these were ignored. Just ten days after the Celtic League wrote to the Defence Secretary asking him to review operations by an Army helicopter with an identified defect one of the machines crashed last week in S. Armagh with nine people on board (two were injured).

The type involved the Lynx helicopter has been involved in two fatal crashes over the past fifteen months years and following the first at Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia, in Dec. 1998 a defective part in the tail rotor drive was identified. This is to be replaced on a phased basis over two years.

However, the League suggested in correspondence to Defence Secretary Geoff. Hoon ten days ago that this decision carries potential risk. Responding to our concerns a military spokesman in N. Ireland, where the latest incident occurred, said more frequent safety checks were carried out as a result of the Bosnian incident.

Last May, a Lynx narrowly avoided crashing on the village of Tilton on the Hill in Leicestershire, three aircrew died. This clearly indicated the threat posed to small rural communities. We said that if the machine continued to operate with known defects other accidents were inevitable. Our concerns are vindicated by last week's incident.

It's not the first time the MOD have continued to operate suspect choppers and much has been written about the fears that aircrew had about the Chinook prior to the disastrous crash at Kintyre in 1994 when 29 people died.

Nor are these the latest accidents the first with the Lynx which over the years has claimed many service personnel due to 'mechanical failure'. The continuing danger posed to aircrew and the public should be urgently probed meanwhile this type of chopper should be grounded.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

5/3/2000

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A CULTURE OF COMPLACENCY

The NII have woken up too late on the Sellafield safety scandal. NII boss, Laurence Williams, should emulate Sellafield's John Taylor and resign.

Further revelations about the laxity of safety standards at BNFL have emerged with reports that the NII have impounded four batches of fuel at BNFL's Springfield site near Preston.

However, as we have previously indicated, the new found vigour of the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) in pursuing its 'nuclear watchdog' role is at odds with the years of inertia during which the scandal that now enfolds the British nuclear industry was allowed to develop.

For many years the UK's Department of the Environment, and regulatory bodies such as the NII, seemed to view their role as one of complementing, not monitoring, the various nuclear sites. Today's scandal over Sellafield is almost a rerun of the earlier disclosures about Dounreay. The picture which emerges in relation to the NII and the British government generally is of a culture of complacency in respect of nuclear industry safety and regulation.

Next week members of the Commons Trade and Industry Select Committee will ask why the NII, which has an on-site presence at most nuclear sites including Sellafield, failed to identify the safety shortcomings of the plant. It will no doubt be inferred that the NII are too close to the industry they are supposed to monitor. This is exactly the point that the Celtic League made years ago when we called for international verification of UK nuclear safety standards.

The NII is still not off the hook. Heads have rolled at BNFL despite an attempt by the former Chief Executive John Taylor to 'stonewall' in the face of the growing crisis. In the end he too was sacrificed as the company desperately sought to stabilise the confidence 'melt-down'.

At Tuesday's Select Committee meeting it is to be hoped that the Committee will have the good sense to suggest to NII head Laurence William that he too should take the honourable course and resign!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

5:3:00

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LANGUAGES CHARTER WARNING

The UK has joined France in signing the Euro Charter on Minority languages. However, the Celtic League believe practical implementation will be the true test of the veracity of the Old Nation States towards language rights.

Speaking during the first Gaelic debate in the new Scottish Parliament Gaelic minister, Alasdair Morrison, said on Thursday: "There are many precious components in the heritage of Scotland. But none is as ancient, profound and worthy as the Gaelic

legacy."

Despite the comparatively small number (3) of Gaelic speakers in the Parliament the debate was historically important and marked the continuing reversal in fortunes of all the Celtic languages.

As if to reinforce this on the same day the United Kingdom finally got around to signing the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages, an issue the Celtic League has been campaigning on for many years.

However, the UK's reluctant signature is only the first step and ratification and implementation will be the true test of cultural equality between the peoples of these Islands. We need to press vigorously for ratification and implementation and also spell out clearly that the provisions of the Charter are not to be dissipated by neutralising qualifications.

We already have the worrying example of France. Its signature, and ratification, of the Charter was so hedged around with qualifications as to clearly indicate that the cultural genocide which the French State has exhibited towards minorities within its frontiers is not yet extinguished.

The Council of Europe (CoE) drew up the Charter in 1992 for the purpose of encouraging the preservation and the promotion of indigenous minority languages in Europe. So far a disappointingly small number, 16 of the 40, of CoE member States have signed.

The Old Nation States of Europe such as England and France are not stupid, they are aware that stimulating linguistic self-determination is a catalyst for political self-determination. Their commitment to the Charter will be lack-lustre unless the Celtic languages groups present a united front to pressure the signatories.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League 5/3/2000

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PRISON DECISION MEAN-SPIRITED

The Celtic League have slammed prison authorities in the Irish Republic for refusing a hospital visit by a prisoner to a sick relative.

Josephine Hayden is just months away from completing a lengthy prison sentence in Limerick Jail and had sought permission to visit her elderly father (87) who was hospitalised in Waterford. The refusal by the prison authorities has been described by the Celtic League in a letter to Irish Justice Minister John O'Donoghue TD as "mean spirited" (attached 1).

The Celtic League have also written to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture pointing out that the denial is a clear breach of European (model) Prison Rules

which say that such visits should be facilitated (attached 2).

It is not the first time that Josephine Hayden has been the subject of harsh treatment by the prison authorities. After suffering a heart attack part way through her sentence she was denied proper medical treatment.

There is no doubt that from the authorities point of view she is a 'troublesome' prisoner. Since being imprisoned she has campaigned ceaselessly to improve conditions for women prisoners in Limerick Jail which is patently not resourced as a penal institution for female offenders. Like many prisons world wide Limerick is a prison designed for male offenders and the women's section has been crudely tacked on without any thought for facility. Josephine Hayden's attempt to fight this injustice has undoubtedly caused the hard attitude towards her.

However, in denying the visit to her sick father the prison authorities have plumbed the depths of callousness and inhumanity.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

5/3/00

(attachment 1)

The Minister for Justice

Mr. John O'Donoghue TD

Department Of Justice

72-76 St. Stephens Green

Dublin 2

Ireland

Dear Minister,

I write with reference to the circumstances of a female prisoner detained in Limerick Jail, Mrs. Josephine Hayden.

I understand that recently Mrs. Hayden, who is within several months of completing a lengthy period of imprisonment, was denied permission to visit her elderly father (87) who was hospitalised and gravely ill.

I would like to record our view that the denial of this visit on compassionate leave grounds is extremely mean-spirited. More importantly it contravenes norms of European procedure governing such situations.

I refer you to section 49.2 of the European Prison Rules which says:

"A prisoner shall be informed at once of the death or serious illness of any relative. In these cases and whenever circumstances allow, the prisoner should be authorised to visit this sick relative or see the deceased either under escort or alone".

I see from the background on your Departmental web site that you are yourself a family man I would therefore suggest that from that standpoint you contemplate the morality of the decision taken in this case. Certainly to deny a hospital visit in these circumstances must have created for the prisoner involved extreme psychological torment. As regards the legitimacy of the decision viz a viz International law we will be drawing the situation to the attention of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

Persons being punished by the State are in the care of the State and in this instance that duty of care was not discharged.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General 5/03/00

(attachment 2)

The Secretary

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Council of Europe

F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex

FRANCE

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Celtic League to express our concern at the denial of a hospital visit to a prisoner detained in Limerick Jail in the Republic of Ireland.

Mrs. Josephine Hayden is close to completing a lengthy sentence at that prison and was recently denied permission to visit her elderly father (87) who was hospitalised and gravely ill. I am not aware at this stage if that original decision has been rescinded as I understand political representations were being made however the initial refusal was in the circumstances extremely mean-spirited.

I have written to the Minister for Justice in Ireland (encl.) to express concern about this matter pointing out that the European (model) Prison Rules set out quite clearly

that visits of this type should be granted whenever circumstances allow. This is not the first time that Mrs. Hayden has been the subject of punitive action by the Prison authorities. When she suffered a heart attack in prison the adequacy and immediacy of the health care provided was questionable.

I would urge your Committee to raise this matter with the Irish authorities. The principles involved in respect of the decision extend beyond this individual case

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General 5/03/00

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BASES RADIATION RISK

The British army don't have a rifle that works effectively. Can one accept assurances about the safety efficiency of its sophisticated electronic surveillance equipment that beams down on the farms, houses and schools of S. Armagh?

Last year the MOD rejected requests from the Celtic League for accurate and independent testing of micro-wave emitting radiation equipment used on a variety of bases and hill-top lookouts that dominate the landscape of S. Armagh. Present in all border areas of Ulster it is in this County that the concentration of equipment is most prevalent.

The MOD told us that "Army equipment is assessed against and operated in accordance with the national guidelines". The Army were alluding, in this statement, to UK National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) guidance. The truth, from our research, is that the NRPB have no knowledge of and have never been asked to form an opinion.

The reference to "Army equipment" is in itself worrying. It has emerged over recent months that a vast array of Defence equipment is deficient from the point of view of both effectiveness and safety. If the British army do not have a rifle that works effectively how can one accept assurances about the unverifiable safety efficiency of its sophisticated electronic surveillance and monitoring equipment that beam down on the farms, houses and schools of S. Armagh?

The attitude of the Irish government to this situation is also ambivalent. Assurances given about the safety of this equipment, in reply to a question posed in the Dail in 1995, have no foundation whatsoever.

Sadly, both the British and Irish governments have traded on the uncertainty of evidence that supports health concerns. Assurances are given that equipment either meets accepted safety standards or that research has not proven any long term implications for health. However, attitudes to micro-wave radiation are changing.

Forty miles from the micro-wave mosaic that straddles S. Armagh, across the Irish sea, planners in the Isle of Man recently turned down permission for a fairly innocuous civil communications mast "until such time as more conclusive and agreed evidence" was produced. More significantly half way across Europe the Swiss government have recently adopted new more stringent standards setting new limits on exposure to micro-wave "orientated to the future". The Swiss are now committed to keeping exposure as low as is technically feasible. They say that the need for caution is prompted by "credible indications" that chronic, low-level exposure may be harmful. In the case of the civil application of micro-wave technology at least there are some identifiable parameters.

In the secret electronic world of S. Armagh the British Army are probably operating unsafe and sub standard equipment which, despite their protestations, meets no safety bench-mark but that which they set themselves.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

7/3/00

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BRETON OIL SPILL DISASTER PREDICTED

Alan Heusaff, founder member of the Celtic League, who died last year would, had he lived, have been extremely concerned about the environmental tragedy which has befallen his native Brittany.

A large swathe of coastline is currently polluted by heavy fuel oil which has leaked from the wreck of the tanker Erika. The clean up of the polluted coastline is now compromised by fears over the threat of cancer to those who have been involved.

Ironically it was at the Celtic Leagues AGM, at Plomeur in Brittany, in 1996 that Alan Heusaff expressed concern about just such an incident. He moved a resolution, which was adopted by the conference calling for action to address the issue. The resolution read

"This AGM, alarmed by the repetition of catastrophic oil-spills from tankers which have caused widespread destruction of marine life and so severely affected the economic life of coastal areas of at least five of the six Celtic countries in the past twenty years;

Urges the governments responsible for the protection of the marine environment in these countries as well as the European Union to adopt strictly binding measures to avoid such accidents, in particular enforcing double hulling for tankers prohibiting them from sailing through narrow sea channels or within given distance from shore, use of pilots familiar with approaches to storage facilities."

During the months following the 1996 AGM he engaged in correspondence with the

European Commission, the French government and the United Kingdom.

However, there was total inertia on the part of the authorities. The EU said it was indeed a concern but did not indicate any direct strategy to address the problem referring to moves at the IMO (International Maritime Organisation) and the responsibilities of member States. The U.K. response was equally lack lustre. Ironically the French authorities did not even bother to respond!

Events since including the recent disaster have focused on the need Heusaff foresaw for more direct intervention by the British, French and the EU to address the issue. In the next few weeks the Celtic League will be writing to both the British and French reiterating his concerns and urging that the proposals he made be adopted.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

11/3/00

(See resolution and correspondence from EU and British government on Celtic League home-pages)

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CHINOOK SHORTAGES HAD DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES

Pilot error or computer problems ? The underlying cause of the Kintyre crash were the deficiencies in RAF heavy lift helicopter capability which we exposed prior to the accident and the MOD denied.

This month more theories and speculation about the crash of an RAF Chinook helicopter in 1994 on the Kintyre peninsula are doing the rounds. New evidence is said to expose problems with sophisticated computer software (FADEC) controlling the refurbished helicopter engine.

However, what is more interesting to the Celtic League is the added revelation that a leaked memo identifies shortages of helicopters by the RAF at this time. It is asserted that this prompted the unsafe Chinooks to be pressed into service.

In the spring of the previous year (1993) the Celtic League carried a short article in our quarterly journal CARN (No. 82). In an article entitled "Britain Scours Junkyards" we asserted that there were serious deficiencies in the availability of both medium and heavy lift helicopters. We alleged that in 1992 MOD officials had discreetly visited India in an attempt to procure 21 second-hand Westland WG30 helicopters supplied for oil exploration work. Although denied by the MOD, subsequently the story was vindicated. In the Guardian newspaper on Sept. 19 1997 it was confirmed attempts to procure WG30 helicopters, which ironically had been originally supplied as part of a UK overseas aid package, had been made.

The second part of our Carn 1992 article referred to heavy lift helicopters and

specifically the Chinook. We said:

"on the heavy lift side the position is no better and attempts last year (1992) to acquire redundant Royal Australian Air Force CH 47's (Chinooks) were frustrated when the Australian government traded them in against new purchases from Boeing /Vertol"

The article also asserted that resources were stretched "due to the increased commitment in Ireland at a time of strain in other areas". We pointed out that "the situation has become so critical that all heavy lift support for general infantry training (during 1992/93) has been curtailed".

Whatever the truth the cause of the Kintyre crash one thing is incontestable i.e. the RAF were critically short of heavy lift Chinook helicopters for over two years prior to the Chinook crash. Therefore Chinooks such as the fateful ZD576 returned from conversion in the US by Boeing/Vertol to HC 2 were pressed swiftly into service, before any teething troubles could be eradicated, with devastating consequences at Kintyre in June 1994.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

11/3/00

=====

EXTEND NO FLY ZONES AROUND N-PLANTS CALL

Scottish local authorities and politicians have joined the calls for greater air safety around nuclear plants. The calls coincide with a major night exercise over SW Scotland and the borders which will involve dangerous low flying near nuclear plants

Last year the Celtic League expressed concern about the narrow (1 mile) air exclusion zones around nuclear power stations following a near miss when an RAF Tornado jet narrowly avoided colliding with the Torness plant in central Scotland. It has also emerged that there was an incident over Anglesey last month when two RAF jet aircraft narrowly averted collision. Anglesey is the site of the old Magnox power station at Wylfa, sixty miles from Dublin. Air training exercises of this type are a feature of life over Anglesey.

The Celtic League concerns were echoed at the time by the Irish and Manx governments. Now Dundee City Council have written to their colleagues on Midlothian council seeking its support for calls to increase flight avoidance zones around the plants. Meanwhile Scottish Green MSP Robin Harper said Scotland had been seconds from a "Chernobyl scenario" of radioactive fallout despite assurances from management.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

15/3/00

=====

FAULTY 'CHOPPERS' CLAIM

Military air exercises over SW Scotland and the Borders in the next few days are likely to have an added risk posed by the operation of Lynx helicopters flying with a known defect.

Last month the Celtic League highlighted the fact that, following an accident in Bosnia in 1998 in which three people died, a defect had been identified on the type. We wrote to the MOD asking why the machine had not been grounded pending repairs. In their reply the MOD said that safety was not being compromised and the machines were being subjected to enhanced safety checks until "the affected component has been replaced fleetwide". They indicated this would take until December 2000. However two days later tragedy was narrowly averted when a Lynx helicopter crashed near Mullaghbawn in Northern Ireland narrowly missing a farmhouse. Some of the nine military personnel on board were injured.

The League have reiterated their call for operations or exercises by the machine over rural areas should be restricted.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

15/3/00

=====

LEAGUE ATTACK HUMAN RIGHTS HYPOCRISY

The Celtic League have written to leading participants in a Dublin human rights conference co-hosted by the Irish government protesting at the treatment of Limerick Prisoner Josephine Hayden.

Earlier month the League condemned the failure of the Irish Justice Minister and Limerick Prison authorities for failing to allow her compassionate leave to visit her father who was ill in hospital. The League also sent a protest to the European body which monitors prisoners' rights (CPT) - See newsgroup item 5/3/00 "Prison Decision Mean Spirited".

The text of the latest protest and the list of conference participants circularised is set out below.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

18:3:00

Dear Sir,

Ref. Dublin human rights forum/Abuse of prisoners rights.

I understand that you recently attended a major Human Rights Conference, hosted jointly by the Government of Ireland and the Council of Europe, in Dublin Castle on Friday, 3 March 2000. The Conference had as its theme, "The Protection of Human Rights in the 21st Century: Towards Greater Complementarity within and between European Regional Organisations".

I feel I should draw your attention to the attached correspondence to both the Irish government and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) concerning the treatment of a female prisoner currently serving a sentence in Limerick Jail, Ireland. The events referred to occurred immediately prior to the conference but in fact, as the correspondence indicates, the attitude of the authorities to this prisoner in the past has been questionable.

It is an unfortunate facet of human rights policy within some developed European States that the treatment or attitude towards detainees is qualified by political factors within the State. Sadly in some instances States believe they can approach the question of rights under international law almost as if that in relation to some individuals or groups its application is optional.

Returning to the theme of your Dublin conference, I am not quite sure what is meant by complementarity but unfortunately what is occurring across Europe is a "similarity" of disregard for rights norms. Some of the Nation States of the New Europe seem to regard human rights as a "moveable feast", with items selected or disregarded dependant on circumstances.

The treatment of Josephine Hayden recently and previously has a questionable legitimacy. The fact that you met and discussed human rights within weeks of it being perpetrated gives credence to the abuse.

Perhaps it would be useful if before human rights conferences are conducted the rights record of the host state is more adequately scrutinised by participants?

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Encl.:

(1) Copy of letter to Secretary of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) 5/3/00

(2) Copy of correspondence to the Irish Minister of Justice, Mr. John O'Donoghue TD 5/3/00

Dublin Human Rights Conference participants contacted

Mr Alvaro Gil-Robles y Gil Delgado

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr Walter Schwimmer

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

Mr Brian Cowen T.D

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

Mr Pierre-Henri Imbert

The Director General of Human Rights of the Council of Europe

Judge Christos Rozakis

Vice-President, European Court of Human Rights

Mr Rudolf Bindig

First Vice-Chairperson, Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Mr John Olden

Second Vice-President of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT)

Mr Harold Koh

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State at the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labour

Chair: Anne Anderson

Ambassador of Ireland to the United Nations, Geneva and Chair of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights

Dr Janne Haaland Matlary

State Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Mr Bertrand Ramcharan

United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

=====

ISLAND PRISON 'TRANSPORT' PROTEST

The Celtic League have written to a European Human Rights organisation (see attached) protesting at a Manx government plan to 'transport' prisoners to the United Kingdom to ease an overcrowding problem at the Island's prison.

The Islands Victorian prison has often been at the centre of controversy. The conditions led to a number of suicides by inmates in the early 1990s. The League previously sought involvement by the CPT following the prisons use to house adult and child offenders together in the same facility.

A 1997 report by the CPT was critical of the prison and called for its redevelopment and the adoption of new procedures. However, political difficulties mean that a site for a new facility has still not been identified.

The Celtic League assert that the new proposal to relocate prisoners, if necessary by force, goes against the 1997 CPT report recommendations and is also offensive in the context of model European Prison Rules.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

22/3/00

The Secretary

Mr. M. Kelly

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Council of Europe (CPT)

F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex

FRANCE

Dear Sir,

I refer you to the attached news-cutting which sets out Isle of Man government plans to alleviate overcrowding at the Isle of Man Prison.

You will recall that I communicated with the Committee following a decision of the Celtic League annual general meeting in 1996 which adopted a resolution critical of the absence of modern prison facilities on the Isle of Man and also the failure to follow procedures in the existing facility based on reputable International guidelines. The text of the resolution, together with a brief written report, was provided to the CPT when it visited the Isle of Man in September 1997. At the time I also met with your Committee and provided supplementary oral information.

The Celtic League was pleased recently to receive a copy of the Committee's final report and we welcome the recommendations contained therein.

However, nowhere within those recommendations did we see any suggestion that the Isle of Man government should adopt a policy of voluntary or forced relocation to another jurisdiction to resolve the overcrowding. Indeed, if this policy is enacted it will fly in the face of the Committee's recommendations, specifically Nos. 147 & 148. (Ref. European Prison Rules 43.1 below)

More generally, the Celtic League believe that the Isle of Man government proposal would contradict the objectives of a number of European Prison Rules which are generally accepted as setting out model practice towards prisoners/detainees. I refer specifically to:

European Prison Rules 43.1 65 c 66 b 68

It is clear from public statements made by the Isle of Man government that they face severe difficulties due to the condition of the present prison and its overcrowding. It is also apparent that the government face political difficulties in finding a suitable site for the development of a new facility. It is not a question of the will, to finance or construct a new facility, being available. It is more to do with the time scale and also the current lack of an agreed site.

However, these difficulties should not result in measures being taken which exacerbate the detention arrangements for convicted offenders in the Isle of Man.

Many of these offenders are Manx i.e. indigenous to the Isle of Man which is a distinct country from England. They should not be required to be transported to the North West of England to serve part of their sentences due to political/social considerations outside their control.

I trust the Committee will consider this approach in the context of its 1997 investigation and recommendations and make representations to the United Kingdom and Isle of Man governments.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

21/3/00

=====

GLYNDWR LETTER COMES HOME

The Celtic League have welcomed (see below) the return by French Cultural Authorities of an important exchange of correspondence between Owain Glyndwr and the French Monarchy in the fifteenth century.

The Pennal letter and Seal of Owain will be returned for an exhibition to be staged at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, between April and September.

The artefact is to be returned on loan at this stage. However, in correspondence to the French Ambassador to London, the Celtic League, say that whilst not wishing to detract from the generosity of the gesture they hope that "in the fullness of time the French Ministry of Culture might see the value and significance in allowing this to become a permanent exhibit in Wales".

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

23/3/00

Ms. Daniel Bernard

Ambassador of France

French Embassy

58 Knightsbridge

London SW1X 7JT

Dear Ambassador ,

I understand that a historic letter from the Prince of Wales, Owain Glyndwr, to the French monarchy written in the fifteenth century is to be returned to Wales on loan. This is through the efforts of the French Ministry of Culture and courtesy of the Archive Internationale in Paris.

I feel sure that it will form an important and symbolic part of the Owain Glyndwr exhibition to be staged at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth between April and September this year.

Given the cultural and national significance of this period to many Welsh people I believe it is an extremely positive gesture by the French cultural authorities to loan

this artefact. Wales, with the development of devolution in the United Kingdom, is establishing a new independence of purpose. This is something that we in the Celtic League wish to encourage for all the Celtic people. Part of this process is the stimulation of links, economic, cultural and political across Europe. Gestures such as that by your Culture Ministry both develop and stimulate that process and are to be applauded.

I appreciate that there are complex arguments over the retention, by some States, of exhibits of this type which have more significance (historically and culturally) to another country. However, I would not wish to compromise the generosity or the significance of the loan of an artefact that has not been seen in Wales for many centuries.

I hope however that in the fullness of time the French Ministry of Culture might see the value in allowing this to become a permanent exhibit in Wales.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

18/3/00

Celtic League Press Releases for April 2000

CORNISH MINORITY EXCLUSION MEAN-SPIRITED

The Celtic League has protested to the Council of Europe Directorate of Human Rights Minorities Unit about the continuing denial by the United Kingdom government of minority status to the Cornish people. The League have wholeheartedly endorsed the Cornish National Minority Report (published in Nov. 1999) which advances a strong argument against the UK stance.

At its AGM in Dublin in 1998 the League adopted a resolution calling on the United Kingdom government "to ensure that Cornwall along with the other Celtic Nations (was) included and covered by the provisions of the Convention". When this status was denied the objective was restated at the 1999 meeting held at Liskeard in Cornwall.

The obstinacy of the British government over this issue is all the more frustrating given the positive political, social and cultural progress being made in other Celtic areas of the United Kingdom.

The Blair government, despite its periodic pious statements about social inclusion, is adopting a particularly mean-spirited position towards the aspirations of the Cornish minority. The League have called on the Council of Europe Minorities Unit to recognise that some States will use the present structure of the Framework Convention to dodge its intent.

J B Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

2/4/00

Ms. Nikola Markes-Goerlach

Council of Europe

Directorate of Human Rights

Minorities Unit

F-67075 Strasbourg-Cedex - FRANCE

Dear Ms. Markes-Goerlach

Ref. Status of the Cornish People with reference to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

I write to endorse wholeheartedly the conclusions of the Cornish National Minority Report which advocates that proper status be afforded to the Cornish people as a recognised minority in the context of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The Celtic League has campaigned vigorously for forty years to achieve proper status and recognition for the political, social and cultural integrity of all the Celtic peoples. We welcomed the initiative of the Council of Europe which led to the Framework Convention.

At our AGM in Dublin in 1998 we passed a resolution calling on the United Kingdom government "to ensure that Cornwall along with the other Celtic Nations (was) included and covered by the provisions of the Convention". We reiterated this call at our 1999 meeting which was held in Cornwall, extending our concerns to include the Breton people and the attitudes of the French government.

The Framework Convention has the capacity to improve the prospects for peoples facing social and cultural threats to their way of life. However, its value will be seriously undermined unless the Council of Europe adopt strict criteria to stop countries like the United Kingdom and others arbitrarily excluding minorities such as the Cornish

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

2/4/00

=====

'WELSH' GOSPELS AND 'MANX' CHRONICLES - MADE IN ENGLAND?

Lichfield Cathedrals claim on St. Teilo gospels and the British Library claim on the Manx 'Chronicles' are suspiciously similar.

There was an element of déjà vu in the news report last week about the alleged theft of a 1000 year old biblical manuscripts from the Welsh people.

The eighth-century St. Teilo gospels are said to have been stolen from Llandeilo Fawr in west Wales 1000 years ago. They are currently housed in Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire. Written in Latin, and according to Lichfield Cathedral, compiled by a monk at Lindisfarne in the North-east of England the manuscript has suspicious notations scribbled in its margins which are most definitely Welsh, possibly some of the earliest examples of the written language. In the circumstances the Lindisfarne connection is extremely convenient although apparently not verifiable.

The (English) Monks of the north of England must have been extremely prolific. For some years now the Celtic League have been campaigning for the return to the Manx people of the Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles. Presently they are housed in the British Library. Written in the thirteenth century we advanced a fairly sound case that they were 'pinched' by the English about five hundred years ago. In an uncanny echo of the Lichfield - Welsh controversy apparently this was not so. The busy monks of Furness Abbey (this time) took time off to compile a detailed and specific Chronicle of the Norse Kings of Mann (the Isle of Man) and the Isles. Meanwhile, on the other side of Northern England their colleagues at Lindisfarne were adding those Welsh notations to the St. Teilo Gospels.

On the other hand perhaps Lichfield and the British Library have both had their heads together on this one as their alibis for possessing other peoples property have an uncanny similarity.

There is a serious point to all this. As the people of the United Kingdom develop new structures via equality and devolution this question of stolen artifacts is an issue that must be tackled. Through new institutions, such as the British-Irish Council, which link the constituent parts of the British Isles the question of the return of this stolen property should and must be amicably resolved.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League 2/4/00

=====

STALLED PEACE PROCESS WILL NOT DERAIL LANGUAGE MOVEMENT

What should have been a fairly upbeat meeting of the national association for Gaelscoileanna must necessarily be overshadowed by the suspension of the Northern

Ireland Assembly and the uncertainty that this has cast over all the north-south institutions set up under the auspices of the Good Friday agreement.

After the establishment of the Assembly, and the appointment of Ministers, the prospects for Irish medium education received an added fillip when the important post of education minister went to Martin McGuinness, himself from a party committed to the advancement and status of the Irish language.

The fall-out, if the Irish peace process falls apart, is also likely to have wider ramifications. Other institutions such as the British-Irish Council advance the prospect of wider co-operation across the Celtic countries. This is apparent by the attendance this weekend at the Gaelscoileanna meeting of representatives from the other Gaelic countries, Scotland and Mann. All this is threatened by the present uncertainty.

Despite some pessimistic remarks, by Sean O Muireagain, at the opening of this weekend's conference in Belfast we have no doubt that Gaelscoileanna will overcome this temporary setback. The organisation has a track record of battling with governments for funding. Whilst the promise of the Good Friday agreement may have smoothed the road experience as regards the Celtic languages and cultures is that it is the vibrancy of the language movements themselves that brings progress.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

2/4/00

=====

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J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

2/4/00

=====

GAMBLE WITH LIVES OF 'CHOPPER' CREWS AND OTHERS

The Ministry of Defence, in correspondence to the Celtic League, have ruled out a known defect on British Army Lynx helicopters as having caused a crash earlier this month in Ulster.

Only days before the crash the Celtic League had warned that the machines were being operated with a defect to their tail rotor drive. Whilst the MOD confirm our suspicions they say that the defect problem is being contained by "periodic safety inspections which will continue until the affected component is replaced fleet-wide". The problem came to light following an accident in Bosnia in 1998 in which all on board perished. Since that another fatal crash has occurred, near the village of on the Tilton on the Hill in Leicestershire in May 1999, three were killed.

In the latest crash near Mullaghbawn in South Armagh several of the nine aircrew and soldiers on board were injured. the Celtic League and the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Association have been vociferous critics of the level of military activity including 'heli-ops' in the County.

The MOD have ruled out the need for the machines to be grounded whilst the defect is eradicated and say they are 'confident' that the safety checks being undertaken will eliminate the reoccurrence of this fault. However, the Celtic League believe that the reason the defective machines are continuing operations is that their grounding would cripple helicopter support operations both in Ulster and in the Balkans.

The MOD are taking a dangerous gamble with both the lives of aircrew and service personnel and also the civilians in the areas over which these machines operate.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

31/3/00

=====

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

'OFFICIAL' NUCLEAR HEALTH RISK DATA SUSPECT

British attempts to reject research by Green Audit linking the nuclear industry to increased cancer and leukaemia risk in coastal communities should be treated with scepticism. It's clear some 'official' UK held statistics have been gerrymandered to cast the nuclear industry in a more positive light.

The Manx government, via its Research Laboratory, joined British critics to swiftly rubbish the conclusions of Green Audit published this week about increased cancer risk for women and children in coastal areas near nuclear plants.

The Green Audit team, a trio of scientists based at Aberystwyth University headed by Dr. Chris Busby, were accused of basing their conclusions on inaccurate data. People around the Irish sea were instead urged to put their faith in data held by the British Government.

It is not the first time that Dr. Busby and his research have been 'in the dock'. Earlier conclusions about leukaemia in coastal communities in Wales, publicised last August, was also rejected.

On the day that this latest concern was raised a catalogue of complicity, evasion and deceit involving the nuclear industry which went right to the heart of the British government was exposed. Had the Manx government considered more objectively the background to Dr. Busby's research and been less willing to accept the views or official data from the United Kingdom then they might have accepted his team's conclusions are valid.

Green Audit's conclusions about Welsh coastal communities which have obvious implications for other Irish sea communities were based on figures and data held by the Welsh Cancer Registry up to May 1995. In April of 1996 the WCR was closed down. In January 1997 a new body, the Wales Cancer Intelligence and Surveillance Unit (WCISU), was setup. The WCISU promptly denied the figures upon which Green Audit's research was based. WCISU published alternative data which removed, without explanation, 3517 cases from the original data base.

You do not have to be a conspiracy theorist to see the implications of this sequence of events. If the data held for Wales was gerrymandered in this way then similar situations probably occurred in other UK regions. Only last month we commended the work of the Manx government laboratory and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII). Both bodies should be extremely wary of accepting at face value any assurances derived from fake British statistics.

Green Audit's conclusions certainly cannot be rejected on the basis of official British statistics which have been laundered! Their report sets out *prima facie* a case of increased cancer risk for Irish, Manx and British communities in coastal areas and deserves to be taken seriously.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

14/4/00

=====

MEC VANNIN AGM

The Annual General Meeting of Mec Vannin - the Manx Nationalist Party - was held on Wednesday 12th of April.

The outgoing Chairman Greg Joughin introduced reports from the Officers of the organisation. Election of officials for the coming term was undertaken and an appraisal of the financial position provided.

The main issue discussed was the unfolding housing crisis on the Island and the very real difficulty being experienced by young people and families because of rising mortgage commitments and rental levels. The matter was the subject of a resolution (below) which called for a public enquiry and the issue dominated the AGM. There was a genuine fear that the only way that current disastrous governments policies could be changed is via direct action such as occurred in the late 1980s. On that occasion a underground nationalist group FSFO mounted a publicity campaign and there were arson attacks on several luxury properties under construction.

Other resolutions criticised Sellafield, calling for its closure, and the award of the George Cross to the RUC which was seen a detrimental to the peace process in these Islands.

Officers elected for the new electoral term as follows:

President: Bernard Moffatt

Chairman: Mark Kermode

Secretary: Greg Joughin

Treasurer: Cristl Jerry

Int. Relations: Illiam Costain

Cultural: Phillip Gawne

Editor (YPS): Nathan Talbot

Youth Wendy Hurst

Resolutions adopted as follows:

1) Domestic "Calls for an enquiry into house prices in the Isle of Man to identify if there is, or has been profiteering by developers and marketing agencies which has acted to the detriment of the Manx people".

2) Environmental "This AGM supports the calls by the governments of Ireland and Mann and also the Scottish National Party for the closure of all nuclear installations at Sellafield".

3) International (Inter-Celtic) "Echoes the concern of Celtic nationalists in Ireland at the award made today (12:4:00) of the George Cross to the RUC. This police force has acquired a justified reputation internationally for the brutality it has exhibited towards the nationalist community in Ulster over the thirty years of the troubles. The award is unnecessarily provocative to that community and does nothing to further the peace process in these Islands that all, including the Manx, are committed to.

=====

FORCED TRANSFER OF PRISONERS CHALLENGED

Civil libertarians are concerned about penal moves on the Isle of Man and plans to transfer Manx prisoners to the UK against their will may be challenged this week (April 17-21) - see below. Last month the Celtic League alerted the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture to the transfers (correspondence attached). Civil Liberties never a high priority on the Isle of Man may be trampled on again despite apparently positive legislative moves currently in hand.

Law reforms get under way later this week aimed at removing birching from the statutes of the Isle of Man. Simultaneously the Island will introduce legislation to consolidate rights under the European Convention of Human Rights into its domestic law.

One might be forgiven for believing that attitudes have changed on an island that in recent years attracted international criticism for its persecution of homosexuals and for its use of a crumbling prison to house child offenders.

However, old attitudes die hard and a challenge will be mounted in the Islands courts later this week to counter continuing rights abuse. Last month the Islands government announced that due to chronic overcrowding in its prison inmates would be transferred to prisons in the UK. The issue was glossed over by suggestions that prisoners would welcome the opportunity to exchange life in Victoria Road (Manx prison) for places at Strangeways etc. However, it is clear that some inmates have not welcomed the change. Manx lawyers this week will seek to frustrate the transfer of one prisoner by seeking an injunction and the hearing of a Petition of Doleance challenging the move.

The issue may well also cause embarrassment to UK Home Secretary Jack Straw. Some may ask why he is willing to allot places in the overcrowded UK prison system to bail out intolerant sentencing policies in the Isle of Man. The Labour government, which has kicked up quite a fuss about accommodating legitimate asylum seekers, seems only too pleased to accept Manx prisoners at £85 per day. (£33,000 per year for each inmate transferred)

It may also be suggested that the Isle of Man, which has enjoyed unparalleled prosperity in recent years from its off-shore tax regime, should be able to

adequately accommodate its own criminal population.

Celtic League April 18 2000

The Secretary (Mr. M. Kelly)

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Council of Europe (CPT)

F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex FRANCE

Dear Sir,

I refer you to the attached news-cutting which sets out Isle of Man government plans to alleviate overcrowding at the Isle of Man Prison.

You will recall that I communicated with the Committee following a decision of the Celtic League annual general meeting in 1996 which adopted a resolution critical of the absence of modern prison facilities on the Isle of Man and also the failure to follow procedures in the existing facility based on reputable International guidelines. The text of the resolution, together with a brief written report, was provided to the CPT when it visited the Isle of Man in September 1997. At the time I also met with your Committee and provided supplementary oral information.

The Celtic League was pleased recently to receive a copy of the Committee's final report and we welcome the recommendations contained therein.

However, nowhere within those recommendations did we see any suggestion that the Isle of Man government should adopt a policy of voluntary or forced relocation to another jurisdiction to resolve the overcrowding. Indeed, if this policy is enacted it will fly in the face of the Committee's recommendations, specifically Nos. 147 & 148. (Ref. European Prison Rules 43.1 below)

More generally, the Celtic League believe that the Isle of Man government proposal would contradict the objectives of a number of European Prison Rules which are generally accepted as setting out model practice towards prisoners/detainees. I refer specifically to:

European Prison Rules 43.1 65 c 66 b 68

It is clear from public statements made by the Isle of Man government that they face severe difficulties due to the condition of the present prison and its overcrowding. It is also apparent that the government face political difficulties in finding a suitable site for the development of a new facility. It is not a question of the will, to finance or construct a new facility, being available. It is more to do with the time scale and also the current lack of an agreed site.

However, these difficulties should not result in measures being taken which exacerbate the detention arrangements for convicted offenders in the Isle of Man.

Many of these offenders are Manx i.e indigenous to the Isle of Man which is a distinct country from England. They should not be required to be transported to the North West of England to serve part of their sentences due to political/social considerations outside their control.

I trust the Committee will consider this approach in the context of its 1997 investigation and recommendations and make representations to the United Kingdom and Isle of Man governments.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

21/3/00

=====

MEDALS FOR MURDERERS?

Outside of Ireland the most enduring image that one associates with the force (RUC) are the faces of battered children, bludgeoned and in some instances killed by rubber and plastic bullets

The rhetoric was flying 'thick and fast' in Ulster last week. The decision to present the George Cross to the RUC was seen as commendable by some and as contemptible by others. Unionists were proud of the award to 'their police force' whilst Nationalists saw the move as re-emphasising its lack of credibility. There was claim and counterclaim as to the heroism or barbarity of the force, depending on each side's political standpoint.

The real assessment of the credibility this award bestows on the RUC will however come outside Ireland. Globally we believe the record of the RUC is more rationally quantified.

Most people outside of Ireland are amazed at how, in a corner of a democracy, a police force of this type, so obviously from its inception partisan, could be allowed to grow and be presented to both sides of a divided community as an acceptable face of policing.

Most public perceptions of N. Ireland over thirty years of trouble are bedded in by the image of policemen battering down civilian demonstrators. In that thirty years scandal surrounding the torture of suspects and the alleged murder of innocents has jostled alongside accounts of the RUC role in fighting the IRA and other Republican groups.

Perhaps the most enduring image however that one associates with the force are the

faces of battered children, bludgeoned and in some instances killed by rubber and plastic bullets fired sometimes indiscriminately at point blank range.

To the British Government the RUC that countered the 'IRA threat' may well be perceived as warranting an award of this type. But what about the RUC that made war on, battered and in some instances killed children. How deserving of kudos is that body?

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

12/4/00

=====

PRISON TRANSFER HALT PUTS JUDGES ON TRIAL

Lawyers acting for an inmate at the Manx Prison sought and achieved an injunction on Tuesday (18/4/00) which halted moves to transfer him by force to an English prison.

The Celtic League (see earlier news stories on these pages) had opposed moves by the Isle of Man authorities to 'dump' prisoners in the UK to alleviate problems at the Islands crumbling prison.

The Prison has been the subject of international condemnation and the Celtic League alerted the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) which had recently published criticisms of the prison regime on the Island to the new moves.

The injunction simply stalls the process and allows time for a full hearing of a Petition of Doleance in the Islands High Court which will probably occur in the next ten days.

Interestingly the Manx government is currently introducing new legislation to incorporate the European Convention of Human Rights into domestic law.

Libertarians are sceptical however that the Islands Deemsters (High Court Judges), normally conservative in their judgements, are adequate for the interpretive role associated with the new law. The prison transfers and the complex human rights issue that it raises places judges and the justice system of the Isle of Man on trial.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

=====

FRENCH INERTIA STOKES BRETON VIOLENCE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

Given developments in Brittany this week and the bomb attack by the ARB which tragically cost one life we reproduce below the warning, published by the Celtic League in a pamphlet in October last year, which forecast a decline into separatist violence if the French government did not follow British government steps to promote self determination for the Celtic people.

J B Moffatt

FRENCH STOKES UP 'OLD VIOLENCE' IN THE 'NEW EUROPE'

Brussels should wake up.. armed separatism has a tendency to flourish

As the British and Irish governments make a last push for peace in Ireland and devolution becomes an accepted fact of life in Wales and Scotland one could be forgiven for believing that the era of separatist struggle has ended on the Celtic fringes of Europe.

It is a far cry from the late 1960s when almost all the Celtic countries contained militant separatist groups, most of which would go on to mount desultory campaigns over the next twenty-five years. It is fair to say that while Ireland was always 'on the boil' activism in the other countries 'simmered'.

Relationships in the new Europe have radically changed this perception but while the shaky truce in Ireland looks likely to hold, elsewhere the old forces are stirring. The EU would do well to pay heed.

Early this year CARN, the journal of the Celtic League, commented briefly on developments in Brittany, announcing, "ARB Active Again". The article reported that the Breton Revolutionary Army, a clandestine group inactive for some time, had carried out a series of actions including bomb attacks on tax offices, police stations and courts of justice. The return to armed struggle was a conscious decision prompted by French repression of Breton activists and failure to deliver on linguistic and political freedom for the Bretons.

Earlier this month the issue resurfaced when French police arrested 10 people, including Breton and Basque citizens, in connection with the theft of eight tonnes of explosives.

French paramilitary police had launched a nationwide hunt to recover the explosives. These were stolen from a depot owned by the private firm Titanite in Plevin, Brittany, in late September by hooded armed men and women.

Though some of the people arrested were subsequently released it was clear that this was a carefully planned operation involving co-operation between Basques and Breton nationalists.

No one within the wider inter-Celtic movement wants to see a steady deterioration in Brittany and a spiral of violence like that experienced in the 1970s. However, most of the Celtic peoples in the British Isles, seeing the political progress being achieved here through dialogue, will wonder why the French government cannot follow a similar

road.

France is obdurate in its repression of minorities and the cooperation it is forging between Basques and Bretons will be mirrored with groups such as the Corsicans unless common sense prevails.

Similarly, whilst European media commentators have drawn parallels between the Irish peace process and that in the Basque country, the Celtic League remain sceptical that Spain has the sincerity to resolve their differences with the Basques.

The Breton and Basque arrests, far from resolving anything for either France or Spain, will provide a focus for those who mistrust the old Nation States in the new Europe. More dangerously, armed separatism has a tendency to flourish and if Brussels does not wake up it may find that the problems of two isolated corners of south-west Europe have proliferated.

J B Moffatt - Secretary General Celtic League

Report below from Basque news agency : EHJ. Baiona, Euskal Herria. October 3, 1999

=====

GOVERNMENT ACTION ON CHRONICLES CALL

The purchase and restoration of the Rushen Abbey site is a credit to both the Isle of Man government and the Manx Museum and National Trust.

The Abbey site undoubtedly has a place as one of the most significant sites of historical importance on the Island.

It is also very likely the site at which the Chronicles of the Kings of Mann and the Isles were produced. The Chronicle is a document of crucial importance to our historical record and it detailed our history for the first time in a written form. Its retention by the British not only causes offence to campaigning pressure groups such as the Manx branch of the Celtic League but also to senior figures in Manx public life who have the authority to speak for the Manx nation as a whole. Recently the retiring President of Tynwald, Sir Charles Kerruish, expressed his support for the Chronicles return to their rightful home. The question must now be posed, when will the Manx government take forceful action to secure their return?

Attitudes towards restitution of cultural artefacts are now more liberal. In the past ten years there has been a great change in the way that museums and galleries in Britain approach such claims. Basic criteria exist that we believe the Manx claim to the Chronicles meet. Yet the British Library stubbornly refuse to budge on the issue.

It is past time for government action!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

21/4/00

=====

ANOTHER MYSTERY SHUTDOWN AT WYLFA

Is the reactor core cracking up?

Only three months after the last incident the nuclear power station at Wylfa on Anglesey in North Wales is shutdown again. Mystery surrounds the latest incident with management saying that Reactor One is being shutdown after "unexpected marks" were seen in the reactor's fuel channels. Checks were made on Reactor One after a similar problem was uncovered on Reactor Two at the site which was closed down for overhaul.

Wylfa is a Magnox station built in 1972 and has frequently been the subject of criticism. In February the British Department of the Environment confirmed to the Celtic League that the station, as originally commissioned, had an anticipated operating life of 25-30 years. However British government safety regulators extended the operational life of the station, which is managed by British Nuclear Fuels, until 2004 when a further appraisal is to be undertaken. Worryingly, there seems every likelihood that these obsolescent reactors will continue in service for economic reasons.

In January of this year the station was shutdown because of problems with the reactor fuel rods and the current problems seem to be affecting the same area. Problems in the central core of the reactor could be catastrophic. Any reactor fire or explosion at a site such as this could cause devastating contamination of the North Irish sea area and threaten centres of major population such as Merseyside and Dublin.

It is vital that honest and open information is issued by the British government about this latest incident. BNFL have been criticised for the lack of a coherent safety culture at its Sellafield plant. We need to know if things are any better at Wylfa.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

21/4/00

=====

IRISH AID SOUGHT OVER WYLFA SHUTDOWN

There have been serious incidents at other Magnox stations... but Wylfa seems to be particularly 'incident' prone.

The Celtic League have written to Irish Enterprise Minister Joe Jacob asking him to seek information from the British government about the last incident at the nuclear power station at Wylfa on Anglesey in North Wales (attached). Mystery surrounds the latest shutdown, last Friday, with management saying that Reactor One was shutdown after "unexpected marks" were seen in the reactors fuel channels. A similar problem was uncovered on Reactor Two at the site which was closed down for overhaul. The League have also written to UK Minister responsible Lord Whitty (attached).

Wylfa is a Magnox station built in 1972 and has frequently been the subject of criticism. In February the British Department of the Environment confirmed to the Celtic League that the station, as originally commissioned, had an anticipated operating life of 25-30 years. However British government safety regulators extended the operational life of the station, which is managed by British Nuclear Fuels, until 2004 when a further appraisal is to be undertaken. Wylfa was the subject of controversy in 1995 when the operators were fined £250,000 for breaches of safety regulations.

In January of this year the station was shutdown because of problems with the reactor fuel rods and the current problems seem to be affecting the same area. Problems in the central core of the reactor could be catastrophic. Any reactor fire or explosion at a site such as this could cause devastating contamination of the North Irish sea threatening centres of major population such as Merseyside and Dublin.

It is vital that full information is issued by the British government about this latest incident. Wylfa is one of the series of Magnox stations that ring the Irish sea. A similar station at Trawsfynydd is already closed but the nuclear industry has made no secret of its desire to have safety restrictions relaxed so that it could recommission. There have been serious incidents at other Magnox stations including Heysham on the Lancs. coast but Wylfa seems to be particularly 'incident' prone.

J B Moffatt, Secretary General, Celtic League

23/4/00

The Celtic League has branches in the six Celtic Countries of the western British Isles and Brittany. It works to promote cooperation between these countries and campaigns on a broad range of political, cultural and environmental matters. It targets human rights abuse and monitors all military activity within these areas

TEL (UK) 01624 627128 MOBILE (UK) 04624 491609 FAX 01624 673115

Internet site at <http://www.manxman.co.im/cleague/index.html>

<http://homepages.enterprise.net/mlockerby/clint/clint.html>

News updates at: http://www.egroups.com/group/celtic_league/info.html

b.moffatt@advsys.co.im

Mr. Joe Jacob TD

Minister of State

Department of Enterprise

25 Clare Street

Dublin 2

Ireland

Ref. Reactor shut down Wylfa nuclear power station

Dear Minister,

I refer to my correspondence to An Taoiseach, Mr, Bertie Ahern, T.D., concerning the incident at Wylfa nuclear power station in January which was passed to your Office.

You may (or may not) be aware that a further incident again involving a closure of both reactors occurred this week. Details are sketchy but apparently whilst the No 2 reactor was shutdown for overhaul a problem was identified in the reactors fuel channels. No 1 reactor was then examined and shutdown when a similar problem was identified.

We have written to the U.K. authorities (enclosed) asking about the incident and also seeking assurances that on this occasion problems, with back up instrumentation, which occurred in January did not recur (see DETR correspondence also enclosed). Obviously representations from the Irish government will carry more weight than ours and I hope you will be minded to seek assurances about the operation of this station and other Magnox stations on the Irish sea coast. Given recent developments with the nuclear industry in the UK we are increasingly concerned about the operation of these plants and if, for example, the UK NII long term safety assessment carried out five years ago which allowed Wylfa to continue operating until 2004 was sufficiently thorough.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

22/4/00

The Minister

Department of the Environment and the Regions

c/o (Simon Meares) The Health and Safety Policy Liaison Branch

HSSD

Zone 4/13

Great Minster House

76 Marsham Street

London SW1P 4DR

United Kingdom

Dear Sir,

Further to my correspondence in January concerning the emergency shutdown of both reactors at the Wylfa nuclear power plant on 16th of January I understand that a further shutdown was effected this week 21/4/00.

Can you advise if there is any link between the two incidents?

Could you also advise us if safety defects such as the failure of power (battery) back up to instrumentation which was a feature of the earlier incident also occurred this time?

Can we also enquire how many emergency or short notice shutdowns of either or both reactors at Wylfa have occurred in the past decade and the dates for these?

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

22/4/00

=====

OBSOLETE 'CHOPPER' SAFETY FEARS

In the last six weeks eighteen people have been injured, one seriously, in Army helicopter accidents what are the implications for border areas of Northern Ireland which see the most intensive operations of the British Army's obsolete helicopter force.

Last month we warned about defects on British Army Lynx helicopters. The problem in the tail rotor assembly is known to the MOD but for operational reasons the machines are continuing to operate while a programme of general maintenance is undertaken. This will not be complete until December 2000.

Within days of our warning one of the machines crashed at Mullaghbawn, South Armagh. Nine men were injured, The incident could have been more catastrophic as the machine crashed adjacent to a farmhouse and buildings.

If that was a wake-up call to the communities over which the British Army carries out its most intensive helicopter operations another accident last week, this time in England, should set the alarm bells ringing. A medium-lift Puma helicopter crashed and disintegrated. Nine of the people on board were injured, one seriously.

The accident, near Catterick army base in North Yorkshire, happened in open country. Anyone familiar with the Northern Ireland situation knows operations there, particularly in border areas, are conducted into cramped landing grounds often in the centre of small village communities. An illustration of the damage potential was clearly illustrated at Bessbrook in November 1992 when a Puma and a Lynx helicopter collided and crashed in flames (four crewmen died).

That was eight years ago. Both the Lynx and the Puma were approaching their 'sell by' date then and are now much older. Two years ago we challenged the MOD over continuing the operation of these semi-obsolete types; a query that they evaded at the time.

With eighteen men injured, at least one seriously, in accidents involving the types in the last six weeks surely it is past time the MOD reviewed its maintenance and safety procedures for these operations.

J B Moffatt, Secretary General, Celtic League

23/4/00

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POLICE REACTION TO NATIONALIST WARNING OMINOUS BUT PREDICTABLE

Nationalists "don't shoot the messenger" warning over housing discontent prompts police outburst

Manx Police have said that they will take prompt action against anyone who takes direct action as a result of Manx government policies which are currently stimulating the worst housing and accommodation crisis that the Isle of Man has ever faced.

The Isle of Man currently enjoys unprecedented prosperity stimulated by its offshore tax haven status. People are pouring into the Island both to work in the lucrative finance industry and also the services sector associated with it.

However while 'fatcats' line their pockets and housing speculation is rife Manx people suffer. Nationalists have long been critics of this economic policy claiming that it would ultimately create the problems which ordinary Manx people currently face. House prices are well beyond the reach of the average working couple and private sector rents are being hiked to capitalise on the situation.

The issue dominated a recent meeting of the Nationalist Party (Mec Vannin) and concerns were articulated at the meeting that the situation could lead to a return to the

violence that bedevilled the Island in the 1970s and 1980s. On both previous occasions there was a systematic campaign of daubing of roads and several properties were attacked and burned.

However, during both emergency situations Mec Vannin stuck rigidly to a policy which promoted constitutional politics and solutions and forswore the road of direct action.

If anything the concerns articulated recently by the newly elected Party Chairman Mark Kermode down-played the situation as there is no doubt that current problems are much greater than in the 1980s.

The Police reaction was ominous but predictable. On the previous two occasions when this problem arose the police were able to apprehend only a few suspects and innocent people were targeted. It seems that if these latest predictions do prove correct then Mec Vannin's comment that the authorities should not "shoot the messenger" will be ignored.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

25/4/00

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KINTYRE CRASH QUERIES

The Chinook crash at Kintyre in 1994 killed 25 top Ulster security specialists. Conspiracy theories abound but new information indicates the cause could have been more mundane!

The cause of a RAF Chinook CH-47D crash on the Kintyre peninsula in June 1994 has provoked countless theories (29 died). The Official verdict, which blamed the aircrew was widely condemned and yet the complex theories that were advanced to explain the crash also appear flawed. Questions about the on-board systems of the aircraft, the FADEC (Full Authority Digital Electronics Control), having failed do not seem to square with the continued safe operation by other Chinooks in the RAF fleet.

The cause may be more mundane than some of the wilder theories propounded to date. Analysis of a similar crash by a US Chinook, 21 months later, initially produced a parallel verdict to Kintyre. In June 1996 the US authorities attributed the US MH-47E crash to pilot error - all five of the aircrew on board had died. However, relatives of the five aircrew who died subsequently sued achieving \$4.4 million settlement of the case.

US army investigators now admit that it was moisture that had leaked into the cockpit and not pilot error that caused the crash. Instruments and flight control systems were knocked out with swift and catastrophic consequences.

We have asked the MOD to investigate possible linkage between the two tragedies

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

24/4/00

Secretary of State for Defence

Secretariat (Air Staff) 1a

Ministry of Defence

Main Building

Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Dear Sir,

I write with reference to the tragic Chinook helicopter crash at Kintyre, in June 1994, in which 29 people died. You will recall that we wrote to you in June 1994 drawing attention to similar tragic accidents with comparable US helicopters. In your reply you acknowledged that there was exchanges of safety information but in the examples we cited "the type of helicopter was sufficiently different for there to be little read across to the Chinook".

Having carried out further research on this matter we understand that 21 months after the Kintyre crash a US ARMY Chinook MH-47E crashed. The original post crash enquiry arrived at the same conclusion as the Kintyre accident report and cited pilot error. However, we understand that this conclusion has been overturned and it is now clear the US crash was caused by moisture leaking into the helicopter cockpit and 'knocking out' the aircraft's instrument and flight control systems. Relatives of the five aircrew lost in the US crash have had compensation settled on this basis.

The MH-47E is virtually identical to the CH-47D. I understand that the US machines were re-manufactured on the same production line as the RAF Chinook. It seems highly likely that any deficiencies in cockpit seals due to the manufacturing process although not universal could be a problem which one could "read across". I understand that there has been great agitation about possible failures of computer systems on the Kintyre Chinook but find this hard square with apparent safe operations by other Chinooks in the RAF fleet.

Can I ask if you are aware of the MH-47E crash and have any investigations viz a viz possible linkage to the Kintyre tragedy?

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt 24/4/00

Newslist Messages for May 2000

AER LINGUS CRASH - MILITARY INVOLVEMENT MOST CREDIBLE OPTION

Lost Log books - Mystery Flight - Destroyed Records

British TV pulled quite a stunt this weekend broadcasting a pre-emptive strike before expected publication of the review of evidence into the 1968 Aer Lingus crash. The Captain of HMS Penelope, a Leander Class Frigate, first on the scene of the crash in March 1968 and long suspected of responsibility, came barnstorming in over Tuskar in his light aircraft to categorically refute any involvement.

There is no doubt that Penelope was a mystery ship. Even the good Captain had to elude to its "trials" role. In later incarnations it did carry out missile trials. However, most serious analysts of the crash rule out Penelope's involvement due to the obvious lack of missile-firing gear apparent on footage of the ship at the time.

The real mystery of EI-712 is not the role of Penelope but the many unanswered questions that surround British military involvement.

Mysteries abound. Why, on the Monday (25/3/68) after the crash when Aberporth range was closed, with its support vessels assisting with the search for debris and bodies did its communications flight pay a fleeting visit to Belfast. (Avro Anson 352 Llanbedr to Belfast 11:30- return - Belfast - Llanbedr 15:40). Urgent discussions over missile problems perhaps?

The MOD have lost the log books of many of the warships at the site immediately after the crash.

There were admitted problems with missile firing from the Aberporth complex which, despite claims it was closed on the day, make it still the most likely culprit. Indeed, no one has explained why in the years after the crash the Aberporth range danger area was dramatically extended?

The current review is likely to be compromised by the inexplicable destruction of records e.g. the British Air Accidents Investigation Branch file relating to the accident trashed for no reason by the UK department of Transport in September 1994.

Turning the attention off the UK military onto either the Irish government or Aer Lingus may have journalistic attraction but seriously Aberporth and the British guided missile testing programme is the only credible option to explain this tragedy.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

1/5/00

Bernard Moffatt

=====

MICRO COMMUNICATIONS WARNING OMISSION

As caution is expressed over civil micro-wave communications. Why do the MOD still hide their operations from safety scrutiny?

A report to be published later this week will give warning about the health risks of mobile phones, urge a tightening of regulations and also suggest further research.

The report by the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones will be unlikely to quieten public concerns and in any case there is a significant omission in its research and remit.

When we were contacted by the Group in October of last year and asked to submit evidence we spotlighted the omission of military communications from the committee's agenda. Communications of this type are proliferating around military installations many of which are in the Celtic areas. We highlighted a particular concern about the large number of bases and observation towers in border areas of N. Ireland all of which sprout a preponderance of micro wave emitting dishes and aerials. We pointed out that there is a very real fear in these areas of the "perceived dangers caused by the emission of non-ionising radiation from military communications and surveillance equipment". We continued by pointing out that "The National Radiological Protection Board should also be asked to provide assessment and guidance about the implications of military communications systems which mirror or parallel those in the civil sector throughout the United Kingdom". At the time we were awaiting a response to requests to the MOD for such an assessment. The MOD subsequently rejected any possibility of the NRPB carrying out such a survey arrogantly asserting that they carried out a policy of "self-assessment".

It really begs the question. what credibility can a report by a Committee established via the NRPB have when the British government's own Defence Ministry have excluded NRPB from surveying its sites. What are they concealing?

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

1/5/00

=====

NOT SO MUCH MAN MADE RADIATION ABOUT - SAYS WHO?

How much credibility can we give last week's report from the NRPB which indicated that UK civil nuclear discharges in the mid 1990s had decreased.

Throughout the decade contradictory information from a variety of sources indicates

that radioactive pollution is still a variable and worrying factor.

Throughout the decade agencies in Ireland and the Isle of Man plotted a rise in technetium-99 pollution in shellfish which appeared to peak two years ago with a decrease thereafter (attached). The agencies were anxious to stress that the levels were not at a level to cause alarm but nonetheless they show that any generalised statistics produced by UK government agencies which indicate improvements need to be analysed carefully. Also three years ago research by in the UK produced the worrying statistic that the closer children were to Sellafield the higher the concentration of plutonium found in their teeth. For the past two years a parallel and fierce debate has raged between differing groups of scientists about the incidence of leukaemia caused in children who live close to nuclear plants. All this evidence directly contradicts the rather rosy picture painted by the NRPB and for the most part is for the same period which their report covers.

The one certain statistic is not that reduced discharges from Sellafield might create improvements but the clear knowledge that the discontinuation of reprocessing altogether would!

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

1/5/00

=====

IRISH LEAD IN FIGHT AGAINST SELLAFIELD

The Celtic League welcome the assurances, contained in correspondence from the Irish government, to continue International pressure on the British to end their reprocessing operations which continue to pollute the Irish sea. The Irish government, and in particular Enterprise Minister Joe Jacob, have moved swiftly to capitalise on the safety concerns of potential Sellafield customers. The Japanese, Germans and others are now experiencing themselves at first hand concern that peoples around the Irish sea have had to live with for decades

Throughout those years agencies in Ireland and the Isle of Man plotted a rise in radioactive pollution and although some pollution has in recent years started to decline new dangers such as the detection in the past decade of higher levels of technetium-99 pollution in shellfish need to be carefully monitored. Three years ago research in the UK produced the worrying statistic that the closer children lived to Sellafield the higher the concentration of plutonium found in their teeth and for the past two years a parallel and fierce debate has raged about the incidence of leukaemia caused in children who live in coastal areas near to nuclear plants. Much of the evidence is still inconclusive but whilst that is the case we must err on the side of safety and these new initiatives by the Irish to deal with the Sellafield issue truly are a "watershed".

Minister Jacob's letter to the League Secretary General says that "the Irish government is not prepared to accept any further reassurances about the safety of Sellafield". This

sums up accurately the attitude of all concerned people around the Irish sea who have had to live with this nightmare for so long.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

5/5/00

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NUCLEAR PLANTS POSE CIVIL DEFENCE NIGHTMARE

The cause of the shutdown of the Wylfa nuclear plant over three weeks ago is still a mystery according to correspondence sent to the Celtic League by the British DETR.

The Environment Department claim there is no link between this incident and an earlier shutdown in January of this year and say the plant's operations will remain in limbo until safety regulators are convinced it is secure.

However, the Celtic League question the wisdom of the continued operation of these outdated facilities particularly in circumstances such as this, where "mystery" problems occur. Wylfa is one of a number of such plants in the UK many of which are sited around the Irish sea.

A major malfunction of these ageing reactors would pose a civil defence nightmare for communities living in this area and the Celtic League support calls by the Irish government for the shutdown of these plants.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

12/5/00

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COMMITTEE MISLED ON MILITARY MICROWAVE SAFETY

It is extremely disturbing that an independent committee, established by the British government to examine the health implications of mobile phones and transmitters, has been denied access to vital research about military communications. The research, carried out by the Latvian Academy of Science, found that a military transmitter at Skrunda in Latvia posed health implications for local school children.

Over the past two years the Celtic League has repeatedly tried to have military communications facilities brought under scrutiny. We particularly highlighted the operation of such facilities in border areas and at bases in N. Ireland. When we were

invited to submit evidence to the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP) we emphasized the issue and asked that the Committee should include in its report military sites and make a recommendation that:

"The National Radiological Protection Board should also be asked to provide assessment and guidance about the implications of military communications systems which mirror or parallel those in the civil sector throughout the United Kingdom".

It is clear however that the NRPB was at best negligent and at worst deliberately obstructive in refusing to supply to the IEGMP a copy of the Latvian report.

It is also clear that there is a need for all military communications facilities including the network in the Louth/S. Armagh area to come under proper health and safety scrutiny.

In October 1999 Roger T. Moore the Deputy Chief Environment and Safety Officer told us that the MOD believed "there is no requirement for an independent verification of the health implications of our equipment". This is an oft repeated assertion by the British MOD and it was on the basis of such an assertion that an Irish TD, Dermot Ahern, was assured in the Dail in March 1995 "that the (radiation emitting) equipment used by the (British) Army in South Armagh is not harmful to health". However, when we queried the basis for this assurance from Chief Environment and Safety Officer (MOD) Dr. J. Connor in June 1999 he said "I have been unable to trace the source of the advice that formed the basis of the statement that you quote from the Irish parliament".

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

14/5/00

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US COURT CASE PUTS CHINOOK SAFETY UNDER SPOTLIGHT

The British Ministry of Defence may have acted in haste in dismissing calls for a new enquiry into the Chinook Kintyre crash. A court case, unfolding in the United States, seems set to focus attention on the reliability of critical parts used in the transmission gears of Chinook helicopters. The case is set for trial following a ruling in the Cincinnati Federal Court just over a month ago.

It will be alleged that for more than seven years, Boeing Co. knew one of its subcontractors was supplying the Army with faulty gears for remanufactured Chinook CH-47D helicopters. A type similar to the RAF model. It will also be alleged that this led to a number of crashes.

Earlier this year (February 2000) the US army temporarily grounded Chinooks. A US Army inspection order required removal of faulty transmission gears from the Chinook twin rotor helicopters. The move was interpreted as likely to be helpful to the case

against Boeing brought by Brett Roby, a former quality inspector for Boeing supplier Speco, a component supplier that has since gone into liquidation. The move came only six months after a similar scare, in August last year, which grounded Chinooks world wide including the RAF fleet.

Roby's case, first filed against Boeing in 1995 was joined in 1997 by the United States Justice Department. At the time U.S. Attorney Dale Ann Goldberg of Columbus Ohio, who filed the action, said:

"To protect the lives and safety of our soldiers, we must be particularly vigilant in ensuring that the critical parts used in military aircraft meet the required specifications."

Such sentiments would not seem to be shared by the British MOD who have done all in their power to deflect claims that RAF Chinooks fell short of required operational safety specifications.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

16/5/00

Secretary of State for Defence Secretariat (Air Staff) 1a
Ministry of Defence Main Building
Whitehall, London SW1A 2HB

Dear Sir,

Further to my earlier letter concerning possible problems during the manufacture of RAF Chinook helicopters are you aware of an action which was cleared to go to trial in the US recently?

The case is being brought by Brett Roby a former employee with the Boeing supplier Speco, a firm now in liquidation. Initiated in 1995 it was joined in 1997 by the US governments Department of Justice.

The case alleges that for more than seven years, Boeing Co. knew one of its subcontractors was supplying the Army with faulty gears for re-manufactured Chinook CH-47D helicopters. A type similar to the RAF model. It will also be alleged that this led to a number of crashes.

Can I also ask if RAF Chinook's were subject to the same examination and inspection initiated by the US Army earlier this year (February).?

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

16/5/00

=====

DRUGS SOLDIERS GET MARCHING ORDERS AS McBRIDE KILLERS MARK TIME

This weeks announcement that a large number of soldiers were being discharged from the Army for drug-taking highlights the dubious standards adopted by the British Army towards the murder, by its troops, of Peter McBride in Belfast in 1992. In the case of Mr. McBride a wellorganised though morally misguided campaign has so far enabled those responsible to remain in the British Army.

Seven Welsh soldiers, members of the Queens Dragoon Guards (also known as the Welsh Cavalry), were given their "marching orders" last week after being disciplined for taking drugs whilst on leave. Another eight soldiers from a Scottish Regiment are also likely to be thrown out of the Army.

The situation is a stark contrast to that of the two Scots Guardsmen, Fisher and Wright, who shot McBride twice in the back. In their case, although having served a prison term, the two were allowed to continue to serve. The issue is currently under further review after a judgement in the Belfast High Court that the decision to retain the Guardsmen was flawed.

The McBride family have campaigned ceaselessly to have the two killers, who were branded as liars by their trial judge, kicked out of the Army. No doubt they will share the concern of the Celtic League that the British Army regard the issue of off-duty drug taking as more serious than murder!

We have written to the MOD asking them to explain the ambiguity (attached).

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

20/5/2000

B T Burton Head of Adjutant General Secretariat Ministry of Defence Building
398 Trenchard Lines Upavon Pewsey Wiltshire SN9 6BE BY FAX & POST

Dear Sir,

I understand that this week a large number of soldiers, members of the 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards, have been discharged after being tested positive for drugs. I understand a similar large number of another regiment may also be discharged.

Whilst we welcome the fact that the British army adopts a tough (zero-tolerance) policy on drugs, we are astounded at the continuing prevarication on other serious issues.

I refer specifically to the case of the murder of Peter McBride by two members of the

Scots Guards in 1992 and the fact that these two women were retained in the service after discharge from prison having been convicted and sentenced for the murder. (I am aware that this issue is under further review).

Off-duty drug taking is serious but pales into insignificance when compared to cold blooded murder.

Can you explain the apparent ambiguity in current MOD policy on these matters?

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt Secretary General

20/5/2000

=====

CHEMICAL DEATH FACTORY LIES

The British MOD are now known to have lied about chemical weapons disposal at their Nancekuke weapons plant. Can we accept that they were truthful about the chemical and explosives dumps which litter our coasts?

The British admission that they did indeed dispose of deadly chemical weapons by land burial at Nancekuke in Cornwall is an astonishing volte-face on their previous stance.

In 1991, in answer to questions from the Celtic League, the MOD (CBDE) said "No chemical warfare or toxic material was ever disposed of by burial at Nancekuke". In 1995 the MOD (CBDE) reiterated this saying "no chemical warfare material was disposed of by land burial".

It is now clear that large quantities of potentially deadly chemicals used in the manufacture of nerve gases and also explosive material was discarded. In some instances tipped into old mine workings. Environmental surveys are now under-way to determine the extent of any pollution.

However, the Nancekuke revelations have major implications for other areas of the British Isles.

When it became clear five years ago that large quantities of explosives and chemical weapons had been disposed off around the coasts of Britain and Ireland British assurances about the location and quantities of material dumped were accepted. The MOD revealed a staggering diversity of dump sites. Some such as those at Beauforts Dyke (off Belfast Loch), Loch Linnhe (Scotland) and Milford Haven (Wales) are in sight of land. Others such as those in the Atlantic off the north-east of Ireland are further off shore but straddle important fishing grounds.

It is now clear that the British government and specifically the MOD have been prepared to lie to conceal the true facts about their chemical warfare legacy. Is it safe

therefore to accept assurances about the nature and extent of the dumps and their contents

J B Moffatt Secretary General

21/5/2000

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CAMPAIGN TO SITE LANGUAGE BODY IN WEST BELFAST

The Belfast based Irish language newspaper Lá has initiated a campaign to ensure that the Northern Ireland headquarters of the new cross-border language body, An Foras Teanga, is based in West Belfast.

The Celtic League supports this campaign and all branches of the League will be asked to communicate their support. A petition has been launched by the paper and this will be presented to Irish Minister of State Eamon O Cuiv and his northern counterpart Michael McGimpsey.

Individual League members are also being urged to express support by contact Lá at the address below:

301 Bóthar na Ghleanna, Béal Feirste, Fon: 01232 501111, Facs: 01232 501112

An e-mail petition is also under-way and this can be supported by contacting the e-mail editor Eoghan O'Neill on eoghan@nuacht.com

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

A translated text of the Lá editorial is set out below. The Irish language version of the front-page opinion can be read at: www.nuacht.com

"Next week, the cross-border language body, An Foras Teanga, will discuss proposals before it about the location of its new Northern Ireland offices.

Let there be no beating about the bush: The Northern offices of the Body should go to West Belfast, that vibrant district where Irish is widely spoken.

The Body is already planning to locate its offices in Belfast but a decision should be taken to place the initiative at the heart of the area already known as the Irish language capital of Ireland.

The Language Body should be active among that pioneering community which has ensured Irish lives.

In that way, the Foras would be at the heart of the language revival and not looking down at it.

The Foras has a role to play in the regeneration of the North. Indeed, that is the very basis of the body.

If it operates as a part of the Irish language cluster in West Belfast, it will add to the dynamism and energy of the language groups and Irish language community of the area.

Imagine the power of an Irish language cluster which would boast the Cross-Border body as well as the head offices of Glór na nGael, Cultúrlann McAdam-O Fiaich, Ionad Uíbh Eachach and Gaelscoil na bhFál, the new Telecottage, An Teidealann, Meánscoil Feirste, the Irish language unit of the Queen's University at St Mary's College and much, much more.

The location of the Foras in this area would send out the signal to the Irish school parents and to Irish activists that the Body supports the work they are doing and is proud of their efforts.

The Foras will also be saying that West Belfast is a great area where the community has kept the language alive despite years of discrimination and neglect. That is a crucial message when so many of the suits at Stormont cling to the old agenda.

The rivers and loughs' commission will go to Derry, the cross-border tourism body to Coleraine, the cross-border enterprise body to Newry and Armagh will host meetings of the Inter-governmental body. It's only sensible then that the Language Body should be based in the area where Irish is strongest.

There are reports that the Body may be located in South Belfast. That would be a shameful blow to the Irish-speaking community of West Belfast.

Though the South Belfast 'ghetto' is well known for the fortunes made there during the worst years of the Troubles, it will not go down in history as an area which cherished the Irish language.

It must be admitted that 'nice' people live there, people who have little in common with the 'natives' of Ballymurphy or Andersonstown. That's why the area received only buttons from the old Stormont.

But times are changing. This is the time for the two putative ministers Michael McGimpsey and Eamon O Cuiv to make a decision, which would give recognition to the long hard struggle of the Irish language community. They should insist that the Northern offices of the Foras go to West Belfast.

Let the future begin today"

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NEW CALL TO NAME "DIRTY CASH" BANKS

A man, ostensibly with an income of £60 per week social welfare benefits, deposited

more than £600,000 sterling in a Vienna bank. The tortuous process for the transfer of the monies included accounts in the Isle of Man.

Kevin Meehan was found guilty, by the Irish Special Criminal Court, of six charges of money laundering connected with criminal activity. Interestingly, Meehan is the father of Brian Meehan who is serving a life sentence for the murder of campaigning Dublin journalist Veronica Guerin in 1996.

Veronica Guerin campaigned ceaselessly to expose the Dublin underworld and its drugs Mafia and paid for it with her life.

At the time of her death the Celtic League wrote to the Irish (The Minister for Justice and the Garda Commissioner) and British (the Home Secretary) authorities urging action to clamp down on the Financial Services Centres such as those in Dublin, the Isle of Man and the Channel Isles. We said they provided a conduit for vicious and evil people to conceal and launder the income they generated from their criminal Empires. We also re-iterated our belief that the banks that handled this business should be named and shamed.

Although some banks in Ireland involved in shady transactions in recent years have been identified a cloak of secrecy still hangs over off-shore operations. Beneath that "cloak" corrupt public servants such as former Dublin Council official George Redmond (arrested as he arrived in Dublin on a flight from the Isle of Man with £300,000) were able to hide their spoils. But more insidiously criminal elements such as the Meehan family were and still are able to launder the profits from their evil empires.

How many more of these rotten accounts provide bolt holes for criminals whilst Manx Politicians and Bankers (and their counterparts in other jurisdictions) look the other way?

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

23/5/2000

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CELTIC CULTURAL BODY MEETS

The International Celtic Congress has been staged at Bude in Cornwall

About 70 delegates attended this year's congress. The Celtic Congress promotes the ideals, cultures and language of the Celtic people and includes delegates from Ireland, Scotland, the Isle of Man, Brittany and Cornwall. Unlike the Celtic League the Congress eschews a political agenda.

During the week, two new honorary bards were welcomed to the Gorsedd - Dr. Brian Stowell, from the Isle of Man, and Dr. Erwen Price, from Wales.

The conference also considered and adopted three resolutions which called on the International Celtic Congress Committee to:

- a) use more pressure on governments, councils etc. to make sure Cornish matters are taken more seriously;
- b) investigate the possible appointment of a full-time paid secretary for the congress;
- c) urge the Microsoft Corporation to produce software in Celtic languages.

Like the Celtic League the Congress holds rotational meetings, on an annual basis, in each of the Celtic countries. Next year, in July, it will be the turn of Brittany to stage the event.

Bernard Moffatt

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"NAME AND SHAME" POLICY ON MONEY LAUNDERING URGED

The Celtic League have written to the British and Irish government urging that action is taken to "name and shame" banks involved in money laundering.

It follows the conviction of two Dublin underworld figures for money laundering. Kevin Meehan (61), of Kimmage, Dublin, was convicted this week of handling bank drafts totalling £92,351.17 sterling, £4,500 in cash and a cheque for £4,000, knowing that the money was the proceeds of criminal activity which took place in 1995 and 1996. His brother, Thomas Meehan, of Ballymount, Dublin, had pleaded guilty to a number of money-laundering offences. He admitted handling sterling bank drafts with a total value of £148,386.34 in 1996, knowing that the money was the proceeds of drug-trafficking or other criminal activity. He also pleaded guilty to handling cash and bank drafts also in 1996, worth a total of £145,167 in punts and sterling knowing that the money was the proceeds of criminal activity.

The court was also told that one of the men, Thomas Meehan, had opened a bank account in the Isle of Man which was used as a "stepping stone" to accounts in Vienna which were controlled by Brian Meehan, the murderer of Veronica Guerin.

The Celtic League has repeatedly called for more adequate scrutiny of accounts in the off-shore financial services centres and has expressed a particular concern about the use that criminal elements in Ireland including paramilitary's might make of accounts in the Isle of Man and Channel Isles.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

26/5/2000

Text of letter to Irish Government below. Similar correspondence sent to the British Home Secretary who has a responsibility for the Isle of Man and Channel Isles dependencies.

The Minister for Justice

Mr. John O'Donoghue

Department of Justice

72-76 St. Stephens Green

Dublin 2

Ireland

Dear Sir,

I refer you to the attached correspondence to your predecessor and to the British government in 1996. In it we expressed a concern about the use of financial services centres by criminal elements to launder the profits from drug-related crime. (You will recall that we also wrote to you on the 4/9/98 receiving a reply dated 12/10/98). We also referred to the decision to toughen up legislation in both jurisdictions following the murder of campaigning journalist Veronica Guerin, who had exposed the activities of figures in the Dublin and International drugs underworld.

Recently the father and uncle of a man serving a life sentence for Veronica Guerin's murder was convicted, by a Dublin Court, on money laundering charges. It is clear that they used the off-shore dependencies in an attempt to conceal and move illicit monies. The court was also told that one of the men, Thomas Meehan, had opened a bank account in the Isle of Man which was used as a "stepping stone" to accounts in Vienna which were controlled by Brian Meehan, the murderer of Veronica Guerin.

What continues to disturb us is that Banks associated with this, and other money laundering activity, are not named and thereby exposed to public scrutiny. Please note the attached cutting which refers to our campaign for over a decade to have such a "name and shame" policy adopted.

We urge that you take action to end any anonymity for those banks and institutions associated with money-laundering. To that end, as a considerable amount of this dishonest business is carried on via British Crown dependencies, will you raise this issue with the British government?

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

Secretary General, Celtic League

26/5/2000

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DELAY OVER "AMBER ROSE" REPORT IS A SCANDAL

The Celtic League believe more money and resources should be made available so that sea tragedies can be analysed and acted on more swiftly. Delays in learning why a vessel founders can cause further loss of life.

The news that the report into the sinking of the Northern Ireland Motor Fishing Vessel (MFV) Amber Rose is to be further delayed must cause distress to the family of the Skipper of the vessel, Thomas Hughes who was drowned when the fishing boat sank suddenly off the south east of the Isle of Man in October 1998. They, above all others, desperately need to know the circumstances surrounding the loss and yet almost two years will have elapsed before the final conclusions are published. This is a scandal!

It raises general concerns about the speed with which the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB) is able to deal with these matters. In February of this year our statement that "MAIB enquiries seem unduly protracted, notwithstanding the complex nature of some of the investigations" prompted a quick response from the MAIB head, Rear Admiral J. S. Lang. We were specifically citing the example of the MFV Amber Rose and despite Rr. Adm. Lang's rebuttal of our concerns this latest unexplained delay does seem to bear out our concerns.

The MAIB took over the functions of the former investigative agency, the Marine Directorate of the Department of Transport. The Marine Directorate itself attracted criticism because of the delays and bureaucracy which surrounded its deliberations. However, reports were produced with conclusions, generally within a twelve month period.

There is of course a critical reason why the analysis of these accidents should be expedited. In many instances lessons are learned from the loss of a vessel which can be utilised to improve safety and therefore possibly save other fishermen's lives. The British system of investigating these matters seems protracted and bureaucratic. If it is a question of money or resources these should be made available to the MAIB by the government. The bereaved families of mariners and the industry itself deserve better!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

26/5/2000

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NUKE COMMUNICATIONS BASE DAMAGED

Mystery surrounds damage caused at a top-secret nuclear communications site on the Welsh/English border at Criggion.

An enquiry is under way after part of the aerial complex at the site, which is reputedly used for communications with the British Trident nuclear submarine force, came down on land near Criggion Quarry. The local media have reported that police sealed off all the roads around the area after the incident on Sunday May 14. However since then police have been tight lipped about the incident.

Criggion is a Very Low Frequency (VLF) transmitter and the facility was originally set up during World War 2 to facilitate direct radiocommunications between the UK and United States. British Telecom (BT), the site operators, describe the site as an installation "which is part of the BT. network which sends out information to a dedicated customer". No one is in any doubt that the "customer" is the MOD.

If it is the work of anti-nuclear saboteurs it will create a major headache for the MOD, more used to dealing with more public protests at major nuclear weapons sites such as Faslane. Places like Criggion, and the other Trident communications bases, are sited in areas much more difficult to regulate. They are vital to communications with the British ballistic missile submarine force.

The peace movement was boosted by last October's ruling, by a Scottish Court, that three women who did £80,000 of damage at the Trident nuclear base at Faslane were not guilty of any crime. The court accepted defence arguments that as the nuclear weapons programme is illegal under International Law they had committed no crime.

Criggion VLF site, and the other radio communications sites which complement it, are used to sustain the British military's potential for response using weapons of mass destruction. As such they are an affront to the International community and direct action against them is more than justified!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

27/5/2000

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Date: Mon May 29, 2000 1:02pm

Subject: CHINOOK OPERATED WITH DEFECTS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CHINOOK OPERATED FOR SIX MONTHS WITH KNOWN DEFECT

In February this year the Celtic League highlighted the fact that the MOD were continuing to operate Lynx helicopters, despite a known defect. Last month, after a number of incidents with the type operating in Ulster, they were grounded for repair.

We can reveal that this is not the first time that the lives of aircrew and others in areas over which the MOD carry out helicopter operations have been put at risk. One of the largest machines in the RAF inventory, and a familiar sight to people in Ulster, is the twin rotor Chinook helicopters. Last year, in a little publicised move (in August), all Chinook's were grounded for urgent gear assembly maintenance. The entire US Army fleet were grounded at the same time. However, we can divulge that the defect was identified at an RAF maintenance centre, over six months earlier, in February of 1999. Despite the discovery the machines continued in operation.

It is not the first occasion that the Chinook has continued to operate with known defects. In December 1994, the Department of Defense inspector general issued a "Notification of Defective Transmission Gears" concerning the CH-47D. The notification advised military and civilian authorities to take "any action deemed appropriate."

Asked what action was taken in response to the notification, the US Army said in a written response to the US media, "The U.S. Army continued to fly the CH-47s." The notification, the Army said, was eventually withdrawn.

RAF Chinook operations remain mired in controversy with the relatives of those who died in the Kintyre incident in 1994 unhappy with the official view that the crash was due to pilot error.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

29/5/2000

Newslist Messages for June 2000

LONDON BOMB PRODUCT OF BRITISH PREVARICATION

There seems little doubt that the bomb attack in London, earlier today (1/6/00), is connected to a Republican group committed to continuing the 'armed struggle'.

There have, since the general IRA ceasefire, been a number of incidents in Ireland but to date attempts to export that violence to Britain have been frustrated. This new development, coupled with the fact that no warning was given, must be worrying to the British anti-terrorist authorities whose previous success against the IRA was generally based on luck rather than judgement.

There will no doubt be the usual round of empty condemnations of the attack. However, analysis of the situation since the IRA cease fire indicates that the British government in particular, via its prevarication and continued willingness to accede to Unionist blackmail, has created a situation in which there is a drift back to 'armed struggle' by those who originally forswore it. Irish media reports for many months have indicated this. Obviously, no one in Downing street was listening.

This continuing, though spluttering, campaign of armed action could have been

avoided had the British moved more swiftly on de-commissioning of its troops bases in Ireland and also embraced without prevarication the 'Patten' proposals for reform of the RUC. Instead we still have a substantial presence by the British Army in areas which must be the natural recruiting ground for those suspicious of British intentions. Meanwhile, 'Patten' because of Mandelson's meddling has been seriously undermined.

The bomb attack at Hammersmith Bridge, in which a small device attached to a girder on the south side of the bridge exploded just hours before one of Sinn Fein's senior figures was due to arrive in London, is a warning that within the context of the peace process meaningful progress on demilitarisation must take place.

There will be no Irish bombs in London when there are no British Troops in Ireland!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

1/6/00

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Date: Thu Jun 1, 2000 6:22am

Subject: DAFYDD WIGLEY

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DAFYDD WIGLEY HAS MADE HIS MARK ON THE INTER-CELTIC SCENE

Dafydd Wigley, as well as being committed to Wales, has been a good friend of the inter-Celtic movement. His help, particularly in campaigns such as that aimed at finding out the truth about the loss of the Aer Lingus airliner near Aberporth range, has been invaluable.

Dafydd Wigley, who has announced his decision to stand down as leader of Plaid Cymru, had succeeded in recent years in transforming the fortunes of that Party to the extent that it has rattled the traditional stranglehold that the Labour Party had in parts of Wales.

It is a measure of the man that his decision was greeted with concern within his own Party. They will struggle to find someone immediately to replace his talents. Paradoxically Labour, traditional political enemies of the Welsh nationalists, were boosted by the news.

Wigley however knows that he will stand down at a time when the Party's fortunes were never better and the transition to a new leader can be accommodated. It is also unlikely that any new face at the top will disregard the advice offered in the transitional period by Dafydd Wigley.

Dafydd, as well as being committed to Wales has been a good friend of the inter-Celtic

movement. Over the years he has repeatedly acted on requests for support from the Celtic League, particularly in respect of tabling questions in the House of Commons. Issues he has assisted us with include questions over low flying and other military related matters and more recently he channelled queries from us about the fate of the Chair of Celtic at Humboldt University. For over a decade he has also assisted our enquiries into the Aer Lingus airliner, lost in 1968 near the Aberporth range. Its fate is still the subject of speculation and suspicion. Indeed, it was Wigley's incisive questioning of Junior Transport Minister Glenda Jackson that revealed that the DETR had destroyed (in 1994) the Air Accident report prepared by Britain at a time when questions were once again being raised about the issue.

Dafydd also led moves to build a bridge between the nationalist movements in Scotland and Wales at the time of devolution. A dynamic leader of his party he has also stamped his mark on the wider Celtic political scene.

A strong contender to succeed Dafydd as President of Plaid Cymru will be Ieuan Wyn Jones. Ieuan, member of parliament for Ynys Mon (Anglesey), is also no stranger to the inter-Celtic scene. In February last year he addressed a meeting organised by the Celtic League/Celtic Students Alliance at Trinity College Dublin on "The Challenge of the Assembly for Wales". He described the establishment of the Welsh Assembly as having given Wales "a new image" which had reinforced the sense of identity of the Welsh people. He may now get the opportunity to lead the Welsh towards greater change aimed at equalising the devolved powers in Scotland and Wales.

Despite the barely concealed delight of the Welsh Labour Party over changes to the leadership of Plaid Cymru their euphoria is likely to be short-lived. The very fact that a change of leader in Plaid Cymru means so much to their fortunes is a further indicator of how far the Labour Party's fortunes have slumped.

Plaid Cymru is setting the agenda for Wales (as their counterparts the SNP are doing in Scotland). That bandwagon will take some derailing.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

1/6/00

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Date: Fri Jun 2, 2000 1:18am

Subject: PRISONERS RIGHTS TRAMPLED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

RIGHTS TRAMPLED FOR POLITICAL OR PRACTICAL EXPEDIENCY

Five years ago, in the preface to our pamphlet "Human rights on the Celtic Fringe", we argued that whilst individual and collective rights in the Celtic countries are notionally

protected via International treaty the rights of individuals were still likely to be trampled on for political or practical expediency.

The Isle of Man is about to embrace new Human Rights safeguards and yet this week in the case of convicted prisoner Stephen Galloway the State showed itself willing to trample on those rights. The Courts which should provide protection in such circumstances endorsed this action.

Galloway's situation is straightforward. There is no need to cite this or that convention of the European Convention of Human Rights. He is quite simply being discriminated against. You do not have to be a Lawyer or a learned Deemster (Manx High Court Judge) to establish that. Galloway, unless an appeal is successful will be transferred to serve his time with thousands of prisoners who cannot be treated as he has been! The Statement of Purposes and Values that the Isle of Man Prison say they adhere to sets out their opposition to discrimination as a Principal.

The Manx government has a problem, in that the rotten and overcrowded jail we have has been condemned internationally, to ease this problem prisoners need to be transferred. If necessary the transfer is by forced relocation and it is in this that the discrimination is inherent.

Ironically, the Deemster who heard his case, is likely to be one of those whose principal role will be to interpret the new European Human Rights law. If this is the case then, despite some recent "training" in human rights law, he appears to have failed the first test.

There will of course be little sympathy for Stephen Galloway within the Isle of Man. The attitude of many people towards convicted offenders is one of "lock them up and throw away the key". However this is all the more reason that the rights of those in custody should be vigorously defended.

Earlier this week the Manx Home Affairs Minister, Alan Bell, set out publicly the difficulties that would occur if the judgement went against the Department. It beggars belief that the Minister's comments in a community as small as this were not noted by the Deemster. If this is the case then was his judgement influenced?

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

29/5/2000

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Date: Sun Jun 11, 2000 9:42am

Subject: WYLFA NUCLEAR PLANT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ALARMING FREQUENCY OF SHUTDOWNS AT WYLFA

HSE reveal thirty unplanned reactor shutdowns in ten years

Periodic shutdowns have plagued the Wylfa nuclear power station on Anglesey which is currently closed down again following problems with both its Reactors.

Information, supplied by the British HSE to the Celtic League, indicates that the station has suffered unplanned shutdowns on 30 occasions over the past decade.

Reactor one has been closed down on 13 occasions and Reactor two on 17 occasions. This excludes planned maintenance shutdowns.

Recently the stations operators BNFL indicated their intention to continue operating the station for another twenty years, with a projected closure date in 2021.

The Celtic League, along with other campaigning groups, believe that the UK's Magnox stations including Wylfa should all be more speedily closed. Recently the Irish government added its voice to the campaign. Enterprise Minister Joe Jacob assured the Celtic League that "incidents such as those at Wylfa serve to reinforce my concerns about the safety of these Magnox reactors and my determination to have them closed down." A major malfunction at the plant would of course pose a major threat and civil defence nightmare for the population of eastern Ireland and the Irish sea area.

The frequency of the unplanned shutdowns revealed by the HSE is added cause for concern.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

11/6/00

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Date: Sun Jun 11, 2000 0:12pm

Subject: DRUGS TROOPS GET MARCHING ORDERS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DRUGS TROOPS GET MARCHING ORDERS

In the past month the Army has kicked out twenty soldiers for drug taking. We ask how widespread is the problem and what are its implications for operational deployment such as in N. Ireland?

Last week another 13 British army soldiers were given their marching orders for drugs offences. Their dismissal, which can be the subject of appeal, comes hard on the heels of last month's discharge of seven members of a Welsh regiment. On that occasion we contrasted the British Army's apparent "tough" policy on drugs with the inertia over determining the future of the two Scots guardsmen who murdered Belfast man Peter McBride

The latest drug clear-out seems to indicate a serious level of drug addiction within the armed forces, which the military are serious about tackling. However, the situation is not new. In 1994 a confidential report on drug taking at the RAF base at Odiham in the mid-eighties was exposed. Odiham was home to the RAF Chinook helicopter fleet which at the time detached units for service in N. Ireland and for general duties around the UK. The report revealed that 19 servicemen were found to be in possession of drugs following a "bust" at the base.

Following those revelations we wrote, in November 1994, to Army HQ in N. Ireland and asked did the "Joint Services Theatre Flight Safety Committee consider its implications and introduce any general monitoring of AAC and RAF helicopter flight crews and maintenance staff for possible drug abuse". Headquarters Northern Ireland were unable to comment at the time but the MOD, to whom the correspondence was forwarded, dismissed the report as "nine years old" saying it had no relevance to current operations. Pointedly however, the MOD avoided our question about general monitoring simply saying it was "constantly reviewing its programme on education".

Fifteen years after the Odiham scandal, which was paralleled at the time by other major drugs busts, it appears that the Services drugs education programme is a failure. It begs the question as to what level of drug addiction permeates the Services presently operational in N. Ireland?

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

11/6/2000

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Date: Sun Jun 11, 2000 0:56pm

Subject: ERIKA OIL SPILL WILDLIFE APPEAL
CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS
INFORMATION

The following appeal is taken from the current issue of the Celtic League Journal
CARN

BRETAGNE VIVANTE ERIKA OIL SPILL WILDLIFE APPEAL

Following the Erika oil spill disaster Bretagne Vivante have set up an organisation to help save the birds and to protect the environment in the affected area.

Many members of the group work hard to rescue the birds, take care of them and let them go free.

The group is appealing for financial aid to help the birds to survive. Please send your contributions to:

Bretagne Vivante - SEPNEB, 180 rue Anatole. France, BP 32, 29276, BREST Cedex, Breizh/Brittany, France.

This appeal was published in the current issue of CARN the magazine of the Celtic League. For subscription details for CARN contact the Editor:

Patricia Bridson, 33 Céide na Grianóige, Ráth Cúil, Co. Átha Cliath, Éire

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Date: Sun Jun 11, 2000 0:56pm

Subject: NEW MINORITY LANGUAGES WEBSITE

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

NEW LANGUAGES WEBSITE

In early February a new website, based in Brussels, giving information on the lesser-used languages in Europe opened. The address is:

<http://www.eurolang.net>

The service was established by the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages with the support of the European Commission. It provides, in English, up to date news on a range of issues affecting minority language speakers. Head of the service is John Walsh, previously news editor with TG4 in Ireland. The service will be free for two years

This article was published in the current issue of CARN the magazine of the Celtic League. Unfortunately the URL given was incorrect please note the amendment. For subscription details for CARN contact the Editor:

Patricia Bridson, 33 Céide na Grianóige, Ráth Cúil, Co. Átha Cliath, Éire

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Date: Sun Jun 11, 2000 0:56pm

Subject: BBC FEAR DRAGON

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

BBC FEAR DRAGON

The BBC in London have asked BBC Wales to remove the dragon logo which appears at the start of BBC Wales's television news. London believes it is too nationalistic.

Reacting with surprise BBC Wales have said that they would give no commitment to remove logo, though such designs are periodically changed.

The request is part of a xenophobic response in England towards what are seen as over-enthusiastic displays of Welsh or Scottish nationality. Such reactions have become more common since the granting of devolution to Cymru and Alba which seems to have caused something of an identity problem amongst some of the English.

This article was published in the current issue of CARN the magazine of the Celtic League. For subscription details for CARN contact the Editor:

Patricia Bridson, 33 Céide na Grianóige, Ráth Cúil, Co. Átha Cliath, Éire

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Date: Mon Jun 19, 2000 0:38am

Subject: PRESS INFORMATION

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

NEW OPPOSITION TO SELLAFIELD POLLUTION

The Manx parliament (The Tynwald Court) will hear a resolution next week calling for support and co-operation for calls by Ireland and Denmark to suspend or cease the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. The initiative by a Manx back bench MHK (MP), Brenda Cannell, will put pressure on the Isle of Man government to further develop an independent line over opposition to the nuclear plant. Support for the move would also embarrass the British government which claims the constitutional right to act for the Island on International Treaties and Conventions.

Throughout recent years agencies in Ireland and the Isle of Man have plotted levels of radioactive pollution including new dangers such as the detection in the past decade of technetium-99 pollution in shellfish which are being carefully monitored.

Additionally, three years ago research in the UK produced the worrying statistic that the closer children lived to Sellafield the higher the concentration of plutonium found in their teeth and a fierce debate has raged about the incidence of leukaemia caused in children who live in coastal areas near to nuclear plants. The uncertainties make it vital that a broad coalition of groups keep up the pressure.

Environmental groups, such as the Celtic League, who have campaigned for closure believe that a clear vote of censure, at the Ospar meeting, of the British government's re-processing operation could spell the death knell for Sellafield and de-rail attempts to privatise the accident-prone plant.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

18/6/00

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CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

NEW ARMY DRUGS SCANDAL

'clear-out seems to indicate drug addiction within the armed forces, is approaching crisis proportions'.

More British army soldiers are being given their marching orders last week for drugs offences. Their dismissal, can be the subject of appeal but an Army spokesman has said that only in "extremely exceptional circumstances" will they stay in uniform. The latest revelation comes hard on the heels of recent discharge of members of Welsh and Scottish regiment. On this occasion the culprits are members of the Kings Regiment which recruits in the north west of England and the Isle of Man.

The further drugs clear-out seems to indicate drug addiction within the armed forces, is approaching crisis proportions. However, we revealed last week that the situation is not new. In 1994 a leaked confidential report revealed drug taking at the RAF base at Odiham in the mid-eighties. Odiham was home to the RAF Chinook helicopter fleet which at the time detached units for service in N. Ireland.

The latest clear-out also has a connection to Ulster. It is understood some of the men involved were serving in Northern Ireland when the test results came through and are being sent home.

Five years ago the MOD assured the Celtic League it was "constantly reviewing its programme on (drugs abuse) education". Obviously the education programme is not working with nearly 30 troops given their marching orders in the past four weeks!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

18/6/2000

Date: Sun Jun 25, 2000 10:26pm

Subject: NEW MANX GOVERNOR SAUDI LINKS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

NEW MANX LT. GOVERNOR - THE SAUDI CONNECTION

It was interesting to read that part of the background of the new Isle of Man Lt.

Governor included service in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1994-98) supporting the lucrative Defence contracts that the United Kingdom has struck in recent years. The Saudi Government is not exactly in the forefront of democracy, tolerance and human rights. The extracts below are taken from the current US State Department assessment of Human Rights in the Kingdom.

Air Vice Marshal Macfadyen clinched the Governorship of the Isle of Man after being short-listed with a former Manx High Court Judge (Deemster). One contender therefore has spent the past few years working for the principles of law and justice, whilst the other has spent the past few years working with people whose respect for justice and human rights is, on the basis of the US government's assessment, somewhat questionable.

As far as the Celtic League is concerned the position of Governor is an irrelevant feudal anachronism. Ironically, AVM Macfadyen's recent spell in Saudi Arabia was in the service of one of the world's most despotic feudal systems.

The Air Vice Marshal was appointed this week and will succeed the current Lt. Governor Sir Timothy Daunt KCMG in the Autumn.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

(attached)

1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

U.S. Department of State, February 25, 2000

SAUDI ARABIA

"The Government commits and tolerates serious human rights abuses. Citizens have neither the right nor the legal means to change their government. Security forces continued to abuse detainees and prisoners, arbitrarily arrest and detain persons, and facilitate incommunicado detention; in addition there were allegations that security forces committed torture".

"The Government prohibits or restricts freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, religion, and movement. Other continuing problems included discrimination and violence against women, discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities, and strict limitations on worker rights".

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Date: Mon Jun 26, 2000 2:01am

Subject: HUMBOLDT FUNDING BREAKTHROUGH

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BREAKTHROUGH IN CAMPAIGN TO SAVE CHAIR OF CELTIC STUDIES

The campaign to retain the Chair of Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin has received a tremendous boost with a commitment by the Irish government of substantial funds to support the project.

The Irish authorities have officially confirmed a commitment to provide IR£45,000 per year for a four year period. However, this is simply an initial offer of support under maximum permissible budgetary regulations and the Irish authorities have confirmed their understanding that the Humboldt project will be for a minimum of ten years.

The grant is conditional on at least one other Celtic country matching the Irish offer and formal approaches will be made, by the University, to other administrations. At least one other Celtic country has indicated that it will consider seriously any formal approach and there is therefore optimism that the Celtic Department will continue.

The Irish proposal which is in two components consists of IR£20,000 per year (From the Dept. of Foreign Affairs Cultural Relations Committee) to fund an Irish language teacher plus IR£25,000 per year general funding from the Department of Arts Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Ironically the lifeline to this unique centre of Celtology comes on the centenary of Celtic Studies at Humboldt.

The Celtic League have campaigned vigorously on this issue and will continue until the Chair of Celtic is fully secured. At the inception of our campaign it was in most quarters assumed that the closure decision was irreversible. The future is now much brighter.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

26/6/00

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Date: Mon Jun 26, 2000 2:05am

Subject: FORCED LANDING IN SOUTH ARMAGH

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

MORE PROBLEMS FOR OBSOLETE 'CHOPPERS'

Another forced landing by an Army Lynx helicopter highlights the continuing danger posed by machines which are obsolete and defective. The ratio of maintenance hours to flying time for these 'geriatric' helicopters must be staggering!

In February the Celtic League wrote to the Defence Secretary asking him to review operations by an Army helicopter with an identified defect. The type involved the Lynx helicopter has been involved in two fatal crashes and innumerable forced landings over the past two years and following an incident at Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia, in Dec. 1998 a defective part in the tail rotor drive was identified. This was to be replaced on a phased basis over two years.

However, the League suggested in correspondence, in February, to Defence Secretary Geoff. Hoon two months ago that the decision carried potential risk. The MOD initially evaded the issue but subsequently following a further spate of incidents on both British and Dutch military Lynx helicopters a substantial number were grounded for urgent repair

Now a further forced landing has occurred, in South Armagh, and quite frankly it seems inevitable that if operations by the type are not radically reviewed a serious accidents is inevitable. Many service personnel have been killed or seriously injured in accidents involving the type and, as it clatters in and out of hamlets and farmsteads in the border area, it poses a substantial danger to the public.

Question-marks also surround the operation of other types used extensively in the Province such as the Puma. This type also elderly is being operated well past its sell-by date. Two months ago there was a serious crash in the UK near Catterick when one of the machines lost power and crashed injuring a dozen troops on board. Scores of incidents involving the RAF and Army helicopter fleet have been concealed over the years by a system which 'gerry-manders' the publication of information. The ratio of maintenance hours to flying time for these geriatric helicopters must be staggering perhaps understandably the MOD have released no detail!

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League 26/6/00

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Date: Mon Jun 26, 2000 2:16am

Subject: MORE DRUGS TROOPS SACKED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

NEW ARMY DRUGS SCANDAL Further regiments follow Welsh in clear-out that seems to indicate drug addiction within the armed forces, is approaching crisis proportions.

More British army soldiers are being given their marching orders last week for drugs

offences. The current round of dismissals started with the discharge of seven members of a Welsh regiment. On that occasion we contrasted the British Army's apparent "tough" policy on drugs with the inertia over determining the future of the two Scots guardsmen who murdered Belfast man Peter McBride. Their dismissal, can be the subject of appeal but an Army spokesman has said that only in "extremely exceptional circumstances" will they stay in uniform. The latest revelation comes hard on the heels of recent discharge of members of both Welsh and Scottish regiment. On this occasion the culprits are members of the Kings Regiment which recruits in the north west of England and the Isle of Man. The further drugs clear-out seems to indicate drug addiction within the armed forces, is approaching crisis proportions. However, we revealed last week that the situation is not new. In 1994 a leaked confidential report revealed drug taking at the RAF base at Odiham in the mid-eighties. Odiham was home to the RAF Chinook helicopter fleet which at the time detached units for service in N. Ireland. The latest clear-out also has a connection to Ulster. It is understood some of the men involved were serving in Northern Ireland when the test results came through and are being sent home. Five years ago the MOD assured the Celtic League it was "constantly reviewing its programme on (drugs abuse) education". Obviously the education programme is not working with nearly 30 troops given their marching orders in the past four weeks!

J B Moffatt Secretary General

19/6/2000

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KINTYRE CRASH 'CHOPPER' MAY EVADE SAFETY SPOTLIGHT IN PRE-TRIAL DEAL

A court case concerning the reliability of transmission gears fitted to the Chinook military helicopter due to go to trial last week in the United States has been deferred pending moves to settle the case out of court. The action would have focused attention once again on the safety of the type in which 29 people died at Kintyre in June 1994. It was to be alleged that for several years, Boeing Co. knew one of its subcontractors was supplying the Army with faulty gears for remanufactured Chinook CH-47D helicopters. A type similar to the RAF model. It was to be alleged that this led to a series of crashes. In February the US army temporarily grounded Chinooks pending removal of faulty transmission gears from the twin rotor helicopters. The move was interpreted as likely to be helpful to the case against Boeing brought by Brett Roby, a former quality inspector for Boeing supplier Speco, a company that has since gone into liquidation. The move came six months after a similar scare, in August 1999, that grounded Chinooks world wide including the RAF fleet. Two weeks ago we divulged that the defect was identified at an RAF maintenance centre (In Scotland), over six months earlier, in February 1999. Despite this the RAF machines continued in operation. Roby's case, was filed in 1995 and joined in 1997 by the US Justice Department. At the time US Attorney Dale Ann Goldberg, of Columbus Ohio, said: "To protect the lives and safety of our soldiers, we must be particularly vigilant in ensuring that the critical parts used in military aircraft meet the required specifications." A Boeing representative was quoted earlier this month as saying "The

schedule of pre-trial proceedings and the agreed scheduled trial have been vacated due to tentative agreements with respect to settlement". The Justice Department also confirmed the settlement talks. Obviously, the RAF and MOD will be equally anxious that any well publicised case over Chinook safety is avoided by a pre-trial deal so as not to focus attention once again on the Kintyre cover-up.

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Date: Mon Jun 26, 2000 2:58am

Subject: COMMUNITY OPPOSITION TO TRANSMITTER

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

"COMMUNITY" AND THE VIEWS OF THE COMMUNITY STILL MATTER IN THE ISLE OF MAN

The Celtic League has re-iterated its support for the fight by Bride Commissioners to block construction of a controversial radio station on the northern plain (see attached). It has also praised the tiny authorities working in recent years in monitoring development at the Ayres including the controversial landfill site. The League believe that despite all the technical arguments and counterarguments the issue is straightforward. Should the views of a small community be overridden by commercial interests simply for gain? The League say that "planning Inspectors from the UK should by now be aware that "community" and the views of the community are something that still matter in the Isle of Man.". They cite the numerous battles that local authorities throughout the Island have fought in recent years to protect the environment whilst central government looked the other way. They ask "why should a community have planted within it a commercial operation which is unsettling and indeed alarming to that community?" The League also emphasises that the planning enquiry is only the first step. If Central government via DOLGE try to impose development, as a result of any flawed judgement by the enquiry, against the wishes of the community the campaign will be directed at governments record in failing to protect the Island against despoliation in recent years.

J B Moffatt Secretary General

22/6/00

Letter to Bride Commissioners:

Audrey Green
Clerk to Bride Parish Commissioners
Cronk Mayn Beg
Ramsey Isle of Man
IM8 3TA

22/6/00

Dear Ms. Green,

Ref. Planning Enquiry Cross Field Radio Antennae to be sited on the Northern Plain.

Thank you for your letter of the 12th inst. referring to the Planning Application for a radio station, to be sited at Bride, and the forthcoming Planning Inquiry. The Celtic League will not be submitting a detailed formal objection directly to the enquiry but would be grateful if the correspondence that you already have, dated 14/11/99 (attached), in which we outlined our reservations together with this letter could be included with the Commissioners bundle. Can I start by placing on record our appreciation to Bride Commissioners for the work that they have undertaken to date to scrutinise any development at the Ayres. Specifically, their ongoing monitoring of the landfill operation which takes place there. Bride is one of the smaller local authorities and yet in recent years it has had to deal with more than its fair share of problems in the National Interest of the Isle of Man. Its role in safeguarding this area, up to and including its forthright opposition to this latest assault on the Ayres, is often overlooked by the Manx public generally. The area, from the Bride hills north and west to the coast of the Ayres, is one of the most important natural areas of the Isle of Man. This fact is recognised by the establishment of an area of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) there. The Commissioners desire that this latest development should not go ahead is supported by a broad range of organisations and individuals throughout the Island. The obverse of this is that the only strong voices raised in support of the development are the developers themselves. Obviously their driving force is not an interest in the ecology and environment of that area but purely Commercial factors. The Isle of Man, at the present time, enjoys unprecedented prosperity and as such there is no National Commercial Interest which justifies the approval of this application. I feel sure that during the course of the planning enquiry all manner of detailed technical arguments will be advanced which seek to support or oppose this application. However the single and most salient point that the planning enquiry should consider is in our view straightforward.

The opposition of the local community, expressed via their elected representatives i.e. Bride Commissioners and the areas MHK and whether those views are counterbalanced by a National interest.

When the landfill operation was mooted there was a very definite National interest argument, which although some of us did not endorse it was cogent. There is no such argument in relation to the IBC plans to site a Cross Field Radio Antennae on the northern plain adjacent to an SSI. The installation, despite all the bluff and bluster of its proponents, is aesthetically unattractive. It is technologically unproven. The safety factors relating to its operation are at the present time are not verifiable. All these factors in themselves mitigate against the project but we would re-iterate that the issue is much more simple. Why should a community have planted within it a commercial operation which is unsettling and indeed alarming to that community? Planning Inspectors from the UK should by now be aware that "community" and the views of the community are something that still matter in the Isle of Man. The people of your Parish, via their Parish Board have expressed their opposition and in our view that opposition can only be countered by a National Interest argument which neither the developer and the Isle of Man government can provide. We are somewhat sceptical of the value of planning enquiries. In recent years many communities in the Island have had their views and feelings cast aside via such mechanisms. I will not list the local

authorities and community groups that have fought 'tooth and nail' in recent years to resist the despoliation of the Isle of Man for commercial self interest. We trust that the campaign of Bride Commissioners to protect the aesthetics and environment of the northern plain against this and any other ill-considered development is successful. Should this development receive the endorsement of a planning enquiry that will not be the end of the battle. The Minister for Local Government must, at the end of the process justify his endorsement of any approval. What would be the justification in this case? Despoliation of a unique natural area for gain and self interest.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

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Date: Mon Jun 26, 2000 9:10pm

Subject: HARVESTER SALVAGE EXPOSES SAFETY FAILURES

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SALVAGE EXPOSES FAILURE TO PROBE OTHER SINKINGS

The salvage of the Solway Harvester ensures the sea tragedy will get a scrutiny denied to other sinkings.

The Irish Sea is littered with the wrecks of vessels which sank, over the past twenty years, often in extremely suspicious circumstances. Many theories and explanations were advanced for the sinkings, submarines, fouled cables and overloaded nets were just some of the causes suggested. Many a loss could have been resolved by the simple expedient of lifting the wreck.

Another Kirkcudbright vessel, the Mhari L (1985 - 5 Crew all lost), disappeared suddenly in fine weather just south of the Solway Harvester site. Suspicious damage to the wreck recorded on video-tape led to calls for its salvage and examination, this was unheeded by the British government. In the same area no real search was ever made for the MFV South Stack (1984 - 3 Crew all lost), a Welsh vessel from Anglesey, that disappeared without trace. Further east a Belgian vessel, the Tijn Uilenspiegel (1989 - 5 Crew all lost), sank without warning. The wreck site was investigated but calls to raise the vessel were rejected. The French vessel the Cite D'Aleth (1983 - 10 Crew all lost) a powerful 120' boat got out a brief 'Mayday', again despite suspicious video evidence and family pleas, no attempt was made to recover the vessel.

This week a Belgian salvage vessel on charter to the Manx government has recovered the latest casualty. The families of those lost on the Solway Harvester and the community of Whithorn have suffered a grievous loss, but they have been able to bury their dead and in the next few weeks they will get to know with what caused this loss. It may not be much, but it is a small comfort.

If a tiny country like the Isle of Man can do the right thing, why could the governments of Britain, Belgium and France not have shown the same compassion?

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

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Date: Wed Jun 28, 2000 10:45am

Subject: RADIO STATION NAVIGATION FEARS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

RADIO STATION NAVIGATION FEARS - ANOTHER HAZARD TO
FISHERMEN & MARINERS

The Celtic League has written to the Irish government concerning plans to construct a powerful radio station on the north west coast of the Isle of Man.

The plan is opposed by local authorities and by environmental groups, such as the League, for environmental and aesthetic reasons. The station is to be sited adjacent to a designated area of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) and there are also fears about the untried nature of its technology.

However, the League point out, in correspondence to Minister of State Hugh Byrne at the Department of the Marine, that there are also real fears that the station's frequency and power will affect radio navigation systems for fishermen and mariners.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

28/6/00

Hugh Byrne TD

Minister of State

Department of the Marine

Leeson Lane

Dublin 2

Ireland

Dear Mr. Byrne,

I write with reference to plans to construct and licence a radio transmitting station on the north west coast of the Isle of Man.

The station which uses a comparatively untried technology (the so called crossed field antennae system) is scheduled to broadcast on the long wave frequency 279 kHz and will have considerable output as the signal is aimed to reach audiences throughout Europe.

I should make it clear that the Celtic League opposes the development on environmental and aesthetic grounds and supports the campaign of the Isle of Man local authority in the area, Bride Commissioners in its opposition. However, my reason for contacting you is to make your Department aware that a concern has also been raised viz a viz the implications of this station's interference with radio navigational aids important to shipping.

Whilst the company involved in the project disputes this view you will see from the attached that The Northern Lighthouse Board has indicated serious concern.

A planning enquiry is currently scheduled, on the Island, and your Department might like to consider any implications for the safety of Mariners and make appropriate reservations to the British and Manx governments.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

28/6/00

Newslist Messages for July 2000

FISHING JOURNAL ECHOES LEAGUE CONCERNS

The current issue (30/6/00) of the main fishing industry journal, Fishing News, has echoed the views of the Celtic League that more should be done to investigate fishing tragedies such as that which overcame the Solway Harvester.

In an editorial, which is fulsome in its praise for the action of the Manx government and authorities, the editor goes on to say that, whilst it is not always necessary or desirable to salvage sunken vessels in the case of inexplicable sinking the vessels should be raised if it is technically feasible.

The article also observes that the UK can learn a lot from the example of the Manx government.

Earlier this week the Celtic League criticised the UK government, and others, citing a number of examples of fishing boat sinkings in the past two decades involving significant loss of life. We identified two British, one Belgian and a French trawler suggesting each sinking should have been more thoroughly probed by the relevant

National authorities. One was the the Mhari L, also from the Kirkcudbright area which sank with all hands in 1985 in the same area as the Solway Harvester.

The Fishing News editorial also is critical of the MAIB in relation to the current fatality saying the speculative intervention by its head Rear Admiral Lang last weekend coinciding with the salvage served little purpose. The Celtic League have also been critical of the MAIB and its predecessor (the Marine Directorate of the Department of Transport). In February of this year we attacked the record of both bodies in investigating sea losses and re-iterate our concerns.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

1/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 2, 2000 4:20am

Subject: McBRIDE KILLERS MOD PREVARICATE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

McBRIDE KILLERS ARMY PREVARICATION CONTINUES

The Ministry of Defence are continuing to prevaricate over the case of the two Scots guardsmen, Fisher and Wright, who murdered Belfastman Peter McBride in 1992.

The Celtic League had written to the MOD questioning the contradiction between its hard line over drugs offences and its 'soft' line on murder.

The move followed news, earlier this month, that almost thirty troops had been discharged from the Army following drugs offences. Some of those discharged were serving in Ulster.

In a reply the MOD pompously assert that "the misuse of drugs is unacceptable" but then goes on to reiterate the Army Boards contention that there were "exceptional reasons" which led to the decision to retain the two guardsmen. That decision is currently being further reviewed but the chances are, because of a powerful though misguided lobby of support for the two killers, that they will continue to serve in the Army.

The Celtic League is once again writing to the Irish government to request that it raises this issue at inter-governmental level with the British.

Irish PM, Bertie Ahern, has 'sat on his thumbs' for long enough on this issue.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

30/6/00

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Date: Sun Jul 9, 2000 9:19am

Subject: NATIONALISTS QUERY CRIME STATISTICS

MEC VANNIN - THE MANX NATIONALIST PARTY

LATEST CRIME STATISTICS

Is it just Police Incompetence?

Another depressing set of annual crime statistics? It really goes much deeper than that. For the past twenty years there has been a steady increase in the amount of money and resources poured into police services. The increased resources base has, unfortunately, been paralleled by a similar increase in levels of crime.

One would think that such a situation would provoke a serious debate within society about both law and order strategy and social policy. However, despairingly, this is not the case.

After twenty years of a downward spiral the question has to be posed are our police services competent? On present showing the answer has got to be no.

Politicians, always sensitive not to upset their voter base, seem shy about asking some pointed questions about police resources and the manner in which they are deployed.

Generally in a democratic society the counterbalance to inert politicians is of course a vibrant media. Look back to the editorials of twenty or thirty years ago in Manx newspapers and you would see that at that time the papers, when circumstances demanded, set the agenda posing the unpalatable questions the politicians chose to dodge. Today the media seem to be engaged in some kind of "love in" with "the force" which has made them incapable of reasoned thought.

Last years crime statistics showed a similar increase to the latest figures. Intriguingly however it was not the figures but the way they were delivered that indicated a deeper malaise. The outgoing Chief Constable, admitting the rise in his final report, delivered a condemnation not of criminals or standards in society but of his own force, alleging "disloyalty" within the ranks.

More men, more money, new buildings, more vehicles and additional resources had therefore, during the previous Chief Constables period of Office, produced increased crime and a force that contained within it "disloyal" elements.

The new Chief Constable came in on a roll and the changes flew quick and fast. Restructuring and anti-crime initiatives rolled out on an almost weekly basis, including the somewhat ironically named "Operation Safe". Twelve months later things are looking anything but "safe"!

Mec Vannin

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Date: Sun Jul 9, 2000 9:19am

Subject: TUSKAR CRASH REPORT FLAWED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

TUSKAR CRASH REPORT FLAWED

The new report into the Aer Lingus tragedy in 1968 seems to steer away from the often advanced theory that a missile caused the crash. However, the Celtic League, after preliminary examination of its findings, have found a small but crucial inaccuracy in its conclusions. We have written to the Minister for Public Enterprise (attached).

In the section of the report headed Missiles under the sub heading Recent Drone Finding the report examines the issue of a part from a US AQM-37A target drone. These were manufactured in the United Kingdom by Shorts as the SD.2 Stiletto. The report is dismissive of any relationship between this drone, parts of which were washed up near the crash site, and the crash, saying:

"Further research conducted by AAIU indicates that the UK did not have the capability to launch this type of drone before July 1968"

This is incorrect. In fact in 1967 an RAF Canberra P.R. 3 Bomber (Serial Number WE146) was modified by Shorts as a launch vehicle for the SD.2. It is disappointing that the enquiry appears to have missed this point because a feature of modified machines such as WE146 and an earlier modified Canberra bomber (XH132 - modified to test fire Red Top missiles) was that they had distinctive day-glo markings applied to their wings and fin. In fact either of these aircraft would appear to be very similar visually to that described by at least four separate witnesses in the Fethard-on-sea area.

Also, we have learned from research that missiles and drones were used for tests sourced from the British research base at Boscombe Down. We have still to establish test schedules and dates for this facility but find it strange the enquiry does not seem to have looked at missile trials which could have originated from bases other than the Aberporth complex.

The Celtic League accepts that other causes cannot be ruled out and indeed last year we spelt this out quite clearly in a press release (see letter to the Minister attached). We remain of this view. However, the new report does not make it any less likely that

mechanical failure rather than a missile caused the crash.

The Ministry of Defence are still 'in the frame' as far as we are concerned!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

6/7/00

The Minister for Public Enterprise

Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, TD.,

Department of Public Enterprise,

44 Kildare Street,

Dublin 2,

Ireland.

Dear Minister

Ref. Loss of Aer Lingus Airliner EI-712

You will be aware that the Celtic League had campaigned for some years to have the enquiry into this tragedy revisited and we therefore read with interest the conclusions of the recent report.

Given continuing ambiguity I would place on record that we welcome your decision to establish a further review.

In 1999, when you met with the British Ambassador to explore a joint approach to resolving the mystery, we issued a statement urging that all options in relation to the crash should be examined including possible structural and mechanical matters. I set out two quotes from our release below.

The rogue missile scenario is an attractive "conspiracy theory" and whilst so many questions remain unanswered cannot be ruled out. However, the Celtic League in the past few months have been examining all aspects of the disaster and we believe that other factors should also be addressed by a full enquiry which the Irish government should urgently convene.

Twenty years of examination, by the Celtic League, of the crash of the St. Phelim have taught us to keep an open mind as to its cause. One factor is however self evident and with each passing year becomes more of an imperative. A full and detailed re-examination of this crash, and all the circumstances surrounding it, is urgently warranted.

At that time the 'missile theory' was a widely asserted cause for the crash and it involved our organisation in considerable correspondence with the British authorities.

The thrust of the current report however tends to dismiss the credibility of possible missile involvement on the basis of exhaustive examination of existing information, particularly that supplied by the British authorities.

Disturbingly though some of that information is inaccurate and it therefore must call into question the thoroughness of the enquiry in reviewing this option.

In the section of the report headed Missiles under the sub heading Recent Drone Finding the report examines the issue of a part from a US AQM-37A target drone. These were manufactured in the United Kingdom by Shorts as the SD.2 Stiletto. The report is dismissive of any relationship between this drone and the crash saying:

"Further research conducted by AAIU indicates that the UK did not have the capability to launch this type of drone before July 1968"

This is incorrect. In fact in 1967 an RAF Canberra P.R. 3 Bomber (Serial Number WE146) was modified by Shorts as a launch vehicle for the SD.2. It is disappointing that the enquiry appears to have missed this point because a feature of modified machines such as WE146, and an earlier modified Canberra bomber (XH132 - modified to test fire Red Top missiles), was that they had distinctive day-glo markings applied to their wings and fin. You will be aware that the original enquiry and the latest review has not been able to resolve was the identification, by at least four witnesses, of an aircraft over the Fethard-on-Sea area, 28 miles from the crash site, which was described as having a "very red colour on the wings and fin". Witnesses also described the loud noise it made.

Attempts over the years have been made to link these sightings to the operation in the area over two hours later of an Air Corps Dove, however the Dove, a piston engined machine, would not have been moving with the speed and noise of the aircraft identified. There is also the very considerable time difference.

Another point the enquiry does not seem to have examined in relation to both these air-launched drones and air-fired missiles is that these were not dependant on the operation of the Aberporth Range complex (which the British have always insisted was closed on the Sunday). We have established that some trials were sourced from the British Research establishment at Boscombe Down, Wiltshire. Can we ask if the new enquiry looked at any records from that establishment?

Despite the direction in which part of the new enquiry wish to lead those concerned the options for the cause of the crash remain open and include possible military involvement.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

6/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 9, 2000 9:20am

Subject: END OF EMPIRE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

END OF EMPIRE?

Prince Charles may get a welcome on the Isle of Man today but the new governor appointed by his 'mum' is not wanted

The Manx Nationalist Party has issued a statement attacking the Islands continuing link to the UK. The statement coincides with a visit to the Island of Prince Charles to preside over the open air sitting of the Manx parliament Tynwald held each July 5th.

"In the middle of a period designated as our 'National Week' a member of the Royal Family will arrive fleetingly and displace the President of Tynwald from his role on our 'National Day'. Whilst the concept of a 'Day' to celebrate our distinct cultural identity and unique governmental system is one that all would share, the question must be posed are we mature enough as a people to claim such a right?"

The Island and its residents cling to the United Kingdom as if to some Imperial crutch unable, unwilling or afraid to take their place in the world as a free and independent nation. Until they can shake off that mind-set any celebration of a 'National Day', whilst no doubt enjoyable, gives little credence to the spirit of the occasion."

Text of the (Mec Vannin) Nationalist Party statement.

The linkage to the UK is already under strain and there is a perception on the Island that the United Kingdom is selling out the Island to protect its own interest in International forums

Additionally, British-Manx links are further stretched following the appointment of an outsider as new Governor of the Island. Air Marshall Ian Macfadyen was appointed to replace the current incumbent Sir Timothy Daunt. Whilst former British Civil Servant Sir Timothy Daunt has enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Manx people during his term of Office there was a growing conviction that he should be the last non Manxman to hold the post. The appointment of Macfadyen has upset a broad swathe of public opinion.

J B Moffatt

Celtic League

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Date: Sun Jul 9, 2000 9:25am

Subject: CHINOOK GEARBOX CRACKING UP

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CHINOOK GEARBOX CRACKING UP!

The Ministry of Defence have confirmed, in correspondence to the Celtic League, transmission problems with RAF Chinook helicopters, and the difficulties appear to be ongoing. The type is already the centre of controversy over alleged systems failures said to have caused the Kintyre crash in 1994 when 25 top security personnel from Northern Ireland and four aircrew died. However the MOD insist it was pilot error.

The Celtic League had written querying a court case concerning the reliability of transmission gears fitted to the Chinook military helicopter due to go to trial in June in the United States which has been deferred pending moves to settle the case out. The action would have focused attention once again on the safety of the type.

Although the MOD will not comment on the court case the issue involves allegations that for several years, Boeing Co. knew one of its subcontractors was supplying the Army with faulty gears for re-manufactured Chinook CH-47D helicopters. A type similar to the RAF model. It is alleged that this led to a series of crashes.

The identification of the RAF Chinook problem did not lead to the withdrawal from service of the helicopter, rather a phased system of overhaul was introduced. Although the MOD do not confirm it in their letter we understand that in the US identification of the defect led to an order grounding all machines.

(The moves parallels difficulties with another helicopter type the medium lift Lynx helicopter. In February of this year we asserted that machines were being operated with a known defect because of operational requirements subsequently, following a series of incidents the machines were grounded for repair).

Much attention to date has focused on the June 1994 crash of an RAF Kintyre crash and problems with on-board computer systems are alleged. However, it appears that a more deep-seated and credible reason for examination of the machines operational record is its re-manufacture with defective transmission parts now the subject of the US court wrangle.

The Chinook in addition to its operational role in N. Ireland and overseas is used extensively on exercises over the Celtic countries.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General 5/7/00

(Copies of MOD Correspondence can be faxed on request)

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Date: Sat Jul 15, 2000 8:40am

Subject: PRISON TRANSFER - FACIST PRECEDENT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PRISONS TRANSFERS - OUR SHAME

The question of the forced transfer of prisoners is once again deferred. The appeal by an inmate of the Victoria Road Prison, in the Isle of Man High Court, against transfer was yesterday adjourned until August.

Stephen Galloway opposes the decision to transfer him but the issue transcends an individual case and raises serious questions about the application of penal policy on the Island at a time when the general Human rights position is more optimistic.

Counsel for Galloway had difficulty yesterday in arguing the case on precedent because there is no apparent precedent in modern times. However, if one looks back sixty years there was precedent during world war two. The rights of those detained, often with the spurious label of criminal or undesirable, were ignored when they were forcibly transferred from one territory to another. Indeed it was because of the trauma of those years that from 1945 onwards a series of Protocol and Conventions, at both International and Regional level, were devised.

The European Convention of Human Rights was designed to protect individuals. However, pending its incorporation into Manx Law (fifty years after it was enacted) it does not help in the Galloway case. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, again designed to ensure respect for and the protection of the individual, is even more remote to the Galloway case.

Interestingly, European Law proscribes, via the Fourth Protocol of the European Convention, forcible transfer from one territory to another. However, the limitations of the Convention are defined above and in any case an 'enlightened' UK government has not ratified the protocol and therefore its provisions by implication to not extend to the Isle of Man.

Despite the legalistic banalities played out in the Appeal Court yesterday the matter is straightforward. The forcible transfer of prisoners between their own territory and another is shameful. The fact that the only precedent in modern times occurred during the dark days of fascism half a century ago seems to reinforce that point.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

15/7/00

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Date: Sat Jul 15, 2000 8:40am

Subject: SNP GAELIC MOVE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

The Celtic League endorses SNP moves to secure the status of the Gaelic language (see below).

RUSSELL TO PROPOSE SECURE STATUS BILL FOR GAELIC

SNP Shadow Minister for Gaelic Mr Michael Russell MSP has today [Saturday] announced he will be tabling a Member's Bill in the Scottish Parliament to give secure status to Gaelic.

Mr Russell commented:

"Centuries of being ignored by the state, particularly in education, have left the Gaelic language in urgent need of official help and official recognition.

"Recent answers which I have received to parliamentary questions state that the Lab/Lib government have no intention of bringing forward any legislation on secure status in the next twelve months. I now hope that the Government will honour its manifesto pledges on Gaelic, either by getting behind my Bill, or by giving a firm date when they will bring their own Bill forward.

"Over the summer, I will be liaising with the Gaelic organisations to draft the text of the Bill. Meanwhile, I have officially lodged my intention to introduce a Bill along the following lines:

Michael Russell: Proposed Gaelic Language Bill

Proposal for a Bill to establish the principle of equal validity for Gaelic and English in Scotland, to create certain rights and duties in law with regard to the use of Gaelic including a right to Gaelic-medium education, a duty on certain specified public bodies to prepare and implement Gaelic policies, a right to use Gaelic in courts and tribunals and before other judicial and quasi-judicial bodies and the right to use Gaelic names and descriptions, and to create certain bodies to assist in monitoring and enforcing these rights and duties and to ensure the monitoring and enforcement of these rights and duties.

Mìcheal Russell: Tairgse airson Bile na Cànan Gàidhlig

Tairgse airson Bile a stèidhicheadh am prionnsabal gu bheil a' Ghàidhlig agus a' Bheurla co-ionnan ann an èifeachd an Albainn, a chruthaicheadh còirichean agus dleasan sònraichte ann an lagh a thaobh cleachdadh na Gàidhlig, 'nam measg còir do dh' fhoghlam troimh mheadhan na Gàidhlig, dleasnas air buidhnean poblach

comharraichte polasaidhean Gàidhligullachadh agus thoirt gu buil, còir Gàidhlig a chleachdadh ann ancùirtean-lagha agus mòdan-ceartais agus air beulaibh bhuidhnean eile aig a bheil cumhachdan breithneachaidh agus còir ainmean agus tuairisgeulan Gàidhlig a chleachdadh, agus a dhèanadh cinnteach gum bidh na còirichean agus na dleasan seo air an sgrùdadh agus air an toirt gu buil.

Mr Russell concluded:

"The Bill will take as its starting point the initial recommendations on secure status made by Comunn na Gàidhlig. It will also follow the precedent set in by the late SNP MP Donnie Stewart, who tabled a far-sighted Bill in the House of Commons in 1981, seeking to give greater status to the language. The Scottish Parliament now has a chance to achieve in the next 12 months what Westminster has failed to do in the last twenty years."

Contact:

Michael Russell

Dr Alasdair Allan, Parliamentary Assistant (Tel) 0131 348 5679

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Date: Fri Jul 21, 2000 11:13am

Subject: AMBER ROSE REPORT SOON

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

AMBER ROSE REPORT SOON

The long awaited report into the sinking of the Northern Ireland motorfishing vessel (MFV) Amber Rose off the south east of the Isle of Man (15/10/98) should soon be released. In correspondence to the Celtic League the Chief Inspector of accidents at the MAIB Rr. Admiral Lang says that the report should be published before the end of July.

The loss of the Amber Rose became controversial when the British PM, Tony Blair, and his deputy John Prescott turned a deaf ear to calls for the recovery of the body of the Skipper of the vessel, Thomas Hughes, which was trapped in the wreck. The other crew members were rescued.

Eventually civilian divers recovered the body at great risk. The Labour government's mean-spirited response at the time led to calls for a fund to be established for recovery purposes. (It was also put in sharp contrast this year when, following the Solway Harvester tragedy, the Manx government moved speedily to pledge money and resources to recover crew members' bodies and also lift the vessel for examination).

Rr. Admiral Lang has also commented in detail on his argument that 'black box' safety devices similar to those in aircraft should be fitted in ships including MFVs. When this

was reported the Celtic League were sceptical as to its practicality given costs and other factors. However, the Chief Inspector of Accidents advances a cogent and practical argument for the plans implementation.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

20/7/00

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Date: Fri Jul 21, 2000 11:22am

Subject: BASQUE PEACE CALL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CALL FOR BASQUE PEACE INITIATIVE

The Annual meeting of the Celtic League being held this weekend in the Isle of Man will consider a resolution calling for a UN and EU joint initiative to bring peace to the Basque country.

The resolution (see below) recognises that the only lasting solution must include self determination for the Basque people in both the northern (French) and Southern (Spanish) Basque country.

Violence has returned to the Basque country because of the failure of the Spanish authorities to develop a peace strategy similar to that adopted for Northern Ireland.

(Text of draft resolution)

This AGM:

Being concerned about the ongoing violent struggle between the Spanish government and the Basque independence movement ETA

- a) Urges the United Nations and European Union to take the initiative to end the current conflict within the Basque country
- b) Believes that resolution of the conflict must inevitably hinge on self determination for the Basque people.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

20/7/00

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Date: Fri Jul 21, 2000 11:32am

Subject: NUCLEAR WASTE PLAN ATTACKED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

FRENCH NUCLEAR WASTE PLANS UNDER ATTACK

Sellafield and the British nuclear industry are often a target for the campaigns of the Celtic League however this weekend (22/23 July) at the Celtic League Annual meeting it is the French government that comes under attack.

A wide range of resolutions will be moved by delegates from Brittany including one attacking plans for a nuclear waste store in the country.

(Text of draft resolution)

This AGM:

Views with concern the decision of the French government to authorise the establishment of a so called 'research laboratory' in Brittany to examine the feasibility of using site(s) in Brittany for the disposal (burying) of waste.

Bearing in mind the well known opposition of the Breton people to the French nuclear industry we support the campaign of opposition to the setting up of long term nuclear storage facilities because of the risks posed both now and to future generations of Bretons.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

21/7/00

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CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

In addition to a wide range of resolutions dealing with the problems of the Celtic countries the Celtic League Annual meeting, held this weekend in the Isle of Man, will take time to consider messages of solidarity and support for other peoples.

A resolution for consideration (see below) attacks British and American treatment of the people of Diego Garcia expelled from their homeland to make way for a military base thirty years ago.

The Islanders are currently fighting for the right to return to their homeland

(text of draft resolution)

This AGM

Condemns the forced removal, between 1966 and 1969 of the population of the Island of Diego Garcia from their home by the British and American governments as one of the most shameful examples of colonial exploitation.

Supports the campaign of the Islanders to both return to their Island home and receive compensation from the British government for their forced removal and exploitation.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

21/7/00

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Date: Fri Jul 21, 2000 11:45am

Subject: CORNISH RIGHTS CALL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CORNWALL HAS DEVOLUTION RIGHT

Equal status for the Cornish people in respect of current devolution moves will be called for at this years Celtic League AGM. A draft resolution seeks endorsement for the Cornish National Minority Report.

(Text of draft resolution)

This AGM:

Recalling the decision of the 1999 in respect of the failure to recognize the status of Breizh and Kernow under the provisions of the European Charter for Regional and Minority languages.

Endorses the conclusions of the "THE CORNISH NATIONAL MINORITY REPORT" and expresses its support for the campaign to have the United Kingdom government recognise that the Cornish are a national minority for the purposes of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

21/7/00

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Date: Fri Jul 21, 2000 11:53am

Subject: IRISH RESOLUTIONS TO AGM

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

POLITICS CULTURE & SPORT

A range of Irish branch resolutions to the Celtic League Annual meeting held this weekend (22/23) address political, cultural and sporting matters.

(text of draft resolutions below)

1) This AGM

calls on the Irish Government to give TG4 a sound and secure basis in the Broadcasting Bill with adequate statutory and financial provision for broadcasting in the Irish language with the capacity to expand this.

2) This AGM

calls on the British and Irish governments to reconstitute the crossborder bodies and other institutions contained in the Good Friday Agreement and to pursue its complete implementation.

3) This AGM

condemns the unilateral abrogation of the Northern Assembly by the Secretary of State, PM, and calls for measures [such as parallel legislation and joint guarantees] to prevent such a one sided action in future.

4) This AGM

welcomes the continuing international meetings between hurling and shinty. We encourage the GAA and An Camanachd Association to maintain and expand, where possible, on the international fixtures and links.

5) This AGM

objects strongly to biased formulation of the question of nationality proposed for 2001 Census in the Republic. (This motion has to be confirmed by the proposer, there may be no question framed like this)

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

21/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 23, 2000 7:53am

Subject: PEACE PROCESS A MODEL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PEACE PROCESS MODEL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The level of militarisation of areas in Northern Ireland such as South Armagh is a continued concern and de-stabilising factor in the peace process delegates at the AGM of the Celtic League held in the Isle of Man this weekend were told.

The League's Secretary General, delivering his report to delegates, said the Northern Peace process was a model for conflict resolution but only if its intent was honoured on both sides. Continued militarisation was unhelpful. The meeting went on to urge that lessons learned in N. Ireland should be translated to the violent struggle in the Basque country. A resolution adopted by the meeting called for United Nations and EU initiatives to end the conflict and ensure self determination for the Basque people.

The meeting also considered a range of reports on other issues including the language and culture of the Celtic countries and social and environmental issues.

French plans to site a nuclear waste dump in Brittany were also condemned in a resolution moved by Breton delegates. The meeting pledged to continue campaigns against both the British and French nuclear industries which pose a threat to the Celtic countries.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago and brings together activists from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic countries. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

22/7/00

Date: Sun Jul 23, 2000 7:54am

Subject: GLYNDWR LETTERS CALL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

GLYNDWR LETTERS BELONG IN WALES

The French government should be encouraged to return the Pennal letters, written by

Owain Glyndwr to the French King Charles VI, to the people of Wales the AGM of the Celtic League held this weekend in the Isle of Man was told. A resolution of support for this principle was adopted.

The meeting also considered a range of reports on other issues including the language and culture of the Celtic countries and social and environmental issues.

The League's Secretary General delivering his report to the meeting also highlighted concerns raised in the past year about nuclear matters including the accident prone Wylfa power station. In another Welsh related issue the Secretary General reported that despite the recent review of the crash of an Irish airliner near the Aberporth range thirty years ago the "jury was still out on possible British military involvement".

French plans to site a nuclear waste dump in Brittany were also condemned in a resolution moved by Breton delegates. The meeting pledged to continue campaigns against both the British and French nuclear industries which pose a threat to the Celtic countries.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago, at Rhos in North Wales, and brings together activists from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic countries. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

22/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 23, 2000 7:56am

Subject: PACKED AGM AGENDA

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PACKED AGENDA FOR CELTS AGM

The Peace process, nuclear issues and cultural matters compete in packed agenda for Celts meeting

The level of militarisation of areas in Northern Ireland such as South Armagh is a continued concern and de-stabilising factor in the peace process delegates at the AGM of the Celtic League held in the Isle of Man this weekend were told.

The League's Secretary General, delivering his report to delegates, said the Northern Peace process was a model for conflict resolution but only if its intent was honoured on both sides. Continued militarisation was unhelpful. The meeting went on to urge that lessons learned in N. Ireland should be translated to the violent struggle in the

Basque country. A resolution adopted by the meeting called for United Nations and EU initiatives to end the conflict and ensure self determination for the Basque people

The meeting also considered a range of reports on other issues including the language and culture of the Celtic countries and social and environmental issues.

Irish government initiatives, taken by enterprise Minister Joe Jacob, to address the problems of Sellafield and the elderly Magnox stations - such as the accident prone Wylfa power station - were praised.

Meanwhile, French plans to site a nuclear waste dump in Brittany were condemned in a resolution moved by Breton delegates.

The meeting pledged to continue campaigns against both the British and French nuclear industries which pose a threat to the Celtic countries.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago and brings together activists from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic countries. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

22/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 23, 2000 7:57am

Subject: FRENCH 'NUKE' WASTE PLAN ATTACKED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BRETON NUCLEAR WASTE SITE PLANS CONDEMNED

French plans to site a nuclear waste dump in Brittany were strongly condemned in a resolution moved by Breton delegates to the AGM of the Celtic League held in the Isle of Man this weekend

The meeting pledged to continue campaigns against both the British and French nuclear industries which pose a threat to the Celtic countries.

The level continued British military presence in Northern Ireland was also a concern and a threat to the peace process delegates were told.

The League's Secretary General, delivering his report to delegates, said the Northern Peace process was a model for conflict resolution. The meeting went on to urge that lessons learned in N. Ireland should be translated to the violent struggle in the Basque

country. A resolution adopted by the meeting called for United Nations and EU initiatives to end the conflict and ensure self determination for the Basque people

The meeting also considered a range of reports on other issues including the language and culture of the Celtic countries and social and environmental issues.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago and brings together activists from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic countries. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

22/7/00

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Date: Sun Jul 23, 2000 9:08am

Subject: TRAGEDY CEMENTED LINKS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SCOTS - MANX LINKS WERE CEMENTED BY TRAGEDY MEETING TOLD

The swift moves made by the Manx government following the Solway Harvester tragedy were praised by the Secretary General of the Celtic League when he presented his report to the 39th Annual General Meeting of the League held in the Isle of Man this weekend. He said the moves had cemented links between SW Scotland and the Isle of Man which share many common traditions.

The meeting also adopted a resolution supporting efforts by Puerto Rican anti-military groups to end the use of their country for military exercises and condemned the transfer of such exercises from Puerto Rico to bases off Cape Wrath in N. Scotland last year.

Secretary General also said the Northern Ireland Peace process was a model for conflict resolution but continued militarisation was unhelpful. The meeting went on to urge that lessons learned in N. Ireland should be translated to the violent struggle in the Basque country. A resolution adopted by the meeting called for United Nations and EU initiatives to end that conflict.

The meeting also considered a range of reports on other issues including the language and culture of the Celtic countries. Several resolutions concerning the Scottish, Manx and Breton languages were adjourned to the League's General Council due to a packed agenda.

Social and environmental issues were also considered and. Irish

government initiatives, taken by enterprise Minister Joe Jacob, to address the problems of Sellafield and the elderly Magnox nuclear stations were praised. Meanwhile, French plans to site a nuclear waste dump in Brittany were condemned in a resolution moved by Breton delegates. The meeting pledged to continue campaigns against both the British and French nuclear industries which pose a threat to the Celtic countries.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago and brings together activists from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic countries. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

Bernard Moffatt, Secretary General

23/7/00

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Date: Tue Jul 25, 2000 10:36am

Subject: CELTIC LEAGUE AGM ADOPTED MOTIONS

FULL TEXT OF ALL RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT THE CELTIC LEAGUE
AGM HELD IN MANNIN (ISLE OF MAN) JULY 2000

These resolutions will be published in the next issue of CARN together with a report on the AGM and also background on the work of the League over the past twelve months.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

25/7/00

This AGM proposes that moves be set in motion to bring together the three groups of Celtic parliamentarians - the Tynwald, Oireachtas and the recently formed Scots - Irish inter-parliamentary body, providing the nucleus of a Celtic Council type body.

This AGM endorses the view conveyed by the Secretary General of the Celtic League to the French Ambassador to London that the "Pennal Letter" should be returned to Wales permanently.

This AGM calls on the Irish government to give TG4 a sound and secure basis in the Broadcasting Bill with adequate statutory and financial provision for broadcasting in

the Irish language with the capacity to expand this.

This AGM:

Recalling the decision of the 1999 AGM in respect of the failure to recognise the status of Breizh and Kernow under the provisions of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

Endorses the conclusions of "The Cornish National Minority Report" and expresses its support for the campaign to have the United Kingdom government recognise that the Cornish are a national minority for the purposes of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

This AGM of the Celtic League calls upon the Isle of Man government to:

a) Acknowledge that, remembering Mann is an island nation where the frustrated home-seekers' only option is emigration, the current housing crisis is creating a social problem, namely an exodus of indigenous Manx people in the face of the 'financial clout' wielded by a recently immigrant, and relatively affluent, element of the population. It is those home-seekers who are less financially advantaged (and therefore less able to compete in the current housing market) i.e. the indigenous Manx people, that are forced to leave.

b) Formulate and immediately implement an action plan to relieve the present situation, caused by immigration, of demand having so badly outstripped supply of homes, both for rent and for purchase.

c) Introduce legislation to curtail local and off-island corporate and private excesses in the field of property speculation on Mannin. Such speculation when excessive is not only, given the limited size of the IOM housing market, morally reprehensible but is also potentially an embarrassing money-laundering instrument.

This AGM:

Condemns and the forced removal, between 1966 and 1969 of the population of the island of Diego Garcia from their home by the British and American governments, as one of the most shameful examples of colonial exploitation.

Supports the campaign of the Islanders to both return to their island home and receive compensation from the British government for their forced removal and exploitation.

This AGM:

Reiterates the concerns expressed five years ago by the Celtic League, in the pamphlet "Human Rights on the Celtic Fringe," in respect of the British, French and Irish governments.

Calls for greater adherence to the principles of International Human Rights Treaties via their incorporation, without amendment, into domestic law.

This AGM of the Celtic League calls for equality between men and women at work and especially in the farming industry (agro-alimentaire).

This AGM of the Celtic League reaffirms its commitment to struggle only by non-violent means.

The Celtic League reaffirms once again that the first violence is perpetrated by the hyper-centralism of the State.

This AGM welcomes the continuing international meetings between hurling and shinty. We encourage the Gaelic Athletic Association and An Camanachd Association to maintain and expand, where possible on the international fixtures and links.

We also call on the associations to ensure widespread media coverage. The example set by the GAA and An Camanachd Association should be followed in the other Celtic countries.

This AGM calls on the Scottish Executive to put measures of protection in place to protect historic battle sites, this being as a result of Stirling Castle giving permission to build a housing scheme on the battle site of Bannockburn.

This AGM, whilst recognising the progress made in certain areas of support and promotion of the Manx language by the Manx government, calls upon the Minister for Education to reinstate the Manx language medium education facilities, withdrawn by him, to the growing number of competent Manx speaking children over the age of seven.

and further,

urges the Department of Education to use the opportunity presented by the forthcoming Education Bill to enshrine, in law, the right of each and every child in Mannin to learn its own language, culture and history.

This AGM, recognising the impact that military bases and exercise facilities has had on the Celtic countries, supports the campaign by Puerto Rican anti-militarists to close training and exercise facilities used by the United States on the Puerto Rican off-shore island of Vieques

This AGM:

a) Being concerned about the ongoing violent struggle between the Spanish government and the Basque independence movement ETA, urges the United Nations and European Union to take initiatives to end the current conflict within the Basque Country.

b) Believes that the resolution of conflict must inevitably hinge on self-determination for the Basque people.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

recalling the concern of previous AGMs of the Celtic League about the risks posed to the Celtic coastlines by oil tanker spillage and being aware of the devastating impact of the most recent oil Erika spillage off Brittany, calls for the establishment of a European Marine Environment & Coastguard Agency.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

a) calls upon the Breton Regional Council to condemn the French Constitutional Council, which rejects all democratic aspirations (thereby encouraging extremism).

b) requests that the Breton Regional Council accept the demands of elected Breton representatives.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

reiterates its call to the Breton Regional Council and the Department Council of Loire-Atlantique to demand that the French Government re-unify historic Brittany in line with the wishes of the people made clear in recent opinion polls.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

calls upon those Breton politicians, especially of the French left PS(F) and PCF, reported in the French mass media to cease their slanderous campaign against the Breton Movement, as an isolated issue, using tendenciously and viciously the position of part of the Breton Movement during World War 2 as an isolated issue with no mention of the anti-Breton and colonialistic policy of the French Third Republic.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

Concerned that restrictions and obstacles are continuously being put by the French Department of education on the progress being achieved in recent years in the teaching of the Breton language in schools.

Wishes to express its rejection of the idea that the adoption and implementation of the measures for the transmission of the Breton language to the younger and future generation is dependant on the goodwill and decision of any authority other than that of the democratically elected assembly representing the people to whom that language belongs.

Calls on the Regional Council for Brittany to demand, of the French Government and Minister of Education, the delegation of the powers required to ensure that an effective and adequate system of teaching Breton be established.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

Condemns the UK and French Governments' decision not to recognise Kernow and Breizh respectively under the provisions of the "European Charter for National Minorities". we also call upon the European Commission to re-examine the policy of allowing Member States to define who should be recognised as a National Minority.

This AGM of the Celtic League:

Demands that the Ministry of Defence increase the Flight avoidance zones around nuclear power stations from 2 to 10 miles

Calls upon the Scottish Executive to support this demand

This AGM of the Celtic League;

calls for recognition of Kernow and Breizh in the Euro Soccer Championships and calls on the Soccer authorities in all the Celtic countries to support the bid to have the Euro Soccer Championships in 2008 hosted in the Celtic countries.

This AGM:

calls upon the Manx government, via the Department of Local Government and the Environment, to bring those Local authorities into line who have ignored the Tynwald Resolution of 1985 in support of the Manx Language i.e. they have ignored the desire of Tynwald that all government bodies should use the Manx language where practical to do so on signs, stationary etc.

This AGM:

calls upon the Department of Education to institute an induction course for all new teachers in Mannin that ensures that they are familiar with and will support our linguistic, cultural and political heritage.

This AGM:

reiterates its call for an end to the levying of broadcast licence fees in the Isle of Man on the grounds that programming directed by the BBC into the Isle of Man makes no provision for the distinct cultural identity of the Manx people.

This AGM

Condemns the forced transfer of convicted prisoners from the Isle of Man to jails in the United Kingdom on the basis that it is both a breach of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Prison Rules.

This AGM:

Views with concern the resumption of the trade in reprocessed nuclear fuel between the United Kingdom (BNFL) and Japan (Kansai Electric).

Supports the calls by Ireland, Mannin and the governments of Scandinavia for an end to reprocessing at the Sellafield nuclear plant

Condemns the disregard shown by the Japanese government and people to the threat which their nuclear trade with the United Kingdom poses to the environment and peoples of the Celtic countries.

The AGM:

endorses the moves announced by SNP Shadow Minister for Gàidhlig Michael Russell MSP to introduce a Bill in the Scottish Parliament to give secure status to Gàidhlig

This AGM:

notes that official Task Forces are about to report on the future of Gàidhlig broadcasting and of the Gàidhlig development agencies and;

(a) expresses its concern at press reports that these Task Forces are to suggest that most or all Government funded Gàidhlig development agencies, Gàidhlig television production and Gàidhlig related jobs which currently exist on the Highland mainland, Glasgow and Aberdeen be removed from the mainland and centralised in the Western Isles.

(b) urges the Scottish Executive and the UK Government to recognise the national status and changing demography of Gàidhlig and to recognise good practice in language planning internationally by ensuring that the new Gàidhlig development infrastructure is not centralised in the Western Isles but rather has strong and expanded representation in Scotland's capital, the main cities and the Highland mainland in addition to the Western Isles.

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Date: Tue Jul 25, 2000 11:51am

Subject: SELLAFIELD, GAELIC AND FOOTBALL!

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS IN 'SECOND HALF' OF CELTS MEETING

Marine pollution, Japanese arrogance over nuclear reprocessing, the Manx Language and Football! feature in the closing session of the Celtic League Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Celtic League concluded last night with delegates from the various Celtic countries returning home today with a range of adopted resolutions for implementation. The meeting has undoubtedly been a great success, addressing a substantial agenda of motions some of which had to be adjourned from the main session of the meeting on Saturday 22 July. These were considered and adopted yesterday by the League's General Council.

A substantial portion of the concluding business was moved by the Breton delegation and related to cultural matters, political objectives and environmental matters. The devastation wreaked by the Erika oil-spill came in for scrutiny and was compared to similar incidents in northern Scotland and off the Pembroke coast. A resolution called for the establishment of a European Marine Environment and Coastguard Agency. There was also criticism of the opposition by some governments (including the Isle of

Man which has a substantial Shipping Register) to more rigorous standards including double-hulls for oil tankers.

The British - Japanese deal to resume their reprocessing contract was also condemned:

text

"This AGM:

Views with concern the resumption of the trade in reprocessed nuclear fuel between the United Kingdom (BNFL) and Japan (Kansai Electric).

Supports the calls by Ireland, Mannin and the governments of Scandinavia for an end to reprocessing at the Sellafield nuclear plant

Condemns the disregard shown by the Japanese government and people to the threat which their nuclear trade with the United Kingdom poses to the environment and peoples of the Celtic"

The Manx government were asked to encourage local authorities to comply with a decision, taken over fifteen years ago, to promote the use of the Manx language.

text

"This AGM:

calls upon the Manx government, via the Department of Local Government and the Environment, to bring those Local authorities into line who have ignored the Tynwald Resolution of 1985 in support of the Manx Language i.e. they have ignored the desire of Tynwald that all government bodies should use the Manx language, where practical to do so on signs, stationary etc."

Finally a suggestion that a proposal from Irish delegates that the League support calls for the Euro Soccer Championships in 2008 to be hosted by the Celtic countries was supported despite opposition. Opponents thought that the promotion of Soccer might be to the detriment of more traditional Celtic games but the motion was eventually carried.

text

"This AGM of the Celtic League;

calls for recognition of Kernow and Breizh in the Euro Soccer Championships and calls on the Soccer authorities in all the Celtic countries to support the bid to have the Euro Soccer Championships in 2008 hosted in the Celtic countries."

Next year's AGM will be the Fortieth and it was agreed by delegates that as mark of respect to League founder Alan Heusaff, a Breton, it would be held in Brittany.

The Celtic League was founded almost forty years ago and brings together activists

from political & cultural movements in the six Celtic counties. This year's meeting focused on communication and the enhanced opportunities offered to the Celtic movement by Internet related developments.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

25/7/00

Newslist Messages for August 2000

CELTIC LEAGUE - AGM UPDATE

The following resolution adopted at the AGM and proposed by the Breton branch was omitted in error from the list published previously.

"This AGM of the Celtic League calls upon the Town and District Council of Saint-Aubin-du-Cormier and upon the Department Council of Ille-et-Vilaine to respect the historical site of the last battlefield for Breton independence which is shamefully planned for a waste area"

This resolution closely parallels the Scottish branch motion relating to Bannockburn and the two branches could usefully cooperate over implementation.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

2/8/00

Subject: PRISON TRANSFER OVERTURNED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

APPEAL COURT OVERTURNS PRISONER TRANSFER

The Isle of Man Court of Appeal has nullified an attempt to transfer a prisoner from the Isle of Man to the United Kingdom to relieve overcrowding at the Island Prison.

The issue had been the subject of a resolution, opposing the transfers, to the recent AGM of the Celtic League and has been greeted by the League as a vindication of human rights concerns.

The issue may however still warrant a challenge under the European Convention of Human rights as the Appeal Court ruling does not clarify the validity or otherwise of the transfers.

The League argued that the transfers breached two articles of the European

Convention of Human rights and also that the principle of forced transfers between jurisdictions also breaches the European Convention on the Transfer of Offenders.

The Isle of Man is a distinct legal jurisdiction a fact that seems to have been overlooked by officials, UK prisons should not be used as a dumping ground for inmates of the Manx prison system.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

8/8/00

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Date: Tue Aug 8, 2000 11:04am

Subject: UN URGED TO AID BASQUE PEACE PROCESS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BASQUE PEACE CALL

Just days after the Celtic league wrote to UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, and EU leader, Javier Solana, calling for international moves to end the violence in Spain and the Basque country more incidents have occurred.

The Celtic League at its AGM last month, in the Isle of Man, adopted a resolution calling for international moves to end the crisis. It was suggested the Northern Ireland peace process should be used as a 'template' to end the war between Spanish security forces and the armed separatist movement ETA.

Developments in the past 24 hours, with a series of bomb attacks and deaths, make it vital that a new peace initiative is launched. The League, in follow-up correspondence to all EU governments have urged collective action to end what is fast turning into Europe's most vicious guerrilla war.

The Celtic League have a direct concern about the conflict because of strong links between the Basque and, Celtic, Breton people. Several Bretons have been harassed or jailed in recent years for providing humanitarian support to Basques who fled political repression.

In correspondence to the United Nations the League say any settlement must recognise the right of the Basque people to self-determination.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

8/8/00

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Date: Tue Aug 8, 2000 11:05am

Subject: BRETONS PROMINENT AT MANX CONFERENCE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BRETON FOLLOW UP TO MANX MEETING

A major feature of this years Celtic League, held in the Isle of Man last month, was the volume of business and proposals moved by the Breton delegation.

Brittany, the most southerly Celtic country, has tended in the past to lack prominence in League campaigns but increased activity in recent years has seen the branch become more pro-active in Celtic League initiatives.

A dozen Breton branch resolutions were considered at the AGM most of which were adopted.

Subjects covered included cultural matters and the Breton language, environmental issues including concern about the Erika oil-spill and a proposed nuclear waste site and also political issues.

It was also agreed that in honour of the Breton founder member of the Celtic League Alan Heusaff, who died last year in Ireland, the next General meeting of the League, the fortieth, would be held in Brittany in 2001.

The Celtic League Convenor, Cathal O'Luain, will visit Brittany over the next ten days to discuss both implementation of the programme of business agreed at the Isle of Man conference and also preliminary planning for next years AGM.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

8/8/00

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Date: Sun Aug 13, 2000 10:50am

Subject: BRITAIN'S WORST KEPT SECRET

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

HEALTH QUERIES ABOUT RADIO SITE - BRITAIN'S WORST KEPT SECRET

Mystery surrounds damage caused at a top-secret nuclear communications site on the

Welsh/English border at Criggion last May.

An enquiry was apparently held after part of the aerial complex at the site, which is used for communications with the British Trident nuclear submarine force, came down on land near Criggion Quarry. The local media reported that police sealed off all the roads around the area after the incident on Sunday May 14. However, since then police, the MOD and the site operator BT have been tight lipped about the incident.

Criggion is a Very Low Frequency (VLF) transmitter and the facility was originally set up during World War 2 to facilitate direct radiocommunications between the UK and United States. British Telecom, the site operators, describe the site as an installation "which is part of the BT. network which sends out information to a dedicated customer". It's Britain's worst kept secret that the "customer" is the MOD.

Criggion VLF site, and the other radio communications sites which complement it, are used to sustain the British military's potential for response using weapons of mass destruction. As such they are an affront to the International community and if the damage was caused by direct action by peace campaigners it is morally justified!

However, more pertinently such installations can pose a potential health threat because of the unknown implications of electromagnetic fields associated with their operation.

The Celtic League have written to Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon asking him to come clean about any environmental implications implicit in its operation.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

13/8/2000

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"AIRWORTHINESS NOT ISSUE" IN CRASH SAYS TRANSPORT MINISTER

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport has told the Celtic League that there was no evidence of any airworthiness issues affecting the air ambulance crash on Merseyside on June 14.

The Celtic League had queried the decision of the DETR to allow the Piper aircraft to continue the air ambulance role despite a number of serious crashes, worldwide, in the fourteen day period up to the crash.

However, the Transport Minister has not answered specific queries put by the League about the type's operational record. In follow up correspondence the League questioned the wisdom of using a light aircraft of this type, with limited egress, in emergency situations such as the air ambulance role.

Five people died when the Piper PA31 crashed carrying a patient from the Isle of Man for specialist treatment at a hospital on Merseyside. It crashed just yards from the

shore of the Mersey Estuary, near Liverpool Airport.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

12/8/00

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Date: Sun Aug 13, 2000 10:50am

Subject: SEA SAFETY THREAT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SAFETY THREAT TO MIZEN HEAD SAFETY BEACON

The Celtic League has again written to the Irish government about the safety implications surrounding plans to construct a powerful radio station on the north west coast of the Isle of Man.

The plan is opposed by local authorities and by environmental groups on the island for environmental and aesthetic reasons. The station is to be sited adjacent to a designated area of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) and there are also fears about the untried nature of its technology.

However, the Celtic League pointed out, in correspondence in June, to Minister of State Hugh Byrne at the Department of the Marine, that there are also real fears that the station's frequency and power will affect radio navigation systems for mariners.

The League have now supplied the Minister with a copy of a letter from Northern Lighthouse Board Radio Engineer, Peter Douglas, which outlines specific interference concerns and cites possible problems for a new radio transmitter planned for Mizen Head in the Irish Republic and due to come on stream in March 2001.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

13/8/00

Hugh Byrne TD

Minister of State

Department of the Marine

Leeson Lane

Dublin 2

Ireland

Dear Mr. Byrne,

I faxed information to you on 28 June 2000 relating to the construction of a new long wave radio station in the Isle of Man and concerns expressed by the Northern Lighthouse Authority about possible interference with marine frequencies. I also supplied detail of questions subsequently raised in the Manx parliament about the issue.

I have now been passed more detail of the concerns expressed by Northern Lighthouse Board Radio Engineer, Mr. Peter Douglas, in correspondence to the local authority in the area which opposes this development. I enclose a copy of this and apologise for the quality of same although I think the points made are decipherable.

You will see, from the quote from his letter set out below, that he is quite specific about the potential for interference with transmitters outside the UK:

" My concern is related to the bandwidth of the proposed broadcast, which at 279 kHz is adjacent to the International Maritime Radiobeacon band of 283.5-315 kHz. This band is used for aeronautical and marine radiobeacons and different GPS correction transmissions. As a result of congestion in this band in Europe some of these sites suffer from considerable interference, and therefore the band has recently been re-planned, with an implementation date for the new frequencies of 29 March 2001. Whilst none of the transmitters in the U.K. is at the bottom of this band, there are transmitters in Portugal, Spain and Belgium at these frequencies, and Mizen Head in the Republic of Ireland is scheduled to transmit on 284 kHz. Any spurious out-of-band transmissions from such a powerful LW transmitter could easily interfere with these signals."

I passed this to your Department because of the obvious safety implications for mariners in Irish coastal waters. However, it is clear that this may also be a concern in relation to aeronautical safety and therefore I trust you will pass this information to the Department which has the remit for aeronautical safety.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

13/8/00

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Date: Sun Aug 13, 2000 10:50am

Subject: JAPAN RESPONDS TO LEAGUE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

JAPAN RESPONDS TO SELLAFIELD DEAL CRITICISM

The Japanese government has responded to criticism from the Celtic League about its decision to resume nuclear reprocessing agreements with British Nuclear Fuels Ltd.

The League considered the issue at its recent AGM with delegates from the Irish and Manx branch of the League moving a joint resolution which criticised both the Japanese government and BNFL's main customer Kansai Electric.

A letter from the Japanese Embassy in London explains that the Japanese understand the concern about the Sellafield nuclear plant and stress that the Japanese are continually requesting that BNFL restore public confidence by improving safety. The letter also outlines the difficulties surrounding Japanese energy requirements and its lack of energy resources.

The Celtic League whilst appreciating the energy resource difficulties faced by the Japanese people cannot accept that as an excuse to trade with BNFL which has a proven and continuing record of environmental safety violations.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

13/8/00

Text of the Celtic League resolution

This AGM: Views with concern the resumption of the trade in reprocessed nuclear fuel between the United Kingdom (BNFL) and Japan (Kansai Electric).

Supports the calls by Ireland, Mannin and the governments of Scandinavia for an end to reprocessing at the Sellafield nuclear plant

Condemns the disregard shown by the Japanese government and people to the threat which their nuclear trade with the United Kingdom poses to the environment and peoples of the Celtic countries.

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Date: Thu Aug 17, 2000 2:20am

Subject: ANOTHER CELTIC LEAGUE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ANOTHER CELTIC LEAGUE?

The Welsh initiative will provide an important sporting bond between the Celtic countries

Another CELTIC LEAGUE will be up and running next year after the Welsh Rugby Union gave it the go-ahead. The WRU, the general committee has voted unanimously this week in favour of the league.

The structure will consist of eight Welsh clubs, four Irish provinces and two Scottish Super District sides and the new Celtic league will become operational from the 2001-2002 season. First fixtures are scheduled for August 25, 2001 and the 14 Celtic teams will be divided into two conferences of seven teams each.

The WRU secretary, Dennis Gethin, said, "The proposed structure should offer the required level of competition in the early part of the season.

"The Celtic League sits nicely with the build-up to the European Cup and the autumn international programme. The competition has tremendous commercial potential and I am sure it will be of huge interest to broadcasters."

Ironically, just three weeks ago (at its annual conference) the other "Celtic League" i.e. the political, cultural and social pressure group with branches in the six Celtic countries focused on sport with calls for increased participation by all the Celtic countries in the Euro Soccer Championships.

Other resolutions approved at the organisations conference, held on the Isle of Man, supported increased links in the area of Gaelic Sports.

Obviously the WRU initiative will provide an important sporting bond between the Celtic countries and is wholeheartedly endorsed by "The Celtic League" - even if they have pinched our name!

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

13/8/00

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Text of the resolutions of the Celtic League covering Sport adopted at the AGM held on the Isle of Man in July.

This AGM of the Celtic League;

calls for recognition of Kernow and Breizh in the Euro Soccer Championships and calls on the Soccer authorities in all the Celtic countries to support the bid to have the Euro Soccer Championships in 2008 hosted in the Celtic countries.

This AGM;

welcomes the continuing international meetings between hurling and shinty. We encourage the Gaelic Athletic Association and Comann na Camanachd to maintain and expand, where possible on the international fixtures and links.

We also call on the associations to ensure widespread media coverage. The example set by the GAA and Comann na Camanachd should be followed in the other Celtic countries.

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Date: Fri Aug 18, 2000 1:22am

Subject: IRISH WON'T NAME 'DIRTY' BANKS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

O'DONOGHUE WON'T NAME BANKS GUERIN KILLERS RELATIVES USED

The Irish government has said it will not name banks involved in money laundering allegations against underworld figures related to the killer of Irish journalist Veronica Guerin.

A letter from the Department of Justice to the Celtic League says that after receiving reports, on concerns expressed by the Celtic League earlier this year, from An Garda Siochana (the Irish Police), the Central Bank of Ireland and the Minister for Finance the Justice Minister, Mr. John O'Donoghue, T.D., "does not consider it appropriate for the naming in public of any such institution in a context which would infer involvement in money laundering". It goes that no financial institution was convicted of an offence in this instance.

The League had cited the case of the father and uncle of a man serving a life sentence for the Guerin slaying who were convicted, by a Dublin Court on money laundering charges. The court was also told that one of the men, Thomas Meehan, had opened a bank account in the Isle of Man which was used as a "stepping stone" to accounts in Vienna which were controlled by Brian Meehan, the murderer of Veronica Guerin.

The Celtic League has consistently called for a "Name and Shame" policy in relation to Banks via which underworld figures or cartels are found to have conducted laundering transactions.

Whilst the Celtic League are disappointed at the Minister's conclusions in this case we welcome the thorough nature of the Justice Department's investigation of the issue.

However, if the tough talking by politicians following the Guerin killing is sincere then at some stage Banks that carry on these shady transactions will have to be "outed".

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

17/8/2000

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Date: Fri Aug 18, 2000 1:28am

Subject: 'KURSK' ECHOES OF IRISH SEA INCIDENT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

RUSSIAN SUB CALAMITY ECHOES IRISH SEA MISHAP

The fate of the trapped Russian submariners echoes a similar incident in the Irish sea fourteen years ago. On the weekend of March 13 1986 the USS Ballistic Missile Submarine Nathaniel Greene (SSBN-636) struck the sea-bed about forty miles south of the Isle of Man, in the deepwater channel off Dublin bay. No stranger to controversy only two years earlier the vessel slipped its prop in the same area, off Anglesey, wallowing out of control until tugs arrived (July 30 1984).

Immediately, a major sea rescue operation was launched to save the vessel and its crew of 140 men. Great secrecy surrounded the salvage of the vessel which had sustained major hull damage. The situation was complicated by the fact that the vessel, unlike its modern day Russian contemporary, was carrying a full cargo of Poisedon nuclear missiles with multiple warheads.

Despite the security blanket maintained to this day it is clear that this was perhaps the most serious nuclear incident in these coastal waters and posed a major environmental risk to the whole ecosystem of the Irish sea.

Fortunately, after approx. 48 hours the vessel was salvaged and limped back to the base at Holy Loch which it entered under tow. After temporary repairs it was escorted back to its home base. Damage to the Nathaniel Greene was so serious that the vessel was de-commissioned six months after the incident in December 1986. It was struck off the US Navy list the following month.

Despite repeated efforts by the Celtic League to obtain information on the incident and the extent of pollution to the sea floor the US Navy and MOD remain tight-lipped. Despite initial acknowledgement that an incident had occurred it was two years later that it was admitted that the N. Greene had sustained "damage to her external hull plating and rudder". It is only now with the advent of the Internet that sketchy details of the accident are emerging. Submariners swap yarns about "the day they met the mountain" in the depths of the Irish sea.

J B Moffatt Secretary General

13/8/00

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Date: Fri Aug 18, 2000 1:54am

Subject: MINISTERS APPROACH OVER MANX LANGUAGE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

MINISTERS APPROACH OVER MANX LANGUAGE

The Celtic League Assistant General Secretary (AGS), Mark Kermode, has written to Education Minister Steve Rodan, MHK, advising him of the Celtic League AGM resolution adopted this year which called for the provision of Manx language medium education facilities to be established. There is growing pressure amongst nationalist and Manx language organisations to boost infrastructure provision for the Manx language.

The AGS also stressed the League's concerns that teachers recruited from outside Mannin should receive an induction course which stresses the Islands' distinct linguistic, cultural and political heritage.

In a separate approach to Local Government Minister, Walter Gilbey, MHK, the AGS has reminded the Minister that a Tynwald (Manx Parliament) resolution of 1985 in support of the Manx language is being ignored by some local authorities. The Tynwald resolution said that all government bodies should use the Manx language where practical to do so on signs, stationary etc. It led to a visible presence of the Manx language around the Island previously not seen and transformed the public perception of the language.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

18/8/00

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Date: Mon Aug 21, 2000 4:54am

Subject: ISLANDERS MAY REGAIN HOMELAND

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ISLANDERS MAY REGAIN HOMELAND

The Foreign Office has indicated, in correspondence to the Celtic League, that it has commissioned a report into the feasibility of the Islanders of Diego Garcia being able to return to their homeland.

The plight of the Islanders and their campaign to return home was focused on at the AGM of the Celtic League, held in July on the Isle of Man.

A resolution was adopted at the meeting which criticised the United Kingdom and US governments expulsion of the Islanders over thirty years ago, to make way for a military base complex, as "one of the most shameful examples of colonial exploitation".

The United States military still use the Diego Garcia complex in the British Indian Ocean Territory and the Foreign Office say that the resettlement of the Islanders after thirty years "would present serious difficulties".

However, it is clear that the growing International pressure on the British government to right the wrong that they perpetrated towards the people of Diego Garcia is causing a rethink in Whitehall.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

21/8/00

Text of the resolutions of the Celtic League on Diego Garcia adopted at the AGM held on the Isle of Man in July.

This AGM:

Condemns and the forced removal, between 1966 and 1969 of the population of the island of Diego Garcia from their home by the British and American governments, as one of the most shameful examples of colonial exploitation.

Supports the campaign of the Islanders to both return to their island home and receive compensation from the British government for their forced removal and exploitation.

Newslist Messages for September 2000

Date: Fri Sep 1, 2000 8:26am Subject: DECISION ON PROBLEM NUCLEAR PLANT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DECISION ON TROUBLED NUCLEAR STATION SOON

BNFL plans to restart the troubled Wylfa power station on Anglesey have received a setback, They had planned to send their safety plans to the NII (Nuclear Industries Inspectorate) this week with a view to re-commissioning. However, these will not be ready for several weeks. The closure is reputed to be costing £400,000 per day.

The station shutdown in March after "unexpected marks" were seen in the reactors fuel channels on Reactor one. A similar problem was uncovered on Reactor Two. The

Celtic League wrote at the time to the British and Irish governments questioning the record of the Magnox stations including Wylfa which are being operated beyond their original service life. We believe the decision of the NII to even contemplate re-commissioning the plant is highly irresponsible.

Information the Celtic League have indicates that Wylfa station has suffered unplanned shutdowns on 30 occasions over the past decade. Reactor one has been closed down on 13 occasions and Reactor two on 17 occasions. This excludes planned maintenance shutdowns. Despite this the stations operators, BNFL, indicated their intention to continue operating the station for another twenty years.

The Celtic League believe that the UK's Magnox stations including Wylfa, which pose a threat to the community around the Irish sea, should all be closed. The Irish government also have concerns. Enterprise Minister Joe Jacob assured the Celtic League that "incidents such as those at Wylfa serve to reinforce my concerns about the safety of these Magnox reactors and my determination to have them closed down."

The frequency of the unplanned shutdowns revealed by the HSE is added cause for concern. A major malfunction at the plant seems inevitable if the NII bow to pressure to allow re-commissioning.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General Celtic League

31/8/00

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Date: Sun Sep 3, 2000 9:29am

Subject: POLITICAL JUDGEMENT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

A POLITICALLY EXPEDIENT 'JUDGEMENT'

There is a popular conception that the relationship between the various facets of the Isle of Man's establishment is to say the least incestuous.

The preconception is reinforced by the recent judgement by the Isle of Man Appeal Court over Isle of Man - UK prison transfers. There is no doubt that the Manx government for political expediency needed to get a positive reaction from the Appeal Court. Despite the obvious unfairness and lack of respect for individual rights the Courts ultimately delivered the judgement the politicians wanted. That in itself should make us pause for thought.

The issue transcends the ultimate fate of one individual. A number of prisoners have already been transferred and the validity of those transfers is itself questionable. The State however is not apparently going to advise these individuals of its own illegal

actions now that they have "settled in very well" in the UK.

The decision to accommodate the transfers obviously is driven by political considerations and the Manx courts have indicated that they will deliver judgements that suit political expediency thereby setting a dangerous precedent - not just for the inmates of Victoria Road Prison.

A judicial system which prostitutes itself to the political process is beneath contempt.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

2/9/00

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Date: Sun Sep 3, 2000 9:29am

Subject: CHINOOK DEFECTS CASE SETTLED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CHINOOK DEFECTS CASE QUIETLY SETTLED

A lawsuit involving allegations that defective gears were fitted on Chinook military helicopters was settled last month. Boeing will pay up to \$61.5 million dollars to the US government and a former employee of a Boeing components supplier SPECO, Mr. Brett Roby. The action was brought by Roby after he was sacked by Boeing supplier SPECO (now defunct) when he tried to "blow the whistle" about the defect in 1994.

In May the Celtic League queried the situation surrounding RAF Chinooks which were also fitted with the defective parts. In response the MOD refused to comment on the court case however they confirmed that last year tests confirmed "minute cracking in two Chinook engine transmissions systems". Subsequent checks revealed "a further four gears... with similar defects"

The Chinook is the centre of controversy over alleged systems failure said to have caused the Kintyre crash in 1994 when 25 top security personnel from Northern Ireland and four aircrew died. However the MOD insist it was pilot error. Ironically RAF machines were re-manufactured with the same SPECO components.

Although the defect was identified on RAF Chinooks, in late 1999, this did not lead to the withdrawal from service of the helicopter, rather a phased system of overhaul was introduced. In the US however identification of the defect led to an order grounding all 460 Chinooks in January of this year (some remain grounded pending overhaul).

The Chinook in addition to its operational role in N. Ireland and overseas is used extensively on exercises over the Celtic countries.

In June the MOD told us that "Flight safety is of paramount importance to the RAF and naturally we will consider whether any further action is necessary as the Boeing investigation, which we are still monitoring closely unfolds". However, pointedly, the MOD have not commented following the quiet conclusion of the Boeing - Roby action and they have not admitted that defective gears may have been fitted to the Kintyre Chinook.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

2/9/00

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Date: Tue Sep 5, 2000 9:33am

Subject: INDIFFERENCE TO ARMY DRUGS CRISIS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ARMY INDIFFERENCE TO DRUGS CRISIS IT CREATED

British Army dumping youths with substance abuse back into Society with problems their service background has created

More British army soldiers are being given their marching orders this week for drugs offences. The current round of dismissals started with several months ago with discharges from a number of Welsh and Scottish Regiments. Their dismissal, can be the subject of appeal but the Army has said previously that only in "extremely exceptional circumstances" will they stay in uniform.

Ironically, the fresh round of sackings comes during a week in which calls have again been made for two Scots guards who murdered a Belfastman Peter McBride to be expelled from the Army. Apparently the Army's tough policy on drugs does not extend to murder.

The latest revelation must call into question the cynical policy of the British Army in recruiting young people in the Celtic areas and then dumping them back into society after creating the environment in which they feel the necessity to become involved with drugs. Surely the MOD has a duty to try and help these young people address their drugs problem probably created as a result of the trauma and pressures of service life.

Despite attempts by the MOD to 'stonewall' over the issue the further drugs clear-out seems to indicate drug addiction within the armed forces, is approaching crisis proportions. We revealed in June that the situation is not new.

Five years ago the MOD assured the Celtic League it was "constantly reviewing its programme on (drugs abuse) education". Obviously the education programme is not

working with nearly 50 troops given their marching orders in the past three months.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

5/9/2000

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Date: Mon Sep 18, 2000 11:23am

Subject: KREMLIN BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

KREMLIN CONTRACT BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS - SWISS POINT FINGER AT
OFFSHORE CENTRES

The Isle of Man government is quietly patting itself on the back over after being
"commended for their success in stamping out other criminal activities by the Offshore
Group of banking Supervisors and the Financial Action Task Force".

However, this weekend news broke which paints a less positive picture of the Islands
bank system. Reports in the UK media indicated that senior Russian and Swiss law
officers began talks last week on Swiss claims that a branch of a Manx based bank was
used to pass \$25 million in bribes to a confidant of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Swiss normally reticent about their own banking indiscretions appear to be
zealously intent on pursuing the allegations. In the process they make sweeping
accusations about a number of off-shore jurisdictions including the Isle of Man and
Guernsey and their involvement in handling money connected with a half billion
dollar contract to refurbish the Kremlin and other government offices. This may be
a "spoiler" to distract attention from their own regulatory shortcomings.

The Manx government should urgently clarify the situation as any connections, of a
dubious nature, to the Russian federation invariably involve criminal elements that
have flourished via the political corruption that has existed since the collapse of the
Soviet Union.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

18/9/00

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Date: Tue Sep 19, 2000 4:53am

Subject: NUKE NO FLY ZONE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

NO REVIEW OF NUCLEAR AIR SAFETY MARGIN

Low-flying around nuclear plants to continue despite concerns - collision warning system being developed!

The Ministry of Defence has rejected calls to tighten low flying restrictions around nuclear plants.

The issue had been raised at the Celtic League AGM in August when delegates from Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man expressed concern about the danger posed by military low flying near nuclear plants in Scotland, Cumbria and N. Wales.

The MOD indicate that enhanced collision warning systems are being developed for the Tornado GR 4 aircraft. An aircraft of this type crashed near the Torness nuclear plant in November 1999. That incident led the Irish government's Enterprise Minister, Joe Jacob, to support calls by the Celtic League for improved regulation.

Bizarrely, the MOD in confirming that it will not react to criticism from campaigning groups, or national governments, says it will revisit the issue if the "nuclear industry...ask us to review our policy".

In a related development the Nuclear Industry admitted this week that it will no longer ensure that disused nuclear reactors are fitted with protective shells. Paradoxically this will compound the danger as the industry's old Magnox stations are de-commissioned.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

11/9/00

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Date: Wed Sep 20, 2000 5:24am

Subject: KREMLIN BRIBES LINK CONFIRMED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

KREMLIN BRIBES - LINKS CONFIRMED

The admission that the Isle of Man's regulatory authorities knew three years ago about links between Manx financial institutions and the Kremlin bribes allegations scandal is a shocking admission.

It is now admitted that the Manx fraud squad were 'on the case' three years ago but the regulatory inertia is explained away with the bizarre assertion that no money laundering in the 'traditional sense' had occurred.

The Isle of Man has recently been trumpeting its credentials viz. aviz the finance sector and regulation and yet apparently harmful links through the Island to bribery allegations associated with a half billion dollar project to refurb. the Kremlin were left smouldering on the bank burner.

It is not as if warning about the dangers of the potential danger links to business in Russia posed was not known. At least one former senior member of the fraud squad (now retired) warned in October 1995 about the dangers posed by transactions from the former Soviet bloc.

It is past time all agencies from the Treasury down shook of the self-inflicted inertia that their constant prattling about "high regulatory standards" has induced. If the Island is being used, however legitimately, as a conduit for such business it should be stopped.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

20/9/00

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DRUG STRATEGY COMPROMISED

'In tandem with research, support, assessment and rehabilitation strategies a well thought out public policy on punishment and penal provisions should have underpinned the policy. This is plainly not the case.'

It is difficult to quarrel with the conclusions of an Isle of Man newspaper editorial which criticised the sentence set down in a recent serious drug trafficking case.

The Celtic League have campaigned for years against the drugs threat, which has steadily grown from being a major problem in urban conurbations such as Glasgow, Belfast, Dublin and Liverpool into rural areas. Areas in these large cities have had the soul ripped out of them by a trade which depends for the most part on a relatively small network of suppliers and dealers and the vulnerability of young people.

Adequate and full support should and must be made available to those young people whose lives are being destroyed by this evil trade. Rehabilitation must be provided to the drug users to enable them to recover their lives. However, as the newspaper correctly pointed out, the dealer, unlike the user, is driven by the lucrative profits to be made exploiting the dependency of drug users.

It is always difficult to reach conclusions on the basis of case circumstances as

reported in the media. However, any analysis of the sentence in this case must beg the question - did the courts get it right?

The case, in which an habitual dealer received a minimum custodial sentence, also highlighted deficiencies in the current and well publicised Chief Ministers drug strategy. One would have thought that in tandem with research, support, assessment and rehabilitation strategies a well thought out public policy on punishment and penal provision should have underpinned the policy. This is plainly not the case.

A key imperative to resolving the problem must be the removal of sources of supply - and that includes habitual dealers.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

19/9/00

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Date: Wed Sep 20, 2000 5:26am

Subject: POLICE 'LOSE' MORE CASH

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

POLICE STATION MONEY - WHERE IS IT?

Public and media interest in what happened to money which disappeared from an Isle of Man Police Station seems strangely muted. Recently, the Force acknowledged that over £1000 could not be accounted for after going missing from Ramsey police station.

It is not the first occasion when such incidents have. Occurred approximately three years ago a similar sum, recovered after a robbery in the south of the Island, disappeared.

There is an understandable and pro-active campaign by the Police to gain and maintain public confidence. For the most part this is successful. However, such confidence is unlikely to be maintained whilst accountability for the loss of not insignificant amounts of money is so lax.

Recently the Islands Chief Constable, in a move eerily reminiscent of his predecessor, criticised some officers for spreading rumour and gossip. Perhaps his efforts would be better directed at improving cash security within the force stations.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

18/9/00

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Date: Fri Sep 22, 2000 1:22pm

Subject: KREMLIN BRIBES QUESTIONS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

KREMLIN BRIBES SCANDAL - QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED

The Manx governments response to the Kremlin Bribes scandal which broke last week has so far been evasive and insubstantial.

Urgent questions surrounding the issue need to be resolved if the Isle of Man is to maintain its assertion that its regulatory system is up to scratch.

Bizarre statements that the issues do not involve money laundering in a "traditional sense" and a Treasury Minister who has "indications" that correct procedures were followed hardly engender confidence.

Most tellingly if the investigation was closed three years ago why is it now being re-opened. Is it because other regulatory regimes have become aware of matters our system should have detected?

We have posed a number of questions to the Isle of Man Government's Treasury Minister (see below).

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

22/9/00

The Treasury Minister

Mr. R Corkhill MHK

The Treasury

Legislative Buildings

Douglas

Isle of Man

Dear Minister,

Ref. Kremlin bribes allegations - Manx Government, FSC and Media statements.

I note with interest comments made by you in response to allegations that the Islands finance sector is linked to allegations that substantial sums of money (in the form of bribes) were 'milked' from a half billion dollar Russian construction contract.

I am extremely concerned that you apparently believe that because this allegation surrounds events three years ago, and the Island has since introduced more robust regulatory provisions, this in some way explains away any Manx connection.

I also note you say that the "Indications are that the bank involved did follow procedures at that time". For some years now the Isle of Man government have indicated that correct regulatory procedures were being applied to this sector. The particular problems associated with large sums of monies originating from particular countries, such as the Russian Federation were also said to be well understood. In the circumstances your response to these latest allegations is insubstantial and 'woolly'.

The questions to be clarified are:

a) Was this transaction subject to specific scrutiny given the origins of the financial business and if so what were the actual conclusions of that scrutiny?

b) Did the bank meticulously adhere to regulatory procedures then in place?

In respect of the latter we do not want to hear your speculation about indicators but rather a factual statement of what the initial fraud squad investigation uncovered.

I am copying this letter to John Aspden at the FSC because obviously there are points it (the FSC) needs to clarify in relation to this matter. I understand that they are reopening the investigation and indeed this begs the question should it ever have been closed. I also, incidentally, find the reference made by Mr. Aspden "this is not money laundering in the traditional sense" bizarre. Perhaps it might be useful if you point out to the FSC that the Manx government and people will not countenance "money laundering" in any sense or context within this jurisdiction and it is their role (FSC) to ensure it does not occur.

There is a further more general observations I would make to you.

The current state which the Russian Federation finds itself in means that substantial sums of money such as that alleged to have been embezzled in this transaction can ill afford to be lost. As always there is a human dimension to this and as an organisation we believe it is ethically wrong for Manx people to prosper on the basis of trade or transactions which are tainted.

If our banks are used as a conduit, however legitimate to swindle the wealth of another nation than that causes human misery and we cannot be a part of it.

The government has been "patting itself on the back recently" about its efforts to improve the Islands image viz a viz our finance industry. This episode is a useful

reminder of the danger that complacency can engender.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

22/9/00

cc John Aspden - Chief Executive Financial Supervision Commission

Newslist Messages for November 2000

Date: Sun Nov 12, 2000 0:33pm

Subject: MANX "CHICKEN OUT" ON INDEPENDENCE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

MANX "CHICKEN OUT" ON INDEPENDENCE

Government lacks inclination or confidence to manage own affairs however Ministerial salaries will still be collected!

The Isle of Man government has discounted the option of seeking independence at the present time opting instead to maintain the status quo in its relationship with the United Kingdom.

This latest disgraceful abrogation of responsibility is contained in a report prepared for the Council Of Ministers which has taken an astonishing 30 months to prepare despite the fact that it proposes no radical change.

The Government will however still title themselves Ministers and draw ministerial salaries despite the fact that they feel unable to take the responsibility the salary and title would seem to imply.

In recent years the influence of the United Kingdom in Manx internal affairs has virtually ceased although the decision of the UK Home Secretary to saddle the Island with the Edwards enquiry without consultation did cause jitters.

It was hoped by nationalists that the government would continue the measured progress towards independence and at the very least this report should have outlined a timetable for parting the constitutional umbilical knot that still ties us. Instead the government has chickened out cited the "generally benign nature" of the UK government and the Island's "favourable economic circumstances". Possible difficulties which independence might pose are also hyped and the government

seemsto be saying that it has neither the inclination or confidence tomanage its own affairs

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

12/11/00

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Date: Sun Nov 12, 2000 0:33pm

Subject: MORE TROUBLE FOR WYLFA

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

TROUBLED NUCLEAR PLANT FINED

Pollution incident staff lacked training

The accident prone nuclear plant at Wylfa on Anglesey was in the news again last week when its operators were fined £15,000 (+£1,638 costs) following a pollution incident some months ago.

Holyhead magistrates found there was an "acute lack of training and responsibility" on the part of relevant staff which resulted in 5000 gallons of bleach (20,000 times the permitted level) being discharged into the sea. The damage to the marine environment of such a spill is appalling.

Meanwhile, the management of the plant still hope to get clearance to restart the stations reactors which have been shut-down since April. The Celtic League have long maintained that this contentious nuclear station which threatens Irish sea communities should be decommissioned. Last month leading nuclear engineer and safety specialist, John Large, of Large and Associates echoed our concerns. Mr. Large told a meeting in N. Wales that the continued operation of the plant could have "unpredictable results".

Wylfa station has suffered unplanned shutdowns on 30 occasions in the past ten years. Reactor one has been closed down on 13 occasions and Reactor two on 17 occasions. The station was the site of one of the worst nuclear emergencies since the Sellafield fire and in 1995 the operators were fined £250,000 for breaches of safety regulations.

The Celtic League believe that any decision by the British Nuclear Installations Inspectorate to allow this plant to re-start poses an unacceptable risk.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

12/11/00

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Date: Sun Nov 12, 2000 0:33pm

Subject: HUMBOLDT OUTLINES STUDIES PROGRAMME

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CELTIC STUDIES SAVED

Prestigious German university does about face on Celtic Studies closure.

The Celtic League has received more detail about the decision to secure the future of the Chair of Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

An outline brief sets out the main areas of teaching and research at the restored Dept. of Celtic Studies. In addition to concentrating on the majority Celtic languages and countries i.e. Ireland, Wales, Scotland and Brittany the smaller Celtic countries Cornwall and the Isle of Man are not neglected. With regard to Manx for the first time it is intended to teach Manx Gaelic as a subject in its own right. Presently at British-Irish universities it is dealt with only as an appendage of Irish or Scottish Gaelic. In addition each of the model teaching areas sets out study of literature and social and cultural developments including political and constitutional change.

The Celtic League have spearheaded a campaign for some years against proposals to discontinue the Chair and a breakthrough came last year when the closure was put on hold. A funding commitment by Ireland it is hoped will be matched by the other Celtic countries. A wider range of political leaders in the Celtic countries have indicated support for the project.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

12/11/00

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Date: Sun Nov 12, 2000 0:33pm

Subject: DEFECTIVE NUCLEAR SUBS PATROL AGAIN

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DEFECTIVE NUCLEAR SUBS RETURNED TO DUTY

The Manx governments Chief Minister is to raise the issue of the nuclear submarines recall which occurred last month with his UK opposite number. The Celtic League had written to the Manx and Irish governments* pointing out that British nuclear submarines continued to operate in the Irish sea despite the identification of a generic fault on a submarine berthed in Gibraltar and deemed to unsafe to move.

The British nuclear submarine force operates extensively in the waters off the west of the British Isles and also in the comparatively confined areas of the Irish and Celtic sea. In the days prior to the recall, of the entire Swiftsure class, there were reports of operations by the type in the submarine exercise area to the south of the Isle of Man, off the Co. Louth coast.

The defect discovered in the submarine tied up in Gibraltar is now admitted to be prevalent throughout the fleet. Once they are docked with reactors shutdown the problem is containable. However, on vessels at sea it could trigger a "catastrophic failure" in the reactor followed by a radioactive leak. Since the recall several of the type have returned to operational duties. There is a suspicion that the UK had to bend safety rules as its entire fleet was decommissioned and embarrassingly in the last week of October the only operational British patrol submarine was a vessel on charter from the German navy!

Paradoxically, as the vessels return to operations in the Irish and Celtic sea the EU has raised concerns about the safety implications of the type.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

12/11/00

*The issue was also raised with the Scottish and Welsh authorities who have referred it to the Ministry of Defence for answer.

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Date: Mon Nov 13, 2000 1:37pm

Subject: UNCRC1 - MANX BLUSTER AT UN CRITICS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

Report UN Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC) Comment 1

MANX BLUSTER AT UN CRITICS

The Isle of Man government has exhibited an unusual fit of pique following the publication of a report by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child

(CRC).

The reaction is somewhat at odds with the position adopted when a Manx team gave evidence to the Committee in September. At that stage the official position was that the Island had successfully rebuffed criticisms that its past record might have prompted. The Isle of Man government now feels so indignant about its treatment that it is taking the unusual step of publicly criticising the UN committee. This is a bad move and quite frankly places the Island in the same league as some of the world's more despotic regimes whose reaction to UN recommendations is to whine and complain.

The CRC takes the trouble, over a considerable period, to gather adequate evidence about the "State party" (in this case the Isle of Man) which it is scrutinising. If it receives complaints from children's organisations, rights groups or NGO's it is scrupulous in providing that "State party" with an opportunity to respond. It not only accepts written evidence but allows detailed oral submission, as indeed happened in the case of the Isle of Man. It produces 'Concluding Observations' but gives to the "State party" the role of disseminating the information. Indeed this is implicit in the Convention and thereby provides another opportunity for the government to reflect on its concluding observations before they enter the public domain.

Given the fairness of the procedure followed, for the Isle of Man to call foul beggars belief.

Behind the bluster of the government, when one analyses the CRC comments, many are extremely valid. Whilst undoubtedly in the past five years the Island has made progress on children's rights and has further legislative changes in the pipeline the CRC criticisms, taken in their totality, are not unreasonable.

We should aim not to match best practice in the UK, or grudgingly concede the minimum to meet international obligations, but rather strive to achieve a state of excellence as regards International human rights parameters. Nowhere is this more imperative than in relation to this particular convention.

The Manx government should stop complaining and engage constructively with the UN CRC to redress perceived shortcomings. In this manner it will swiftly be able to clarify any inaccuracies it perceives with the Committee.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General - Celtic League 13/11/00

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Date: Mon Nov 13, 2000 1:37pm

Subject: UNCRC2- LAW CHANGE SLAMMED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

Report UN Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC)

Comment 2

AGE OF CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY CHANGE SLAMMED

The UNCRC report rightly focuses on the intention of the Manx government to lower the minimum age of legal criminal responsibility. The principle of *doli incapax*, i.e. the presumption that children between the ages of 10-14 years are incapable of committing a criminal offence, is undoubtedly contentious. However the suggestion that legally the minimum age of full criminal responsibility should be lowered from 14 to 10 years is outrageous.

The Isle of Man should have known that its decision in this respect to "ape" so called tough legislation introduced in the United Kingdom was likely to bring it into conflict with International human rights law.

The response of the Manx government to the CRC on this point is disappointing. Falling back on the position adopted by the United Kingdom may at this stage seem a plausible strategy but it seems destined to ensure that this issue will feature in successive UN reports. The implications of the legal changes are also likely to be more sharply focused as the case law which develops exposes the ludicrous nature of these age of criminal responsibility changes.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

13/11/00

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Date: Mon Nov 13, 2000 1:37pm

Subject: UNCRC4-BOOST FOR MANX LANGUAGE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

Report UN Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC)

Comment 4

UN REPORT SUPPORT FOR MANX LANGUAGE

In the UN CRC report sections (32-33) dealing with Education, Leisure and Cultural Activities the Committee notes "that the Manx Gaelic language is currently taught as an option in all primary schools for a two year period and that the Department of Education is currently reviewing the possibility of establishing a Gaelic Medium

School to commence in September 2002".

In the section (33) on recommendations the Committee " encourages the Isle of Man to continue its efforts in promoting the Gaelic language in schools".

The reference to the Manx language in this section provides a useful boost to those promoting the language. It is also an endorsement of the Department of Education programme for the language.

The section on Education generally is positive with only a minor quibble about the absence of a formal complaints procedure for students. Surprisingly the COMIN (Council of Ministers of the Manx Government) comments on the section are downbeat and it appears that by this stage of its progress through the UN report the Manx governments Council of Ministers were determined to respond to all the recommendations negatively.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

13/11/00

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Date: Mon Nov 13, 2000 1:37pm

Subject: UNCRC3-CHILD CARE ARGUMENT PERSUASIVE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

Report UN Committee on the Right of the Child (CRC) Comment 3

CHILD CARE STRATEGY - UN ARGUMENT FOR BROADER PARTICIPATION IS PERSUASIVE

The Manx governments response to sections 10-11 of the UNCRC report is disappointing. This section focuses on the responsibility and co-ordination of child welfare. The UN Committee deliberating at a distance shows a surprising insight into some of the deficiencies in the present system. It argues for broader participation from all relevant government agencies in determining a strategy.

It is undoubtedly the case that the decision to centralise child welfare provision around the DHSS as the principle agency has not been a success.

There have been a succession of enquiries and reports and the area still appears to have an element of 'drift and develop' about it.

This section of the UNCRC report, without being unduly critical, makes sound

proposals to make the provision of child welfare services more inclusive across government and also points to the vital role of other agencies such as NGOs.

The government's response that the Social Services Division is to embark on a review of child care strategy over the next five year period hardly meets the constructive concerns the UN report reflects. Is the Social services Division in isolation adequately resourced to carry out a task of this magnitude? A benchmark might be to examine its delivery of services to date in this respect.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

13/11/00

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Date: Sat Nov 18, 2000 0:33pm

Subject: SPAIN - JUVENILE JUSTICE PROTEST

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

UN PROTEST AT SPANISH JUVENILE JUSTICE PLANS

UNICEF has expressed concern about Spanish government plans to modify the juvenile code. The move is targeted at Basque youths involved in protests in the Basque country.

Spain had already moved in this direction and has been charging youths suspected of terrorism and trying them in the special anti-terrorism court. If found guilty they are often imprisoned outside their homeland, itself a clear breach of International and European rules on the treatment of prisoners.

The latest draft bill would let the judicial system try youths, some as young as 14, in adult courts when they are accused of terrorism thus (officially) shifting trials to the special National Court, itself a hangover from the fascist Franco regime.

Young people are very much at the forefront of the struggle for Basque independence and engage mainly in demonstrations or in publicity efforts (sticking posters, daubing slogans etc.) which highlight the excesses of the Spanish security forces. They are also prominent in moves to protect the language and culture of the Basque people.

The Celtic League is to communicate its concern to the United Nations and European Union about the Spanish criminalisation of children, stressing that the new proposals and existing practice are a breach of Article 40 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

18/11/00

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Date: Sat Nov 18, 2000 0:34pm

Subject: "CUTTING" PROTEST AT EH POLICY

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CUTTING TORCH TO "CULTURAL AGGRESSION"

The contentious issue of the placing of signs by English Heritage(EH) around Cornwall has been highlighted following the arrest of three men, linked to the Cornish Stannary parliament, for removing EH signs.

The three, when apprehended by police at Pendennis Castle, were well equipped; the signs having been removed with oxyacetylene cutting gear.

They also confirmed to police that they had previously "confiscated" 15 English Heritage signs between July and October 2000, in an ongoing operation code-named "Operation Chough", and that these were being stored at various sites in Cornwall "as evidence of English cultural aggression in Cornwall".

As yet we understand that no formal charges have been laid against the three but it is to be hoped that English Heritage will recognise that its Signs policy is provocative to Cornish people.

For more information on the Cornish cultural and political scene visit the following sites:

www.cornish-stannary-parliament.abelgratis.com

www.tyr-gwyr-gweryn.kernow.eu.org/

www.Cornish.Heritage.care4free.net/

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

18/11/00

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Date: Sat Nov 18, 2000 0:35pm

Subject: BRETON PRISONERS RIGHTS FIGHT

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BRETON PRISONERS RIGHTS FIGHT

Outside of Brittany the plight of the ten prisoners currently imprisoned on political charges is not well publicised.

Presently the prisoners are staging protests and hunger strikes to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) The right to serve their sentences together as political detainees;
- 2) The right to serve their sentence in their home country, Brittany;
- 3) Compassionate treatment, including early release for sick prisoners;
- 4) The right to use their own language, Breton, during any legal proceedings.

The request of the Breton detainees is just and is compatible with both International and European rules covering the treatment of prisoners. The Celtic League supports the campaign of the Breton prisoners and all branches will be urged to take practical steps to support their requests for fair and humane treatment.

Messages of support can be sent to them at the addresses below:

Arnaud Vannier

272336 T

2 / 136

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Alain Solé

9045 B2

S 217

M.A. de la Seine St Denis

93422 Villepinte cedex

Christian Georgeault

890 826

3 / 179

MAH

94261 Fresnes cedex

Pascal Laizé

273 195

D 119

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Denis Riou

58979

C211

MA des Yvelines

78390 Bois d'Arcy cedex

Gérard Bernard

289 03V

G3-46 D4

MAH

91705 Fleury-Mérogis

Gaël Roblin

273 196

A 215

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Stéphane Philippe

273 209

D 117

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Philippe Jaumouillé

274 101 M

C 314

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Pascal Scatolin

274 123

1/203

42 rue de la Santé

75674 Paris cedex 14

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

18/11/00

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Date: Sat Nov 18, 2000 0:36pm

Subject: WINDSCALE FIRE CONTROVERSY RAGES

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DOWN'S SYNDROME CLUSTER - SELLAFIELD LINK STILL CONTENTIOUS

A possible link between radioactive pollution from a 1957 fire at Sellafield (Windscale) and the cluster of births to mothers who attended St. Louis' School in Dundalk at the time has been ruled out by a report published recently. The connection with the fire and the birth defects was first put forward in a study in 1983.

The latest research, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, advances that the cluster may well be the result of pure chance. The study, by the Medical Social Research Board, has taken five years.

It re-investigated the original data, potential risk factors and analysis of tissue and blood samples from affected children and their parents was collated. Meteorological records were also consulted. However the survey failed to pinpoint any organic or environmental cause.

The report has been dismissed however by County Louth based doctor Mary Grehan, who has been campaigning on the issue for several years. She dismissed the research findings as an "absolute whitewash" claiming the basis of the new study was different from the original research. Her outspoken rejection of the research will probably be echoed by campaigners in the County who are certain that crucial information about the dispersal of pollution by the fire was withheld.

The Irish situation has a parallel in Wales, where two years ago data produced by the authorities to disprove linkage of leukaemia in children to pollution from the British nuclear industry was alleged to have been gerrymandered.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

18/11/00

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Date: Tue Nov 21, 2000 0:51pm

Subject: RUC UNFIT TO POLICE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

RUC - INSTITUTIONALISED ANTAGONISM TOWARDS NATIONALISTS

The Celtic League wholeheartedly endorse the comments and complaint by the Committee on the Administration of Justice (CAJ) about RUC handling of death threats against murdered lawyer Rosemary Nelson.

It remains to be seen if their decision to lodge a formal complaint against the RUC Chief Constable Sir Ronnie Flannigan will get anywhere but it is likely to be a potent test of the effectiveness of the new Northern Ireland Police Ombudsman.

Rosemary Nelson gave public testimony just prior to her death about the threats and intimidation levelled at her, by amongst others serving police officers.

The investigation of her murder has been attended by the same inertia as that which surrounded an earlier killing of Belfast Solicitor Pat Finucane.

Police reform in N. Ireland means more than tinkering with names, badges and recruitment demography. It means getting to grips with the institutionalised antagonism within the RUC towards the nationalist community. The threats towards Rosemary Nelson and the indifference towards her murder are symptomatic of the cancer at the heart of the RUC which make it unfit to police.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

21/11/00

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BRITAIN'S TERRIBLE CHEMICAL WARFARE LEGACY

Human guinea pigs.. victims who died.. but where is the deadly material that the British government secretly amassed over three generations? Is it mouldering in the sea-dumps we know Britain used in the North Channel or the Atlantic?

Almost every month there are new revelations concerning the lack of control and accountability in the operation of the British Chemical and Biological warfare programme in the decades following World War 2.

Shocking revelations about the danger to which service personnel were exposed have been extracted from the government. Police investigations into the suspected deaths of some of these human guinea pigs are ongoing.

Both Porton Down experimental establishment and the factory which produced the death agents at Nancekuke in Cornwall are implicated in these terrible events.

Shadowing the mystery over the chemical warfare experiments is the equally disturbing and mysterious subsequent disposal of the Chemical and Biological weapons produced at Porton and Nancekuke.

The Celtic League sought assurances ten years ago as to the final disposal place of these dreadful weapons. We had more than a strong suspicion that material from these sites was sea-disposed as part of a more general disposal of poison gas and explosives into the Beaufort Dyke and sites NW of Donegal, SW of Kerry and at several locations off the Hebrides. The British government have over the years provided conflicting and probably dishonest accounts of what happened to

this material. But as each new revelation about Porton and Nancekuke is revealed it begs the question where did the vast amounts of material produced go to.

If it is mouldering in sea dumps in the north Channel or in the Atlantic to the west of Scotland and Ireland should not the British government come clean about it?

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

21/11/00

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Date: Wed Nov 22, 2000 6:51am

Subject: POLICE COMPLAINTS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

INTIMATE BODY SEARCHES BESTIAL

If people allege that they have been "subjected to wrongful imprisonment, assault, unlawful detention, x-rays and intimate body searches" and subsequently the Police settle a compensatory payment on them then the public are surely right to conclude that the Police got it wrong.

That is the case unless you live in the Isle of Man. The media reported just such a settlement this week. However, the police have taken strong exception to a construction which has been placed on the story i.e. that their incompetence has had to be rectified by payments from the public purse.

More disturbingly, the Police go on to infer that because the newspaper did not seek to "balance" the story prior to printing then in some way the Police have been unfairly treated. It is perhaps understandable that they should think this as in recent years there has been a tendency on the part of some journalists to provide the Police with an opportunity for damage limitation prior to the publication of "unhelpful" stories.

We are heading down an unhealthy road in attempting to put constraints on the media as to the nature of what they publish and how they publish it. The Isle of Man has a balanced media and anyone who believes they are misrepresented in a story simply has to pick up the phone and a generally news-hungry news editor will oblige with a right of reply.

Throughout the course of this year the Island has been subjected to all manner of Police initiatives and operations. In many instances with the press co-opted to give maximum impact when the story breaks. It is therefore a little trite of the police to start whingeing when the media report a police related story that they have not been able to

choreograph.

Returning to the subject of the Police complaint. Six years ago when the Police enthusiastically embraced the use of forced X-Rays and intrusive intimate body searches they were warned by Rights groups, lawyers and a political party that the policy would backfire. The public are now paying for the mistakes of the Police, endorsed by the Department of Home Affairs. Intimate body searches are a bestial and reprehensible form of physical examination. Perhaps the Police will think twice in the future before they use them. That's the lesson from this episode and no smoke-screen about the media being unfair should obscure that point.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

22/11/00

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Date: Sun Nov 26, 2000 11:35am

Subject: PROTEST TO FRANCE OVER PRISONERS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

FRENCH BREAKING PRISONER RULES

The Celtic League have written to the French authorities and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture protesting that the treatment of Breton detainees is a breach of their human rights and European (Model) Prison Rules.

In a letter to French Justice Minister, Marylise Lebranchu, the Secretary General of the League says:

"I feel sure that France is a State which wishes to ensure that, from a human rights point of view, it is seen to treat prisoners fairly and humanely and that it would not wish to exacerbate the distress caused by imprisonment on these men or their families.

In this context it seems extraordinary that arrangements cannot be made for these men to be held at prisons in one of the Breton departments.

I am sure that I do not have to point out that European (Model) Prison Rules (EPRs) highlight the need for prisoners to be able to communicate easily with their families and also retain links with their local community. In respect of untried prisoners the EPRs also set out that communication links with family should be facilitated and that, where the prisoner desires it, opportunities to be visited and treated by their own doctor or dentist should be allowed.

Quite clearly the arrangements in respect of the Breton detainees are such that they are not being treated in accordance with European (Model) Prison Rules.

We would urge that you review the circumstances of these detentions and transfer all those on the attached list to Prisons in or near to their home area".

The Secretary General goes on to outline the four objectives that the prisoners have set which are:

- 1) The right to serve their sentence together as political detainees;
- 2) The right to serve their sentence in their home country, Brittany;
- 3) Compassionate treatment, including early release for sick prisoners;
- 4) The right to use their own language, Breton, during any legal proceedings.

The League conclude by stressing that none of the objectives are unreasonable and if France is sincere in its respect for human rights law and the right of the individual the points must be conceded.

In a separate letter of protest to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) the League call for action over the Breton detainees saying:

"There seems to be a prima facie case that the treatment of such prisoners is guided by political considerations and not humanitarian principles".

The League also express concern about Corsican and Basque detainees whose treatment mirrors that of the Bretons and requests that the CPT raise the issue with the French authorities.

Copies of the correspondence, together with covering letters have been sent to President Chirac and Prime Minister Jospin. Protests have also been forwarded to the Interior Ministry and the Embassies of France in London and Dublin.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

26/11/00

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Date: Sun Nov 26, 2000 0:53pm

Subject: DON'T CAVE IN TO MUTINEERS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PM URGED TO IGNORE "CABAL OF MUTINOUS OFFICERS"

The Celtic League has written to the British Prime Minister (see below) following reports of pressure from senior Army Officers to delay a demilitarisation of the S. Armagh area.

The reports well sourced in a British Sunday newspaper said that senior "Army commanders have warned Tony Blair that they will withdraw from the south Armagh border if they are forced to abandon their hilltop observation posts".

The Celtic League have urged the British PM not to be swayed from any quarter from the peace process in N. Ireland be it "dissident republicans, recalcitrant Unionists or a cabal of mutinous Army Officers"

The League conclude by urging that the demilitarisation process be expedited and also environmental regeneration, compensation and inward investment be provided for the area whose economy has long been blighted by the presence of high troop levels.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

26/11/00

The British Prime Minister

Mr. A. Blair

10 Downing Street

London W 1

26/11/00

Dear Prime Minister,

It is somewhat disturbing to read reports, in the Sunday Times, that "Army commanders have warned Tony Blair that they will withdraw from the south Armagh border if they are forced to abandon their hilltop observation posts".

The article, penned by a reputable journalist, sets out in detail the hostility of senior officers to continued demilitarisation in South Armagh.

We trust that you will be swiftly taking steps to clarify that political policy aimed at

resolving the conflict in N. Ireland will not be impeded from any source, be it dissident republicans, recalcitrant Unionists or a cabal of mutinous Army Officers.

We have little doubt that the reports are accurate. If that is the case it should be self-evident that the political credibility of your government is being undermined at a time when you are committing significant resources to the careers of those in the military who seem to want a veto on the pace of change in Ulster.

Far from delaying the departure of troops from S. Armagh the British government, in line with its commitment, should be expediting the process. It is only when the Army vacate the fortified bases, checkpoints and lookouts that shatter the aesthetics of the South Armagh area that the extent of the environmental and social damage caused by thirty years of occupation will be determined. At that time we hope the British government will have the good grace to sustain considerable compensatory investment in the area so that its true potential can be realised.

It is disengagement and inward investment that will confirm a brighter future for this and other areas in N. Ireland. The arrogance of some in the military establishment, opposed to this process, is unacceptable.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

31/7/00

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Date: Sun Nov 26, 2000 1:37pm Subject: NEW NUCLEAR PLANS?

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

BNFL 2 ? - THE NIGHT MARE CONTINUES

Given the amount of opposition that has built up in communities around the Irish sea to the dangers posed by the nuclear industry it is incredible that the British government and BNFL could be contemplating a new generation of nuclear plants. It is a wake-up call to those in the environmental lobby and also to the governments of Europe that such an economic "doomsday plan" is being hatched but apparently a report which may be issued as early as next week will speculate that:

" If new nuclear build were brought forward reactors could be designed specifically with enhanced plutonium-burning capabilities"

BNFL believes it has the technology to rejuvenate its several Magnox sites around the Irish sea and the Sellafield Plant if it can persuade the government in the United Kingdom to give the green light.

Forty years of nuclear development has been marred by accidents and mishaps and a consistent failure on the part of the industry to meet economic and safety standards.

That the United Kingdom may even contemplate this scenario shows just how desperate the nuclear industry is to salvage something from the mess it's made.

The Celtic League will be lobbying all sympathetic European governments who have already expressed concern at the pollution of the British nuclear industry to try to head off this plan.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

26/11/00

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Date: Wed Nov 29, 2000 0:44pm

Subject: OUTRAGE AT AMBER ROSE DELAY

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

AMBER ROSE - FAMILY AGONY CONTINUES

This week the inquest into the death of Thomas Hughes concluded on the Isle of Man. Mr. Hughes died when his vessel the Amber Rose sank suddenly off the south of the Isle of Man on 15 October 1998.

The sinking was immediately surrounded in controversy. Whilst the crew all survived the body of Mr. Hughes was trapped on board. Subsequently, after condemnation of the British government for failing to recover his body for burial, private action initiated by the family ensured he was brought home to N. Ireland for burial.

Further delay whilst the MAIB report was compiled and published in July led to the Inquest being delayed until this week when a verdict of accidental death was recorded.

The Celtic League were extremely critical of the United Kingdom government at the time for the handling of the Amber Rose affair. We urged that a fund be established to ensure that henceforth families of seafarers did not have to endure what the Hughes family had suffered. Subsequently the events surrounding the loss of the Solway Harvester gave these calls a new impetus and it seems that something will now be done.

However, the agony of the Hughes family is not over. The Celtic League spoke to representatives of Mrs. Hughes today in Portavogie to be told that over two years after the tragedy insurance settlements due to Mrs. Hughes have not been made. The League have now written to N. Ireland constituency MP, John Taylor, urging him to intervene. Failing this we intend to attempt to obtain legal support for the family.

It is appalling that families who endure the trauma of a loss of loved ones at sea and then have to await the protracted, though necessary, conclusion of enquiries subsequently find additional bureaucratic hurdles must be overcome.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

29/11/00

Rt. Hon. John D Taylor MP

House of Commons

Westminster

London - England 29/11/00

Dear Mr. Taylor,

I write with reference to the loss of the MFV Amber Rose and the death of the vessel's skipper, Mr. Thomas Hughes. I understand, after speaking with representatives of the Hughes family today, that you are the MP for their constituency, Strangford.

The Celtic League were active immediately after the incident supporting efforts to recover the body of Mr. Hughes and we subsequently raised with the British government the desirability of a fund being established to facilitate such recovery operations. I understand that the British government are now actively examining this option.

From our contact with the family involved in this tragedy, and being aware of other similar maritime tragedies over the years, we appreciate well the difficulty and distress that is caused.

The initial news of the loss is devastating. When this is followed, as in the case of the Amber Rose with the prevarication of the authorities, this causes further distress. There is then the necessity to await the outcome of the MAIB enquiry and subsequently the conclusion of the inquest. In the case of the Amber Rose the MAIB findings were produced in July and this week the inquest into Mr. Hughes' death was concluded at a Coroners Inquest on the Isle of Man.

All in all the Hughes family, and particularly Mrs. Hughes, have had a terrible experience. I am therefore outraged to find out, after speaking to the family today, that their trauma is not yet at an end and that insurance payments which should have been received by Mrs. Hughes have not been forthcoming.

I am writing to request your intervention with the insurance company to urge settlement of the outstanding claim. Given the trauma, distress and delay this family have suffered to date I feel sure you will agree that matters should be expedited.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

31/7/00

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Date: Wed Nov 29, 2000 0:34pm

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CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

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Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

31/7/00

Date: Thu Nov 30, 2000 0:40pm

Subject: MOD DISINGENUOUS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

IT DIDN'T CRASH IT FELL!

In an incredible example of double-speak, even by MOD standards, the Defence Ministry has denied that a crash involving a Wessex helicopter occurred in S. Armagh last month.

Despite witness evidence, backed by photographs, the MOD say the chopper did not crash when one of its engines failed (due to ingestion of a "foreign object"). It simply made an emergency landing on reduced power. The elderly chopper was subsequently removed slung beneath the belly of a heavy lift Chinook.

The MOD have also rejected claims from the Celtic League that operations by the Wessex are patently unsafe, due to the age of the machine, and its service record which includes a controversial crash in Wales seven years ago in which a number of air cadets were killed.

The helicopter is now almost forty years old having entered service with the RAF in 1961. In that time the type has not been subject to the 'Service Life Extension Programme' of any other type.

The MOD concede that the Wessex is an "ageing helicopter" which will "retire from service within the next few years" but they say they take their "responsibilities for safety very seriously and all aspects of safety are kept under continuous review"

However, this reassurance has a hollow ring earlier this year the Celtic League proved that the MOD were operating helicopters in Ulster with a known defect (the Lynx machines were subsequently grounded).

There is little doubt that the MOD is being disingenuous about this latest incident and it seems that only as catastrophic a crash involving substantial deaths of aircrew and civilians will prompt a rethink.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

30/11/00

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Date: Thu Nov 30, 2000 0:54pm

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES SUPPORT FOR MANX

The Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL) has added its voice to those organisations campaigning for the establishment of a Manx medium unit by the Department of Education in the Isle of Man.

FEL President Nicholas Ostler says, in correspondence to Manx Chief Minister Donald Gelling MHK, "We urge you to show support for Gaelic medium education and to follow the excellent examples of Scotland and Ireland where many thousands of children are founded through Scottish and Irish Gaelic. A number of studies have shown the advantages of bilingualism from an early age. A recent academic study of the attainment of children in Gaelic medium education in Scotland (the Johnstone report) has shown that children educated through the medium of Gaelic tend to outperform English medium peers in English and various other subjects".

FEL say that the department should aim to establish a unit in line with the wishes of Manx language bodies by September 2001.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

30/11/00

Newslist Messages for December 2000

Date: Fri Dec 1, 2000 1:12pm

Subject: SNP FOR LEAGUE DUBLIN MEETING

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

An Conradh Ceilteach the Irish branch of the Celtic League have organised another successful public meeting. The programme of meetings aims to bring prominent political figures from the various Celtic countries to comment on contemporary matters.

The most recent guest was Irene McGugan of the SNP and the text of her speech is set out below:

'The Scottish Parliament - a Stepping Stone to Independence?'

Irene McGugan, MSP, SNP.

Public Lecture, Trinity College Dublin, 29th November, 2000

BUSINESS IN SCOTLAND "ADOPTING A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE" TO INDEPENDENCE

There are signs that a significant attitudinal change is taking place amongst Scotland's business community towards independence for Scotland. At a meeting in Trinity College, Dublin, on Wednesday night, organised by the Celtic League and Comhaontas Ceilteach in TCD, Irene McGugan, Shadow Deputy Minister for Children and Education with the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP), announced that an organisation, Business in Scotland, had been established to facilitate this change.

Ms McGugan said that "the politics of fear has been used to frighten business away from the idea of Scottish independence" and that many business people had been scared by the unionist controlled media into adopting an extra cautious approach. Business in Scotland was exposing many of the myths behind this "politics of fear" and many business people were adopting a more positive attitude.

"There is no money for the SNP from big business", Ms McGugan added.

Ms McGugan disagreed with the statement made in Dublin recently before his death by Donald Dewar, the First Minister of the Scottish Parliament, that the new Scottish Parliament was the end game for Scots. As soon as the SNP gained an overall majority, independence would be declared, the Shadow Deputy Minister promised.

According to Ms McGugan, the introduction of a PR electoral system was required in Scotland as the present system left SNP voters heavily under-represented. A fairer electoral system "would enable Scotland to take its place amongst the other independent nations of Europe within the European Union".

The SNP were in favour of official status for all three languages in Scotland - Gaelic, Scots and English. "The question of language makes unionist parties very uncomfortable", Ms McGugan claimed, "because it forces them to recognise other identities".

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Date: Sat Dec 2, 2000 4:41am

Subject: MANX BANKS PROBE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

DAIL COMMITTEE TO PROBE MANX ACCOUNTS

"If our banks are used as a conduit, however legitimate, to swindle the wealth of

another nation then that causes misery and we cannot be part of it".

The influential Public Accounts Committee of the Irish Parliament (the Dail) is to probe the "quite amazing amount of money" held by Irish banks and institutions on the Isle of Man.

The scale of the amounts, variously reported at between £3 and £4 billion, is likely to open a new chapter on ongoing enquiries into tax evasion in Ireland. In an indication of the strength of public feeling in Ireland about tax evasion the Public Accounts Committee Chairman, Mr. Jim Mitchell, has called for jail sentences for "white collar crime". He told the media;

"I'm a little taken aback that despite all that's come out in this inquiry to date, there's still the old culture of non-deterrents, non-prosecution, non-custodial sentence for white-collar crime. This committee will not tolerate a Mickey Mouse response, we want effective deterrents. We don't want people in jail just for the fun of it, we want them in jail to make sure a lesson goes out to other people that tax evasion becomes a highly unfashionable thing in this country."

The new revelations come just months after allegations of the laundering of public funds from the Russian federation via the Isle of Man. At that time the Celtic League, in correspondence to Manx Treasury Minister Richard Corkhill, said "If our banks are used as a conduit, however legitimate to swindle the wealth of another nation then that causes misery and we cannot be part of it". The new allegations also come hard on the heels of assurances by the Manx government about the legitimacy of business transacted here. It follows a number of high profile cases in Ireland involving individuals using accounts in the Isle of Man.

Both the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister have gone on record to say that the Island is striving to achieve "greater transparency", yet within days of such statements these new revelations have emerged.

The Celtic League have long called for greater openness about transactions between Mann, Ireland and other finance centres. It appears that this latest Irish initiative will peel away some of the veils of secrecy that surround our finance sector.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

2/12/00

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Date: Sat Dec 2, 2000 0:13pm

Subject: PRISONERS SUPPORT WEEK

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

POLITICAL PRISONERS WEEK

Solidarity sought for Breton, Basque and Corsican prisoners of conscience

A week of events to highlight the plight of Breton, Basque and Corsican political prisoners is taking place in Paris from December 9. It is being organised by movements and associations which support the prisoners.

Last month the Celtic League wrote to the French government urging that 10 Breton prisoners be relocated to prisons in Brittany. We also asked for consideration to be given to early release of some of those prisoners who are ill. Three of the prisoners are currently on hungerstrike.

Gérard BERNARD began his hunger strike on the 1st November. Pascal LAIZE and Arnaud VANNIER started their fast on the 28 November and 1st December respectively. The prisoners are all seeking political status.

Gerard BERNARD and Pascal LAIZE are ill, BERNARD has a thyroid problem, and LAIZE was involved in a car crash in which his knees were broken. Another prisoner, Alain SOLE, is ill with diabetes.

In an attempt to prompt dialogue and encourage the French Government to end the repression in Brittany the ARB (Revolutionary Army of Brittany) has returned explosives stolen in Plévin last year.

It is too early to say if this gesture will elicit a positive response from the authorities in Paris but the Celtic League will highlight the significance of the move in correspondence to EU governments. This will be timed to coincide with the solidarity week commencing on December 9. Celtic League National branches will also be asked to try and seek support from National Parties in the Celtic countries for the prisoners.

It is a disgrace to see incarcerated those whose only crime is to wish to see their homelands free to determine their own future.

The governments in Paris and Madrid should realise that political dialogue and not repression is the road to conflict resolution.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

2/12/00

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Date: Fri Dec 15, 2000 0:03pm

Subject: BRITISH SECURITY BEFORE MARINE SAFETY

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

MARINE POLLUTION THREAT

The Celtic League believe that Britain's continued operation of defective nuclear submarines poses a reckless threat to the Marine environment

The MOD have responded to concerns expressed by the Celtic League about the continued operation in coastal waters around the British Isles of nuclear submarines (SSN) following the discovery of a reactor fault on vessels of the type.

The League had written to the governments in Scotland, Wales Ireland and the Isle of Man following the withdrawal of the Royal Navy's entire SSN force from service in September. The recall followed revelations that faults on a submarine docked at Gibraltar were more serious than at first thought.

We pointed out to the various governments that operations by the submarines in coastal waters and the Irish sea had continued after the problems were known and this posed an unacceptable risk.

In its reply, via the office of the Welsh First Minister, the MOD set out the sequence of events which led up to the recall. They insist that they acted as soon as they were aware there was a serious problem. They also say they consider safety to be of paramount importance and point to the operational record of the British submarine force over 40 years.

However, it is clear from the correspondence that problems persist. The MOD say that faults identified are being subjected to "a second series of inspections, using a more sophisticated investigation technique". Meanwhile some of the submarines said to be "not affected" have returned to operational duties.

The Celtic League continue to have concerns about operations by these vessels in coastal waters around the British Isles. The operation of vessels of this type with the capacity to release pollution which could not be dissipated or contained for many decades is in our view reckless. Reading between the lines the MOD need vessels of this type as they have no conventional alternatives. They are therefore putting Britain's defence interest before the security of the marine environment.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

15/12/00

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Date: Fri Dec 15, 2000 0:03pm

Subject: McBRIDE KILLERS FOCUS FOR INDISCIPLINE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

McBRIDE KILLERS - RALLYING POINT FOR MALIGNANCY AND
INDISCIPLINE

The Ministry of Defence has again defended its decision to allow two convicted murderers, James Fisher and Mark Wright, to remain in the British Army.

The Celtic League Manx branch had written to the MOD as part of a series of protests called to highlight the callousness and insensitivity caused by the decision to the family of Belfast man Peter McBride who was murdered by the pair in 1992. The two men were subsequently jailed but released early by the British government.

The McBride family has tirelessly campaigned against the decision to allow the two men to return to duty. Their campaign this week received a new impetus when the Irish parliament (Dail) debated the issue and condemned the British government's decision.

In correspondence to Celtic League Manx branch Secretary, Cristl Jerry, the MOD say "there were exceptional reasons to allow for their retention".

The Celtic League Manx branch is appalled by the decision and believes that the "exceptional reasons" argument is fatuous. Both Fisher and Wright were branded as liars by the Judge that heard their case. It is clear therefore that immediately after the incident there was no remorse or regret, but simply an attempt to lie to evade retribution. It is clear also that some in the Scots Guards (the men's regiment) still seek to justify the murder. Last week soldiers from the regiment sent a tasteless Xmas card to the Civil Liberties group in Ireland (the Pat Finucane Centre) which has been assisting the McBride family. It is clear therefore that the MOD decision to reinstate the two has made them a rallying point for malignancy and indiscipline.

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

15/12/00

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Date: Mon Dec 18, 2000 11:30am

Subject: SCROOGE FRENCH PRISON AUTHORITIES

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

"SCROOGE" PRISON AUTHORITIES CENSOR XMAS MAIL

The French prison authorities have started to return magazines and cards sent to Breton political prisoners. The Celtic League have labelled their attitude as mean, or "Scrooge like".

The French prison authorities have refused to allow copies of a Celtic magazine, CARN, to be delivered to Breton prisoners currently remanded in prison in the Paris area.

The Celtic League, which has branches in the six Celtic countries including Brittany, is supporting calls for the men to be relocated to prisons near their homes in Brittany or released on compassionate grounds as some of them are ill.

The League has urged its branches and members to send cards, reading material and messages of support. However, copies of CARN, the journal of the Celtic League, have been rejected by authorities at five of the prisons and returned.

The content of CARN is essentially cultural but it does also highlight the distinct political identity of the Celtic countries. Only a limited amount of the content relates to Brittany.

To date the French authorities have provided no explanation for their mean-spirited attitude.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

18/12/00

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ISLAND TO IRELAND - INCINERATOR OPPOSITION GROWS

A vigorous debate on the Isle of Man over the merits, economic and environmental, of waste incineration is now being mirrored in Ireland.

SINN FÉIN Chairperson, Mitchel McLaughlin, has added his voice to that of a wide range of environmentalist and local politicians in Ireland who are querying the wisdom of adopting incineration as a means, long term, of resolving waste management problems.

Commenting, in the current issue of An Phoblacht, on new statistics from the United

Kingdom about the health implications of incineration he says " These (statistics) highlight the need for an immediate moratorium on all incinerator projects here in Ireland until we can put in place a long term all-Ireland waste management strategy. We need an all-Ireland waste management strategy because clearly what happens in Louth or Derry will effect everybody".

His concern is the latest voiced by a wide range of individuals and groups in Ireland which have a correlation to those on the Isle of Man concerned at incineration.

The Isle of Man government plans to site its waste incinerator near to the Islands main centre of population, Douglas, where over half the Islands population live. Urban concerns are also paralleled by Farmers, whose land is adjacent to the new plant.

Whatever the merits or otherwise of incineration it is clear that there is a growing body of public concern, right across the British Isles, about what is seen as a potentially flawed method of waste management.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

18/12/00

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Date: Mon Dec 18, 2000 11:31am

Subject: PATRIOT REMEMBERED

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

MANX PATRIOT COMMEMORATION

The Annual Illiam Dhoné Commemoration, organised by the Manx branch of the Celtic League and Mec Vannin, will take place at Hango Hill, Castletown on the 2nd of January.

Speakers will include Manx language activist Phil Kelly and Mark Kermode, Chairman of Mec Vannin the Manx Nationalist Party.

Illiam Dhoné was executed by the English overlord of the Isle of Man, Lord Derby, on Jan. 2 1663. Illiam Dhoné (William Christian) had early administered the Island for a brief period, taking advantage of the English Civil war to assert Manx sovereignty. His exploits and death are recorded in the Gaelic lament "Baase Illiam Dhoné" (The Death of Brown William). In recent years the anniversary of his death has been used as a focus by Nationalists to raise public awareness at despoliation of the Island by economic interests, such as those created by the pressures for growth within the Finance Industry.

This year the Manx Nationalist Party message delivered by Mark Kermode is likely to

once again restate a fundamental message of opposition to economic exploitation by outside interests and the threat that this poses to environment, culture and population balance.

The commemoration takes place at 2:00 pm on the 2nd January.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

18/12/00

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Date: Mon Dec 18, 2000 1:41pm

Subject: BASES A THREAT TO PEACE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

ARMAGH BASES A THREAT TO PEACE

Batons and guns against peaceful protesters in S. Armagh are not justified! Talk about "new policing" and "reform" carry little weight when batons and guns reflect that the old order of policing in nationalist areas of N. Ireland is unchanged.

The South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee have organised a second weekend protest against the continued British military presence in the area.

On Sunday a group of fifty local residents entered the British Army base at Crievekeeran on the Culloville/Crossmaglen road, despite the presence of heavily armed troops. Using wire-cutters, the protesters occupied most of the base for over an hour, while the soldiers retreated to an inner section of the facility.

Last week, to coincide with the visit by US President Bill Clinton, SAFRC organised a similar protest at the Glassdrummond base. Despite the peace theme of the Clinton visit police action at the Glassdrummond protest and after was less than peaceful and several of the protesters were harassed. In one incident police aimed weapons at the unarmed protesters.

This week again "community policing" was on the agenda and several of the protesters were attacked with batons. The police have no writ in this area, they are not wanted, and by their actions they make their position even less tenable. Talk about "new policing" and "reform" carry little weight when batons and guns reflect that the old order of policing in the nationalist areas of N. Ireland is unchanged. It seems likely the protests will continue for as long as the bases remain and the police response will become more dangerous.

British political and military interests are playing up these community protests in

South Armagh as being orchestrated to achieve a weakening of the security forces in the area. However, it is only when one visits the area and sees the extent and intensity of the military presence that one appreciates the pressures on the local community. The bewilderingly array of communications equipment and radiation emitting surveillance equipment, which in many instances is right in the local communities back yard, adds to health concerns and general uncertainty. Clapped out helicopters clatter in and out of the myriad of bases their progress only varied by the occasional crash landing.

Though the Irish government has paid lip-service to the concern of the South Armagh community, to date no effective pressure has been applied to have the British government give meaningful effect to demilitarising in South Armagh.

Paradoxically, the "security" value of the South Armagh installations was itself always problematical. It created logistic problems which saw the outposts, that mushroomed in the area over the past twenty years, virtually isolated with supply only being effective by air. British history will probably reassess the value of the S. Armagh fortifications as more of a political statement than an effective security instrument.

The British government indulged its security hierarchy and the local community suffered. Now they are giving notice that they intend to suffer no longer. The current heavy-handed police response to the latest protests is not only unwarranted but dangerous for the entire peace process in these islands.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

18/12/00

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Date: Mon Dec 18, 2000 1:42pm

Subject: CORNISH CALL TIME FOR ENGLISH HERITAGE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

CORNISHMEN CHARGED OVER ENGLISH SIGNS PROTESTS

Three Cornishmen, members of the Cornish Stannary Parliament (Stannators), have been charged in relation to "theft" surrounding the removal of English Heritage signs from "English" Heritage sites around Cornwall. In all 11 charges were brought, with the value of the signs set at £20,000.

The innovative Stannators used acetylene cutting equipment to remove the signs, over several months, in an action code-named "Operation Chough". The question of English signs on historical sites in Cornwall, and indeed the very presence of "English" Heritage, is deeply offensive to many Cornish nationalists and those active

within the Cornish language movement.

In what can only be termed a provocative development the three men, who had been bailed, were remanded in cells for several hours prior to their initial Court appearance. Why the detention was thought necessary is unclear as the three are unlikely to abscond. In fact, the whole thrust of their protest is aimed at getting English Heritage to leave Cornwall.

The men were due in Court again last Friday but at the present time the League is unclear if the charges were progressed further.

In the case of one of the men, his only participation in the event was to take "official" photographs of the sign removals. However all have been similarly charged.

The Celtic League will be protesting at the men's pre-trial detention to the Devon and Cornwall Police. We will also be re-iterating concerns previously raised with the Executive of English Heritage about its policy in Cornwall.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

18/12/00

Date: Wed Dec 20, 2000 4:24am

Subject: A positive step for Gaelic education for the whole of Scotland

The Alba branch of the Celtic League are delighted to have attributed to the progress of Gaelic education for the whole of Scotland. The Alba Branch submitted a petition some months ago addressing Gaelic education and sought a 'twinned tracked inclusive' approach. While the Alba branch always saw GME as important we felt that many basic foundations have been missed from rebuilding it. We felt that Gaelic medium education was a parental choice and excluded children who would possibly want to learn Gaelic but whose parents had not chosen that option or it was not available in their area. Children may now be able to have Gaelic as an option if they wish. We thought it would be a positive step to widen the scope of Gaelic education to everyone who wants it. The Scottish Executive in its Educational National Priorities outlines 'Gaelic education' as a national priority and does not just limit itself to Gaelic medium education, which will undoubtedly mean that mainstream schools and special educational schools will also be able to benefit from learning Gaelic and they may hopefully be able to take Gaelic a stage further into Gaelic medium education or on to Higher Education. We also believe Gaelic as a second language could be an option for the many families who have 'dropped out' of Gaelic medium education. Obviously there is still a lot of work to be done but this is a very positive step.

Risnìdh Mòr Aoidh

Alba Branch secretary Celtic league

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Date: Thu Dec 21, 2000 1:01am Subject: MOX MADNESS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SELLAFIELD FACILITY RESTART - MOX MADNESS

The Celtic league has attacked a decision by British safety regulators to allow a restart of the MOX development facility at Sellafield.

Speaking on Manx Radio the Secretary General of the Celtic League, Bernard Moffatt, said that there was a lack of transparency surrounding safety related issues at the plant. The MOX facility ceased production after BNFL were forced to reveal that safety data at the plant, connected to MOX production, had been falsified.

The Celtic League also criticised British safety regulators at the HSE and said that the British nuclear programme was so inextricably linked to the British government that it was impossible to accept that the HSE, itself a government agency, could be totally objective.

The League said that safety regulation of nuclear facilities around the Irish sea has been a disaster for over three decades, with spills from Sellafield and incidents and alerts at other nuclear plants, such as Heysham and Wylfa Power stations on the Lancs. and N. Wales coast.

The Secretary General said communities around the Irish sea faced a threat from Britain's nuclear programme and assurances from Britain's nuclear safety regulator were worthless. He called for tough Irish and Manx government action to scrutinise the latest MOX production moves.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

21/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:33am

Subject: REFORM LIBEL LAW CALL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PRESSURE TO REFORM LIBEL LAWS

The Celtic League have called for reform of legislation on the Isle of Man governing defamation and libel saying that the provisions of current legislation are inconsistent with International law governing human rights. In a letter to Chief Minister Donald

Gelling the Leaguesay:

"The Celtic League welcome the determination with which your administration is now addressing the issue of human rights. It is especially heartening that your government has indicated a wish to incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law.

Implicit in the adoption of new standards on human rights is the need to address those areas of our current law which are restrictive to freedom of expression. One area that immediately springs to mind is the current law on defamation and libel.

You will probably be aware that last year both the European Court and the United Nations Commissioner on Human Rights focused critically on libel laws in Ireland. The implication was that such law was a restriction on the freedom of expression conveyed by both the ECHR and the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Obviously reform in this area has to be balanced by the need to respect the right of an individual from inaccurate or injurious attack. However at the present time the defamation laws, both in the Isle of Man and the United Kingdom, would seem to be structured and implemented more to restrict freedom of expression than protect individual rights.

We urge you to consider reform of this archaic legislation in tandem with other legislative reform."

The League specifically highlight in the correspondence to the Chief Minister criticisms of laws in Ireland voiced last year by a report of the UN Commissioner on Human Rights. The report criticised both the level of damages and procedures of libel cases.

The Celtic League believe that the incorporation of Human Rights legislation into domestic law will invariably lead to freedom of expression suits being lodged by those who are threatened under the provisions of the Islands archaic defamation laws.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:33am

Subject: PROTEST OVER PRISONERS MAIL

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PROTEST OVER BRETON PRISONERS MAIL

The Celtic League have written to the French Embassy following the refusal by prison

authorities at some jails near Paris to accept mail for a number of Breton detainees.

In correspondence to the Ambassador in London the Secretary General has asked that clarification be sought from Justice Minister, Marylise LEBRANCHU, about policy at the various prisons in respect of rejection of prisoners mail.:

"I recently forwarded information and a copy of the Celtic League journal (CARN) to a number of Breton prisoners detained at prisons in the Paris area.

Whilst some of the recipients received the mail forwarded, in several instances the correspondence was returned.

I wonder if you could clarify from the Minister with responsibility for Prisons why this occurred.

If by forwarding mail in the manner specified we are breaching some convention or regulation governing communication with detainees it would be helpful if the prison authorities clarified this when returning the mail.

I would add that it is also unclear what happened to Xmas cards sent by our organisation (and others) to the men. Obviously if these were also withheld it is most mean-spirited."

There are now nine detainees held at prisons in France and the Celtic League is supporting their campaign to be transferred to prisons in Brittany. One other detainee, Denez RIOU, was released just prior to Xmas.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:33am

Subject: PROTEST OVER CORNISH DETENTION

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

PROTEST OVER CORNISH DETENTION

The Celtic League has expressed its concern to the Chief Constable of the Devon and Cornwall Police about the detention of three Cornish nationalist in cells prior to a magistrates Court appearance earlier this month.

The men are alleged to have removed signs belonging to English Heritage from various locations in Cornwall. Originally bailed to the Court the men answered their bail and were promptly locked in cells for three hours prior to the hearing.

In a letter to Sir John Evans Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall the Secretary General of the Celtic League says:

"I am writing to register our concern at the treatment of three Cornish nationalists who were held in cells recently (December 12) prior to a (magistrates) court hearing in your area.

I understand that the three had been detained and bailed in connection with alleged offences involving the removal of signs from 'English Heritage' sites in Cornwall. I understand that they complied with and answered their bail to appear at Court.

In the circumstances why it was felt necessary to detain them in cells for several hours escapes me.?

I can only conjecture that the political nature of the men's protest warranted in the view of your force and the courts a draconian response. If this is the case it demeans the court and the Devon & Cornwall police."

Paradoxically the action taken against the men is likely to further focus opposition in Cornwall against erosion of national identity.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:33am

Subject: IRELAND IN DOCK OVER 'OFFENCES' LAW

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

EUROPEAN COURT IRISH JUDGEMENT HAS WIDER IMPLICATIONS

The concentration of most people on the Xmas holiday period has obscured the implications of a European Court of Human rights judgement delivered against the Irish government.

Without doubt one of the most misused and malevolent pieces of legislation that attacks human rights is the infamous Offences Against the State Act (OSA) first introduced sixty years ago to combat The IRA by the Irish government.

The finding of the European court calls into question Section 52 of OSA. The human rights' judges found that the measure compromised three people's rights to a fair trial.

This was because it impugned their right to a presumption of innocence until proven otherwise, and violated their right not to incriminate themselves and retain their right

to remain silent. All of these rights are protected under the European Convention of Human Rights. Unusually, the court also awarded damages and while the compensation awards are small (£4,000 each plus costs), it is not a usual step for the court, and represents the importance the judges have attached to the cases. Reacting after the judgement Irish Justice Minister John O'Donoghue made it clear there will be no rush to react to the findings of the Strasbourg court and a spokesman for the Minister said the ruling would be examined by the special committee, which is already examining the Offences Against the State Act as part of the terms of the Good Friday Agreement.

However, Mr. O'Donoghue has already begun preparations for incorporating the European Convention on Human Rights into domestic law and it seems unlikely that Ireland can ignore the judgement.

The judgement may also have ramifications for other Celtic countries. The United Kingdom and the Isle of Man have introduced Prevention of Terrorism Acts the provisions of which will undoubtedly eventually be tested when the Human Rights Act is incorporated into domestic law. In addition it is clear that a major consideration in the ECHR judgement against Ireland was the infringement implicit within OSA of inferences drawn from the right to silence. This is already an issue under scrutiny in respect of flawed criminal justice legislation introduced in N. Ireland, mainland Britain and the Isle of Man.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:33am

Subject: POLICE OPERATIONS QUERY

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

UNDERCOVER POLICE OPS QUERY

The Celtic League have asked the Manx Home Affairs Minister Alan Bell what regulations govern the conduct of police undercover operations and the use of aural or visual surveillance equipment. In a letter to the Minister the League Secretary General asks:

"Could you advise what section of current Criminal Justice or Police Powers legislation regulates the operation of police undercover operations.

Specifically, is the use in such operations of surveillance equipment regulated by statute?

For information, I understand that in the early 1980s the then Chief Constable of the Isle of Man issued a version of a Home Office guideline covering these matters. However, subsequently in the United Kingdom when this "guidance" was made public it was held to be deficient and new procedures introduced. However, as far as I am aware, no parallel moves to control usage of mechanical or electronic devices in aural or visual surveillance operations was introduced here. At the time of the introduction of guidelines in the UK it was generally accepted that there was a need for such sensitive operations to periodically be mounted by the police - the primary purpose of aural and visual surveillance being to help confirm or dispel a suspicion of serious crime, and not to collect evidence.

As you are aware there have been several fairly weighty tomes of police procedure and criminal justice legislation introduced on the Isle of Man in the past decade. Could you please indicate which legislation controls this sensitive area of police operations."

Nearly two decades ago the Celtic League co-operated with Welsh nationalist MPs in exposing the Home Office guidelines referred to in the letter to Minister Alan Bell. The Celtic League also campaigned throughout the 1980s for the introduction of regulations to govern the interception of communications and submitted evidence when the Interceptions of Communications legislation was introduced on the Isle of Man ten years ago

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 10:44am

Subject: 'SILENCE' LAW CHANGE INEFFECTIVE

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SILENCE RIGHT RESTRICTION - INEFFECTIVE

For many years the right to silence was a cornerstone of the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom and the Isle of Man. However, over the past two decades that right has been eroded in the interests of the "improving" the conviction rate.

As with so many erosions of rights and liberties the right to silence was first restricted in Northern Ireland. The ability of the police and judiciary to draw inferences from an accused person's silence was felt to be an important weapon in the war against terrorism.

In 1988 the Criminal Evidence (N. Ireland) Order amended the law to allow a court or jury to draw inferences from an accused person's refusal to answer questions. As with all bad criminal justice legislation once established in N. Ireland it was extended to the

United Kingdom 'mainland' via the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

Although there was no serious research indicating that such legislation was either desirable or necessary for the Isle of Man the Manx government anxious to ape legislative changes in the UK soon introduced the restriction to the Manx legal system via the 1996 Police Powers and Procedures Bill.

At the time Civil Liberties organisations and at least one progressive member of the Manx legal profession questioned the necessity or desirability of such change. However the opposition went unheeded.

Now new research has indicated that restricting the right to silence has had little impact on conviction rates (in fact they show a decrease in respect of both terrorist and ordinary crime). The research covers the decade from the introduction of the legislation in N. Ireland.

The research indicates that the decision to attack crime via restrictions on the rights of accused persons has been ineffective in N. Ireland and would suggest that the decision to ape the legislation in the UK and subsequently in the Isle of Man was unsound.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Wed Dec 27, 2000 11:31am

Subject: SYSTEMS NOSE DIVE FOR OBSOLETE CHOPPERS

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

SYSTEMS NOSE DIVE FOR OBSOLETE CHOPPERS

Helicopter operations over South Armagh, already the subject of criticism on safety grounds by local community groups, seem destined to be even more fraught with danger.

The area has for several years had the highest density of military helicopter operations due to supply operation for the myriad of bases which dot the country side in the area. Because of the continued failure by the British to scale down its military operation and close bases these re-supply operations continue apace. One group insists that the level and frequency of flights has increased

Many of the helicopter bases or landing pads are adjacent to villages and farmsteads and from January an added risk may occur because radio systems (ILS) in some military aircraft and helicopters will become obsolete when new frequencies are allotted to commercial users. The extent of the difficulty is impossible to quantify

because the MOD are being 'incredibly tight-lipped' about the problems likely to occur- possibly because they just cannot say how widespread it will be.

The MOD are modifying some of the more modern aircraft to meet the problems posed but the semi-obsolete machines (helicopters) which operate in south east Ulster are unlikely to receive upgrades. In any case British military helicopters are notoriously poorly equipped and instrument deficiencies are said to have contributed, for example, to the Chinook crash at Kintyre six years ago.

The problem is a general one which will effect RAF operations across the United Kingdom. The MOD remain positive about the problem - until the first crash!

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

27/12/00

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Date: Sun Dec 31, 2000 7:51am

Subject: RECORDS 'SWEEPED' ON AER LINGUS CRASH

CELTIC LEAGUE - PRESS INFORMATION

AER LINGUS CRASH QUERY

The Celtic League has re-iterated its concerns to the Irish government about the re-opened investigation into an airliner crash over the Irish sea thirty years ago.

All sixty-one people on board an Aer Lingus Viscount airliner died when the aircraft crashed in the Irish sea in March 1968. The incident still constitutes the most serious loss of life in any air crash over the Irish sea. Speculation about possible British military involvement (the aircraft had been passing close to the Aberporth missile testing range off Caernarvon bay) resulted in a review of evidence last year by the British and Irish governments. The League has queried the accuracy of some of the evidence supplied by the UK for that review. (The British MOD had said that parts of a SD2 Stiletto target drone found near the crash site could not be connected with the crash as in 1968 no launch system had been developed for the type. However, we have pointed out that Shorts the Belfast plane maker modified an obsolete Canberra bomber as a launch vehicle for the type in 1967).

Six months ago the Irish government set up a further independent assessment and this is currently under-way.

The League have now written to Mary O'Rourke at the Department of Public Enterprise (see attached) pointing out that new research at the United Kingdom Public Record Office indicates that information, about either the crash or the Aberporth facility, appears to have been 'swept' clean at that facility.

The League have also written to the British ambassador to Dublin asking why a promised reply concerning the inaccuracy of information supplied to the inter-governmental review has not been forthcoming.

There is little doubt that the unresolved issue of the fate of EI-712 is a continuing embarrassment to both the British and Irish governments. A combination of relatives, pressure groups and the media is not satisfied that the full story has yet emerged.

The British government for its part have not helped their case (that the Aberporth missile testing facility was closed and could not therefore have been involved in the crash) by destroying critical records and losing pertinent documentation e.g. the logbooks from several naval warships

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

31/12/00

(Text of letter to Minister O'Rourke)

The Minister for Public Enterprise

Mrs. Mary O'Rourke, TD.,

Department of Public Enterprise,

44 Kildare Street,

Dublin 2,

Ireland.

Dear Minister

Ref. Loss of Aer Lingus Airliner EI-712

I wonder if you could advise when the review into the Aer Lingus crash, by the Independent Crash Investigators you appointed, will be completed and made public.

You will recall that I wrote in July querying assurances given, during the preliminary inter-governmental review, about a part from a missile drone discovered in the Tuskar area. The part was from a US AQM-37A target drone. These were manufactured in the United Kingdom by Shorts as the SD.2 Stiletto. The report dismissed any relationship between this drone and the crash saying:

"Further research conducted by AAIU indicates that the UK did not have the capability to launch this type of drone before July 1968".

I subsequently forwarded information to your Office and also wrote to the British Ambassador pointing out that this was untrue. I still await a reply from the British Ambassador (Ivor Roberts) promised in July (see encl.).

If the Independent Crash Investigators are still working on their report they might wish to consider some additional factors which are a source of concern to us:

I understand that the Public Records Office (PRO) contains CAA files holding information/analysis of domestic air accidents, going back to the 1950s. However, nothing on the 1968 Tuskar crash is recorded. You will recall that the British government confirmed that the CAA did compile information on the crash.

Interestingly, the PRO also contains information on various world-wide air tragedies being accidents not investigated primarily by the UK but by other countries and obviously obtained for research purposes. Again there is no mention in this file of the Tuskar crash. A crash in Nigeria in the early sixties, in which two people died, is recorded. This latter was obviously deemed worthy of retention by the UK authorities, but there is nothing on the St. Phelim.

Bizarrely two accidents involving Viscount aircraft are recorded, one just before 1968 and the other just after, but again no mention of the St. Phelim.

I also understand that sections of Navy files, where you would on a common sense basis expect to find mention of the extensive naval activity in the few hours before - and for months after - the St. Phelim crash, contain no reference

Disturbingly, there are no files relating to Aberporth Missile Range in the PRO after March 1968, despite the fact that for the period prior to the crash innocuous routine files about station administration (such as those released and seized on by the media about missile test trial difficulties some years ago) do exist.

The source who checked the Public Records Office situation said that they left the building with a distinct feeling that all information which might have had some relevance or bearing on the events of the time had been "swept".

Now, this may all be coincidental but taken together with the trashing of documents, already admitted to by the British authorities, and the supply of inaccurate information (such as that referred to in paragraph 2) it is extremely suspicious.

I trust your Office, or the Independent enquiry, will investigate these matters via a visit to the PRO to cross-reference the points we make.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

31/12/00

Celtic League News Archive - January 2001

JURY STILL OUT ON SAFETY OF CS SPRAY

The deployment of CS spray by the Manx police, two weeks ago, has resulted in its use on three occasions.

It would seem its operational use and effectiveness are therefore confirmed. However, serious doubts remain about the justification for using the (CS) spray in police operations. The agent differs from CS gas, which was introduced and then withdrawn from use in N. Ireland, but as with the Gas the risks associated with its operation (to both operator and target) remain undetermined. A report by the Department of Health in 1999 concluded that there were no health concerns over its use and a Police Complaints Authority assessment last year also gave it a qualified thumbs up, provided it was used under the proper conditions. However, a series of letters and articles published in the medical periodicals such as the British Medical Journal and the Pharmaceutical Journal continued to question its safety. These medical sources reveal considerable disquiet and differences in estimates of the hazards involved in using a severe irritant within confined spaces, and where emergency action is called for and cool calculations may be out of the question.

CS spray is a solution of CS solid mixed with a non-aqueous solvent, methyl isobutyl ketone. Methyl isobutyl ketone is an industrial degreasing agent and much of the irritation produced when a face is sprayed can be attributed to the solvent, which irritates eyes and respiratory tract. Moreover, allergic contact dermatitis from repeated exposure may affect the user. The solvent can cause skin reddening, scaling, blistering and peeling as well as irritation to the eyes and respiratory tract.

In at least one case in the UK death resulted from the use of CS spray and the merits or otherwise of its creeping deployment across the Police services of the UK is the subject of continued controversy. The use of CS spray may be effectively a 'fait accompli' as regards the Isle of Man but the long term effects of its continued use are more difficult to quantify.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League
01/01/01

MANX NATIONALIST ATTITUDES HARDEN

Speaker at annual commemoration attacks traitorous government for "genocidal destruction of the Manx people".

The Chairman of the Manx Nationalist Party (Mec Vannin) launched a strong attack on the policies of the Manx government during the annual Illiam Dhone commemoration held on the 2nd of January.

Speaking at the ceremony Mark Kermode condemned as "traitors" those within the Manx administration who sought "growth for growth's sake" and he said that the "real policy makers" in the Isle of Man were "faceless entities that manipulate the government to their own ends".

The address formed part of a series of attacks by both Mark Kermode and Manx language activist Phil Kelly on politicians and business interests who are seen by nationalists to be exploiting the Isle of Man for their own interests and destroying the distinct cultural identity of the Manx people.

Both speakers reflected a concern that government policies "have resulted in a genocidal destruction of the Manx nation".

The statements, at the annual commemoration to a martyr executed by the English in 1663, are often seen as a reflection of the attitude of the nationalist political and cultural movement. This year's comments indicate a growing frustration at the sell-out by the Manx government of the Manx Nation and a marks a hardening of attitude amongst nationalists.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League
03/01/01

BRETON PRISONERS SUPPORT AT MANX MARTYR COMMEMORATION

The Secretary General of the Celtic League has said that the struggle to achieve freedom for the Celtic countries still goes on and nationalists are suffering imprisonment today just as others suffered in the past.

Speaking at the annual wreath laying commemoration ceremony (2/1/01) to Manx patriot Illiam Dhone who was executed by the English in 1663 he said that the Celtic League were active, as ever, in support of those imprisoned as part of the National independence struggles.

He highlighted in particular the plight of nine Bretons currently imprisoned by the French government some of whom have recently taken part in hunger strikes to focus attention on there campaign to be moved to prisons in Brittany.

The Celtic League is supporting their campaign.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League
03/01/01

"MANXMEN NEED NOT APPLY"

The Manx Nationalist Party, Mec Vannin, has attacked the decision of the Manx government to pass over for promotion the Deputy Chief Constable of the Isle of Man. When a new Chief Constable was appointed last year.

In an article in the nationalist news-sheet "Yn Pabyr Seyr" they say:

"Recently retired Deputy Chief Constable Alan Cretney, in keeping with all his predecessors, had to be able to perform the job of Chief Constable whenever the incumbent was not available to do so. In other words, he had to be competent to be a Chief Constable. Despite this, and again like his predecessors, when the opportunity arose for him to fill the job to which he was deputy, he was ignored. He wasn't passed over in favour of what may have been considered a better candidate from within our force, he was passed over in favour of someone from entirely outside the Island, whose knowledge of the Island was limited, and who had not acted in a comparable role to Mr. Cretney.

Further to this, the successful applicant had, at the time of his appointment, decided to quit policing to go into "consultancy." This raises the question of motivation. No-one can criticise a person who believes that their life and career is best furthered by leaving the police but what selection panel would consider such a person as best candidate for a role of far greater authority to which they had previously served?

The role of Chief Constable must be just that, a Chief of Police whose life's work is dedicated to policing. "Managerialism" is not appropriate to many occupations and policing is one of them. Mr. Culverhouse's buzz-words and phrases and playing with image may be (arguably) good for public profile, but is it improving policing?

Mr. Culverhouse aside, the episode firmly re-iterates what has been said for many years on all walks of higher employment in Mannin: Manxmen need not apply". The article along with other comment delivered at the annual Illiam Dhooie commemoration indicates a sharpening of attitude by nationalists to Manx government policies.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

03/01/01

CS IS SAFE SAY POLICE

League approach British Home Secretary to ascertain if all research has been revealed.

The Manx Police have responded to concerns expressed by the Celtic League about the deployment of CS Spray operationally by the Manx force.

The Police have defended its introduction and said that the Spray is cleared by the United Kingdom Home Office. They also said the Spray was unlikely to have been

deployed for use if the manufacturer had concerns over its safety because of the threat of litigation.

The Celtic League have now written to Home Secretary Jack Straw asking if all research into the effects of the Spray undertaken by the United Kingdom Chemical and Biological Research establishment at Porton Down has been made available to both the Police and the public. The League have also written to the authorities in Wales and Scotland to clarify the position there.

Research at Porton, in 1996, raised question-marks about the safety of CS Spray and we understand that some of this research has still not been made public.

We have also asked the Home Secretary about safe dosage limits fixed by the manufacturer and how these can be monitored in operational situations.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

03/01/01

*The United Kingdom Home Secretary
Mr. Jack Straw MP
The Home Office
Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT*

Dear Mr. Straw,

Ref. CS Spray.

I write with reference to the deployment of CS Spray by a number of Police Forces in England and Wales.

I understand that this deployment was/is endorsed by the Home Office. Could I enquire what research the Home Office conducted prior to its introduction, if the results of this research have been made public and where copies can be obtained? Has this research defined a safe dosage limit? (see below)<

I understand that the Chemical and Biological Research Establishment at Porton Down produced a series of reports (from 1996) one of which suggested that the spray posed a serious hazard and could cause cancer. Have all the reports produced for you by Porton Down been made public and if so where can copies be obtained ?

I have seen a quote in a BBC report attributed to a campaign group opposed to CS Spray in the UK which comments on safety limits recommended by the manufacturer - as follows:

"Union Carbide who manufacture it recommend a safety limit of one part in a million, which is equivalent to a strong smell. But when you are getting sprayed in the face with the stuff, you get a lot more than a strong smell".

I appreciate graphic language may be used by opponents of a particular policy but can you confirm that the dosage received when CS Spray is directed at the face does not exceed the safe limit set by the manufacturer?

Finally, I appreciate that there is a considerable difference between CS Spray and CS Gas which was deployed in N. Ireland in the 1970s. However can you explain why Police and troops asked to deploy with CS Gas there were provided with protective equipment to insure against inhalation or other contamination and yet there is no comparable safety procedure for the usage of CS Spray?

Yours sincerely,

*J B Moffatt
Secretary General*

03/01/01

Letter to Sottish Executive (also similar to Wales)

*First Minister
Scottish Executive
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ*

Dear Sir,

Ref. CS Spray

I draw your attention to the attached correspondence to the United Kingdom Home Secretary concerning the deployment of CS Spray by police forces in England and Wales.

Could you indicate which forces in Scotland use this agent? Could you also confirm if all the Porton Down research we refer to in our correspondence has been made available to both the Police Forces and the public.?

We understand that in the Porton Down reports it was suggested that the solvent Methyl isobutryl ketone (MIBK) could be poisonous and in the long term carcinogenic and mutagenic. Have you any information which confirms or denies this and is that information available to the Police Forces and the public?

Yours sincerely,

*J B Moffatt
Secretary General*

03/01/01

MITTERAND ALLEGATIONS LATEST IN SERIES OF ARMS LINKS

New allegations linking the son of the late French president to arms trading in Africa indicate that Manx registered companies may still be involved in this deplorable trade. This despite assurances that loopholes allowing Arms Traders to operate from the Isle of Man would be plugged.

Once again the links alleging trading by companies operating from the Isle of Man with the arms trade in Africa have been exposed. Jean-Christophe Mitterand son of the late French president is accused of illegal arms trafficking and is said to have used a string of companies in various tax havens including Switzerland and the Isle of Man. This is the latest in a string of connections stretching back decades which have seen Manx based companies involved in arms trading and breaches of UN sanctions on the continent.

Last year a United Kingdom newspaper (1) exposed the use by British companies of offshore centres like the Isle of Man in arming the Rwanda Hutu militia. These militias were involved in several horrendous incidents including an attack on a group of British and American tourists. Eight of the party, including four Britons, were butchered.

This was not the first Rwanda link. In November 1996 documents seized in Rwanda from retreating Hutu militia revealed a tangled web of arms trafficking linked to the Isle of Man and other off-shore centres(2).

The 'Sandline' episode also showed that arms traders were still using offshore jurisdictions in an effort to conceal their tracks.

What is perhaps disturbing about these Africa links is that they are not isolated incidents but stretch back over decades. There is indeed a culture of shadowy and sinister links which probably began at the time of Apartheid and the Rhodesia sanctions and have continued since.

In 1987 the United Kingdom Independent newspaper (3) revealed details of secret meetings between the Isle of Man government and Southern African business interests.

Also in 1987 first details of an aircraft leasing and transport operation similar to that cited in the recent news reports was revealed. The Observer newspaper (4) carried a report that a company with offices registered in the Isle of Man, Guernsey and Shannon freeport in the Irish Republic was engaged in leasing Hercules transport aircraft to a company called Southern Air Transport, based in Florida, which was at that time engaged in supplying arms to rebels fighting with UNITA against the Angolan government.

After the exposure of the Manx involvement in the Rwanda genocide the Celtic League called for law changes which would make it impossible for the arms dealers, who trade on the death and misery of hundreds of thousands of people, to operate here. The government responded with the Islands FSC announcing that loopholes would be closed (5). The loopholes however appear to still exist.

Have our calls and those of others (6) gone unheeded with more people dead? Why has no one been prosecuted for assisting in one of the worst genocides in the last decade (indeed century) the massacre of one million Tutsis. We should recognise also that, although the deaths of the European tourists last year were well publicised, the militias armed by these companies are still spreading a rain of murder, rape and destruction across the Central African region with weapons supplied at the time with the help of companies operating from the Isle of Man and other offshore centres.

The Mitterand connection in just the latest in a series of allegations some proven about links between tax havens and the International arms trade it is past time an extensive International investigation was mounted to root out the merchants of death once and for all

J B Moffatt
Secretary General Celtic League

04/01/01

Reference sources:

- (1) UK Firms Armed Hutu Killers - Observer 7/3/99
- (2) British Company Supplied Arms to Hutu Militia - Independent 18/11/96
- (3) Island Accused in sanctions Scandal - Independent 22/1/97
- (4) MP Linked to Firm in Pretoria Oil Deals May - Observer 1987?
- (5) Rwanda FSC Acts Over Guns Supply - Isle of Man Courier 23/11/96
- (6) Reform Needed to End Abuse - Editorial Manx Independent November 1996

GERMANY REVIEWS STANCE OVER McBRIDE KILLERS

League asks NATO - why no Code to preclude the deployment under arms of convicted murders?

The Celtic League welcome the news that German Defence Minister, Rudolph Scharping, is reviewing a decision to allow two British soldiers, convicted of the murder in Ulster to continue to serve in Germany.

Scots Guards Mark Wright and James Fisher were convicted of the murder of Belfast man Peter McBride in 1992 but released by Mo Mowlam in 1998 and allowed to rejoin their regiment.

The Celtic League has been a vociferous opponent of the decision to allow the two murderers to rejoin their Regiment and in December 1998 we wrote to all NATO governments alerting them to the fact that British Armed forces, sent to serve in their countries, may include those convicted of serious crime, including murder, in N. Ireland. We said:

"in recent years, the British government has allowed its Army to accept back into its ranks a number of servicemen who have been convicted of the murder of civilians whilst on service in N. Ireland, A recent example is the re-integration back into the British Army of two Scots guardsmen Mark Wright and James Fisher who murdered a Belfast Catholic man, and father of two children Peter McBride. These individuals together with others could be deployed in your country.

It is of course a matter for your government to determine if this situation is either safe or morally desirable.

We would also question if the re-integration of convicted killers into the British Armed Forces is not at odds with the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty".

The League will be again writing to all NATO governments re-iterating that they have a moral duty to their people not to allow convicted murderers to be deployed by the British Army in their countries.

The League have also written to the NATO Secretary General, George Robertson, asking why NATO has no Code or Standard which precludes those convicted of murder being deployed under arms by the Organisation.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

06/01/01

Text of letter to NATO SEC-GENERAL

*Mr. George Robertson
Secretary General
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
B-1110 Brussels
Belgium*

Dear Secretary General,

As a former British Defence Secretary you will be familiar with the case of two Scots Guardsmen, Mark Wright and James Fisher, who were convicted of the murder of Belfast man Peter McBride in 1992 but released by Mo Mowlam in 1998 and allowed to rejoin their regiment.

The family of the murdered man and sympathetic groups have long campaigned to ensure that these soldiers do not continue to serve under arms. Recently the Irish Parliament unanimously condemned the British government over its stance on this issue. We understand that now the German Government, via Defence Minister Rudolph Scharping, are reviewing their decision to allow the two British soldiers to continue to serve in Germany.

The Celtic League wrote to all NATO Governments in 1998 advising them that the British government was allowing those convicted of serious crimes, including murder, to rejoin combat units.

Can you advise why NATO apparently has no Code of Practice or Standard that precludes convicted murders serving in its armed Forces?

Can you also advise which NATO countries allow those convicted of serious crimes such as murder to serve in their armed forces?

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

06/01/01

Pro -forma letter to All NATO Embassies - London

*The Ambassador
Embassy of*

Dear Sir,

In December 1998 we wrote to all NATO governments alerting them to the fact that British troops, sent to serve in their countries, include those convicted of serious crime, including murder, in N. Ireland.

We said:

"in recent years, the British government has allowed its Army to accept back into its ranks a number of servicemen who have been convicted of the murder of civilians whilst on service in N. Ireland, A recent example is the re-integration back into the British Army of two Scots guardsmen Mark Wright and James Fisher who murdered a Belfast Catholic man, and father of two children Peter McBride. These individuals together with others could be deployed in your country.

It is of course a matter for your government to determine if this situation is either safe or morally desirable.

We would also question if the re-integration of convicted killers into the British Armed Forces is not at odds with the preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty".

Our comment at that time has a new significance given the news that German Defence Minister, Rudolph Scharping, is reviewing a decision to allow the two British soldiers mentioned in our correspondence to you, to continue to serve in Germany.

I trust that you will convey a copy of our letter and the enclosed copy of the letter to the Secretary General of NATO to your Defence and Foreign Ministries

Yours sincerely

*J B Moffatt
Secretary General*

06/01/01

DUTCH DUMP NUCLEAR WASTE AT SELLAFIELD

The Celtic League has written to the Dutch government to protest at its continued dumping of its nuclear waste at Sellafield.

In a letter to the Dutch Embassies in London and Dublin the League say that the policy shows a callous disregard for the safety of communities around the Irish sea and a contempt for the governments of Ireland and the Isle of Man. Both the Irish and Manx government are strong opponents of the operations of the Sellafield nuclear plant and have repeatedly pressed the United Kingdom to close the accident-prone facility.

The Dutch are currently de-commissioning a nuclear plant at Dodewaard in the Netherlands and shipment from the plant arrived at Sellafield prior to Xmas.

In addition to the dangers posed by the storage or reprocessing of the spent fuel there is also the added hazard posed by its transportation through the Irish sea. Two years ago the Celtic League protested to the British government and BNFL about the use of Ro Ro ferries to transport waste between the Continent and the United Kingdom. Subsequently the Secretary General of the League visited the BNFL transportation facility at Barrow to view safety standards.

It would appear this latest shipment was conveyed on a purpose built nuclear transport ship. However, as the 1990 report by LARGE & ASSOCIATES (nuclear safety consultants) established, the risks associated with the use of even purpose-built nuclear transportation vessels of the type BNFL use poses an unacceptably high risk.

The League will be urging the Irish and Manx governments to protest about the shipments to both the British and Dutch governments.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

06/01/01

Text of letter to Netherlands Embassies London & Dublin

*The Ambassador
Royal Netherlands Embassy
38 Hyde Park Gate
London SW7 5DP*

06/01/01

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I understand that shipments of spent nuclear fuel from the Netherlands to the British Nuclear Fuel facility at Sellafield have resumed. A shipment from the plant being de-commissioned by GKN at Dodewaard arrived at the BNFL site just prior to Xmas.

Your government must be aware of the strident opposition to the operation of this plant by community and environmental groups around the Irish sea. Your government will also be aware of the long standing opposition of both the Irish and Manx governments to the operation of the plant and their repeated requests to the United Kingdom to close the facility.

In the circumstances your governments decision to allow these shipments shows a callous disregard for the safety of communities around the Irish sea and a contempt for the governments of Ireland and the Isle of Man.

The Sellafield plant has an appalling operational record. Over the years there have been hundreds of incidents involving plant malfunctions and leakage of radiation. The plant was the subject of a major scandal only months ago when safety standards were found to have been breached and in the last two weeks a fire occurred within the complex.

In addition to the risks posed at the plant itself there is the added danger to the marine environment of the Irish sea posed by the sea transportation of your countries nuclear waste. A report, prepared by the nuclear safety consultants Large & Associates in 1990, concluded that despite the construction of purpose-built nuclear transports the risk posed by sea transportation were unacceptably high.

Given these circumstances I would respectfully request that the government of the Netherlands reconsider its decision to allow these waste shipments to continue.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

LOW FLYING BEGINS AGAIN

Obsolete aircraft and outdated systems increase the dangers posed to rural communities in Wales and Scotland as RAF low flying training resumes.

Despite a number of serious accidents, involving aircraft participating in low level operations the RAF will kick-start the New Year with a series of exercises.

Air operations commence over the Tactical Training Area in mid Wales from the beginning of next week and more general low-level training will also be under-way over other areas of Wales and Scotland designated for low flying.

It seems inevitable that serious accident or loss of life will occur. The mainstay of the RAF operational air fleet Tornado, Jaguar and Harrier aircraft are now approaching obsolescence. The Jaguar, for example, is now almost thirty years old and although subject to upgrade is hardly at the cutting edge of operational effectiveness. The Tornado meanwhile, again some of which have been subjected to expensive upgrades, is still thought to be plagued by engine problems which caused a series of aircraft fires over the past decade. It was also revealed last month that from January 2001 an added risk may occur because radio systems (ILS) in some military aircraft and helicopters will become obsolete when new frequencies are allotted to commercial users. The extent of the difficulty is impossible to quantify because the MOD are being 'incredibly tight-lipped' about the problems likely to occur - possibly because they just cannot say how widespread it will be.

Community groups in Wales and Scotland are appalled at the decision of the RAF to continue low level operations of this type and even some military Chiefs doubt the effectiveness of the policy, given combat experience in the Balkans and Iraq. In Wales calls have been made for action by the Welsh Assembly to condemn low flying and to post public warnings of the danger posed.

The Celtic League has long called for the RAF to discontinue its dangerous war games and operations at levels as low as 100'. The danger is not just that posed by noise pollution but the very real possibility that one of these aircraft will plough into a country village or hamlet causing death and injury.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

06/01/01

RANGE POLLUTION QUERY

The Celtic League have written to the British Defence Minister about the environmental impact of depleted uranium weapons test fired from ranges in SW Scotland into the N. Irish sea. The Secretary General of the League says in correspondence to Geoff Hoon MP:

"I refer to current concerns about the radiation pollution associated with the use of depleted uranium munitions.

We understand that for many years ordnance of this type has been test fired from ranges on the coast of SW Scotland and Cumbria. Can you provide an indication of the quantity of ordnance fired from these ranges during the period that depleted uranium rounds have been in use?

In the light of the concerns about the environmental impact of these munitions will the MOD or the Environment Agency be carrying out a new study to ascertain if this material, the debris from which the MOD did not recover, poses any long term threat to the marine environment."

Depleted uranium weapons are currently in focus following revelations that troops and civilians exposed to them in the Balkans and Iraq have contracted cancer. A number of deaths are alleged to have occurred.

The Celtic league recognize that test firing into the sea would reduce any threat. However, it is a concern that an area already heavily polluted with radiation by the BNFL facility at Sellafield has this added environmental pollutant. The Solway coast and bay area is a key nursery area for some species of sea-fish and the League are anxious to ensure that the MOD provide the fullest background on any long term pollution problem.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

08/01/01

DON'T CONCEAL NUCLEAR INCIDENTS - MEACHER TOLD

Micheal Meacher, the United Kingdom Environment Minister, is being asked by the Celtic League why a fire at the plant was apparently hushed up for some days after it occurred on Xmas eve.

In correspondence to the Minister the League state:

I understand that a fire occurred in the Sellafield Vitrification Plant on Christmas Eve.

Could you advise when information about the fire was released to the public or media by either the UK government or BNFL.

Given the horrendous consequences of the fire in the 1950s at the Sellafield Windscale plant what arrangements does the British government have for alerting neighbouring States to such incidents.

I appreciate that British Nuclear Fuels have indicated that the fire had a below scale classification on the INES but nevertheless it is disturbing that any fire at a plant of this type is not immediately notified to neighbouring states.

It is worrying that, given the previous record of Sellafield and other Irish sea nuclear plants, there does not seem to be immediate public information when incidents of this type occur.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General

Celtic League

08/01/01

DEPLETED URANIUM - ANSWERS SOUGHT

League ask about USAF A-10 crash in mid Wales and which ranges in Wales and Scotland were used by tank-buster aircraft and shipboard missile defence systems on military exercises.

The Celtic League has broadened the scope of its enquiries about the possible contamination of sites around the British Isles with depleted uranium.

The present focus has been on experimental firing of the munitions from bases in SW Scotland and Cumbria. However, the League have now written to UK armed forces Minister John Speller asking if ranges in other areas of the country have been used. They are also seeking information about the crash in mid-Wales some years ago of a USAF A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft. The A-10 is a main delivery platform for DUM and is used extensively in the tank-busting role. Based in Europe for nearly two decades the League believe it has exercised frequently on ranges in Wales and Scotland and over the N. Irish sea.

The League have also asked John Speller to confirm where naval warships anti-missile defence systems which use the munition were tested. The League have specifically requested detail of any testing at the Aberporth test facility in the central Irish sea area.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General

Celtic League

13/01/01

Text of letter to Ministry of Defence follows:

*Mr. John Speller MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence*

Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB.

14/01/01

Dear Minister,

Re. Depleted Uranium Munitions (DUM)

Given the current focus on the possible toxicity of depleted uranium munitions we are trying to establish just exactly where in the United Kingdom these weapons have been tested or used on exercise. Ranges in SW Scotland and Cumbria are utilised for test firing but could you advise if USAF A-10 Thunderbolt aircraft based in Europe have used ranges in the United Kingdom for exercises during which this munition was expended.

I understand that Thunderbolt aircraft used ranges in the N. Irish sea area (one now disused) and also possibly Pembrey in Wales. Can you confirm or deny this? What other air to ground firing ranges have been used by the type?

On a related point, the Royal Navy is to discontinue using DUM on its warships. The weapons which use this type of munition i.e. the close range missile defence systems must also have been subjected to test firing against target aircraft. Can you advise which ranges around the British Isles were used and specifically if, during the development of these systems, the facility at Aberporth in mid Wales, or missile ranges in Scotland, were used?

Finally, I understand that RAF aircraft do not use this type of munition. Can you confirm this?

As indicated above however, USAF aircraft, such as the A-10 Thunderbolt, do utilise the munitions for the 30 mm tank assault weapon they carry. I understand that one of these aircraft crashed in mid-Wales some years ago. Was it carrying any of this type of munition and if so what decontamination was undertaken at the crash site? Have there been other Thunderbolt crashes in the UK?

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

McBRIDE - PROTESTS CONTINUE

Several League branches add voice to protest - NATO deployment of the murderers highlighted by League.

Several branches of the Celtic League have lodged protest with the British Government about the decision to allow convicted killers Mark Wright and James Fisher to continue to serve in the British Army.

In a letter to the Irish Premier, Bertie Ahern the Leagues United States branch Secretary, Margaret Sexton, expresses concern and urges the Irish government to

"continue to impress on the British government the offense that the decision causes to the family of Mr. McBride". In a parallel letter to Defence Minister Geoff Hoon Ms. Sexton says that the British government has "caved in to political pressure" and a high profile press campaign. She asks "Is this the example that the British Army wishes to display to the world?"

Meanwhile the Secretary of the Breton branch of the Celtic League has also written to the British Government In a letter to the Ministry of Defence Breton branch secretary Jakez Derouet says "It is quite outrageous that convicted murderers, receiving life sentences should, not only be released, but allowed to continue their careers in the British army". The Bretons also accuse the British government of bowing to "establishment pressure and a high profile and dubious press campaign".

To coincide with world wide protests last month the Celtic League Secretary General wrote to the Ambassadors of all NATO countries concerning the decision of the British army to deploy Fisher and Wright with a NATO unit in Germany. Several have responded. The Czech Embassy in London has said that no NATO troops currently serve on its soil. However, they have agreed to pass our concerns to the Foreign and Defence Ministries. The First Secretary of the Netherlands Embassy to Dublin has also been in touch with the League asking for further information and agreeing to pass on concerns.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General

Celtic League

16/01/01

CPT POSITIVE ON PRISONERS RELOCATION DEMAND

Prisoners rights body consider Celtic League concerns about Breton prisoners rights to serve sentence in homeland.

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) has responded positively to concerns expressed by the Celtic League about the plight of Breton detainees forced to serve their sentence outside Brittany.

A letter from CPT Deputy Executive Secretary, Geneviève Mayer, states:

"In certain of its reports (e.g. concerning visits to Spain), the European Committee has expressed its view that humanitarian considerations, not to mention the objectives of social rehabilitation, speak in favour of prisoners serving their sentences in the region where they have family ties, i.e. in the prisoners original social environment"

The Celtic League protest to the CPT expressed concern about the treatment of Breton, Basque or Corsican prisoners held under anti-terrorism legislation/charges. We alleged that there seemed to be a prima facie case that the treatment of the prisoners was guided by political considerations and not humanitarian principles. We

also asserted that in the case of the Breton prisoners the decision to imprison them so far from their homes was at odds with European Model Prison Rules.

CPT Deputy Executive Secretary, Geneviève Mayer, says that the members of the CPT will be advised of the concerns we raised and our request that the issue is taken up with the French Government.

One of the ten Breton detainees located at Prisons in the Paris area has been released since the original protest. However, the others continue to be detained.

In an act which seems to be a petty response to the International attention being focused on their case a Celtic cultural journal CARN, supplied by the Celtic League to each prisoner, has not been delivered.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

21/01/01

THREAT TO GAELIC IN THE HEART OF SCOTLAND

The Celtic league have criticised Perth & Kinross Council in central Scotland for their decision to consider the cessation of Gaelic Medium Education and peripatetic Gaelic teaching in Perth & Kinross.

As part of a drive to save money from the council's education budget, Perth & Kinross are consulting upon the option of closing the Gaelic Medium primary and nursery unit in Perth and of ceasing Gaelic medium secondary provision in Perth Academy. The council are also consulting upon the removal of the peripatetic Gaelic teacher who teaches the language as a subject in primary schools in Highland Perthshire. If implemented, the Celtic League believes that these cuts would also threaten the long term future of the availability of Gaelic as a secondary school subject in Perth and Breadalbane Academies.

According to Celtic League spokesman Bernard Moffatt, "Perth & Kinross Council call the area which they serve 'the Heart of Scotland'. The proposals which the council are putting forward for Gaelic are heartless and would, if implemented, tear the heart out of the local Gaelic community. We call upon the council to remove Gaelic education from their list of options for cuts."

In addition to the protest from the League's General Council individual branches are also querying the Council's action in a separate protest the Chairman of the Celtic League, Cathal O Luain, writing on behalf of its Irish branch says:

"As a supporter of Gaelic and indeed all the Celtic Languages, I am writing to you on behalf of the Irish Branch of the Celtic League to express my disappointment at the news that Perth and Kinross Council are considering the complete discontinuation both of peripatetic Gaelic subject teaching in Highland Perthshire primaries and of Gaelic medium education in Perth.

In view of progress made in recent years to redress the decades long neglect of Gaidhlig this is very surprising and would be extremely detrimental if implemented.

Like the local and national Gaelic community in Scotland, I and the Irish League Branch members find these proposed cuts totally unacceptable and urge the council to ensure that these cuts do not go ahead."

The League centrally has written to the Council Chief Executive Harry Robertson calling upon him to ensure that the threat is removed upon Gaelic medium and Gaelic subject teaching in Perth & Kinross.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

23/01/01

(Text of letter to Council - below)

*Mr. Harry Robertson (Chief Executive)
Perth and Kinross Council
2 High Street
Perth
PH1 5P*

Dear Mr Robertson,

As a group whose aim includes the promotion of the Celtic languages, we are writing to you to express our extreme concern at the news that Perth & Kinross Council are considering the axing of the Gaelic peripatetic teacher for Highland Perthshire and the total cessation of Gaelic medium education (GME) in Perth and Kinross. We call upon you to ensure that these cuts do not take place.

We would remind you that the Scottish Executive has recently designated Gaelic education as a "national priority" for education and that the recent Schools Act 2000 legally obliges local authorities to state annually "the ways in which - or the circumstances in which, they will provide Gaelic medium education and, where they do provide Gaelic medium education, of the ways in which they will seek to develop their provision of such education." If Perth & Kinross council were to axe the Gaelic peripatetic teacher and GME in the area, this would go against both Scottish Executive education policy and legislation.

Perth & Kinross Council's Gaelic education provision is seen by local Gaelic speakers as being at the very heart of the Gaelic community and of the local Gaelic revival. We feel that the withdrawal of GME in Perth and of the Peripatetic Gaelic teacher in Highland Perthshire would demoralise the local Gaelic community and reverse all of the considerable progress which has been made for the language in Perth and Kinross in recent years. Their withdrawal would also put a question mark over the long-term future of Gaelic as a secondary school subject in Breadalbane and Perth academies.

The Gaelic cuts are opposed by the parents of children in the Gaelic unit, by the local An Comunn Gaidhealach Branches and by several national Gaelic organisations such

as CLI, the national Gaelic development agency Comunn na Gàidhlig and by Comann nam Pàrant (Nàiseanta). We trust that you will listen to the national Gaelic community on this matter and will ensure that no cuts are made in Perth & Kinross Gaelic provision.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

23/01/01

VOICE OF STATELESS NATIONS WILL BE HEARD

The Celtic League gave its wholehearted support to the conference in Barcelona last weekend (19-21 January) which brought together a broad range of Stateless Nations within the Political States of the European Union.

The League was represented at the conference by Cathal O Luain, Convenor, and Mark Kermode, Assistant Secretary General.

CONSEU - the Conference on Nations Without State in Europe - was meeting for its fourth session and the earlier emphasis on cultural and linguistic matters was complemented with an emphasis on self-determination, sovereignty and human rights.

There was a feeling amongst many delegates that the evolving European political scene was at a "cross-roads". Europe could either become a Centralist Super-State perpetuating the agenda of the old Nation States such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and Spain or it could evolve into a genuine 'Europe of Peoples'.

A broad swathe of the National minorities of Europe were represented at the meeting which included delegates from Scotland, Wales, Ireland, Mannin (Isle of Man), Brittany, Faeroe Islands, Galicia, Basque Country (Euskal Herria), Catalunya, Slovenia, Flanders, Corsica, Sardinia and others.

Cathal O Luain and Mark Kermode outlined the commitment of the Celtic League over forty years to the cause of self-determination, not only for the Celtic people but also for others in the diaspora of forgotten States of Europe.

The League was complimented by Yann Choucq, the Legal adviser of CONSEU for its work for both National and Human Rights.

The meeting agreed a programme of action, the most important decision being the formation of a Standing Secretariat to progress joint objectives ahead of probable fundamental changes to the European Union in three years time.

A stark warning was given by a Basque delegate who said that a failure, by a future enlarged EU, to recognize all National groups within its boundaries would be "an act of genocide".

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

23/01/01

GERMANS FOLLOW DUTCH IN SELLAFIELD WASTE MOVE

The German government has announced the resumption of shipments of spent nuclear fuel to the Sellafield reprocessing plant in Cumbria, just days after a parallel move was announced by the Netherlands government.

The German government possibly believes that its decision to 'hide under the skirts' of the Dutch may deflect media attention.

However, the Celtic League have registered protests with the German Embassies in Dublin and London. They have asked the respective Ambassadors to advise their governments of the concern felt by communities which live near the plant about such shipments.

Germany suspended shipments two years ago (1998) and at that time there was strong opposition from its own citizens about the contracts.

Also in 1998 the Celtic League protested to the British government, and the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), about the transports, alleging that the vessels used were unsuitable. It is thought that on this occasion BNFL will use its own purpose-built sea transports which have enhanced safety features. However, globally, governments are not reassured about the safety of sea transportation. Last week a sea shipment from Europe to Japan, via the South Atlantic, was forced out of a two hundred mile exclusion zone by the Argentine Navy.

The Celtic league has pointed out to the German authorities that an objective study of sea transportation by nuclear consultants, Large and Associates, concluded that risks were "unacceptably high".

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

23/01/01

(Text of correspondence to German Embassies - Dublin & London - below)

*The Ambassador
German Embassy
Trimleston Ave
Booterstown
Dublin
IRELAND*

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I understand that shipments of spent nuclear fuel from Germany to the British Nuclear Fuel facility at Sellafield are to be resumed.

Your government has previously been made aware of the strong opposition to the operation of this plant by community and environmental groups around the Irish sea. Your government will also be aware of the long standing opposition of both the Irish and Manx governments to the operation of the plant and their repeated requests to the

United Kingdom to close the facility. Your countries actions therefore not only display a contempt for the concerns of ordinary citizens in the communities around the Irish sea but also show a blatant disregard for the stated position of the two governments

It has not escaped us that the decision by the German authorities comes just days after a similar decision by the government of the Netherlands.

The Sellafield plant has an appalling operational record. Over the years there have been hundreds of incidents involving plant malfunctions and leakage of radiation. The plant was the subject of a major scandal only months ago when safety standards were found to have been breached and in the last two weeks a fire occurred within the complex.

In addition to the risks posed at the plant itself there is the added danger to the marine environment of the Irish sea posed by the sea transportation of your countries nuclear waste. A report, prepared by the nuclear safety consultants Large & Associates in 1990, concluded that despite the construction of purpose-built nuclear transports the risk posed by sea transportation were unacceptably high.

Your decision to continue trading with BNFL despite its dreadful record is extremely disturbing. I trust our concerns will be conveyed to your government?

Yours sincerely

*J B Moffatt
23/01/01*

MAN BLINDED BY CS WINS DAMAGES

Just weeks after the Isle of Man police deployed CS Spray Merseyside Police have been criticised for the use of the chemical agent device after a man temporarily blinded by the spray was awarded £25,000 in damages.

Wayne Fudge, 30, of Halewood, sued the force for assault, wrongful arrest, false imprisonment and malicious prosecution. A Liverpool County Court jury found in his favour and damages were agreed.

The case is a salutary warning to those in police forces throughout the British Isles that serious costs will be incurred if the weapon is used inappropriately.

Earlier this month the Celtic League wrote to British Home Secretary, Jack Straw, asking him to make public the results of critical analysis of the device carried out by the Chemical and Biological Research Establishment at Porton Down.

Manx Police assured the public that, when used correctly, the chemical agent causes no long-term harm. It seems that Liverpool Crown Court accept that in some cases the chemical agent can cause substantial harm.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

23/01/01

IS 'ARROGANT' REID A GOOD CHOICE FOR ULSTER?

It took one of John Reid's own country men to sum him up perfectly when in the cause of an exchange over the innocuous issue of fishing limits SNP fisheries spokesman Richard Lochhead. Mr. Lockhead said:

"John Reid's arrogance is breathtaking and his determination to do as little as possible for Scotland beggars belief".

Others have experienced the Reid arrogance including those in Ulster. Reid's concern over the Scots Guards who killed Belfastman Peter McBride meant an early meeting, in his capacity as Armed Forces Minister, with campaigners for the two murders. His door was not so open however when the relatives of Mr. McBride sought a meeting.

Reid's obdurate "stonewalling", again as Armed Forces Minister, was also to the fore as questions started to be raised about the "accident" in which 24 key members of the Ulster security community died on a Kintyre hillside when a defective RAF Chinook helicopter crashed. Again he dutifully towed the official line despite mounting evidence of MOD ineptitude and cover-up.

Behind the false modesty of the statements of Reid at his press conference in Ulster today (new boy anxious to learn) lies a cold character described in the media speak which swirls around London as a Blair loyalist. One of the few shrewd characters of the prime Ministers inner circle.

In truth however an analysis of Reid's record indicates his first loyalty is to John Reid.

In his home country Reid & his family have not been clear of controversy but he is a great survivor. However, he epitomises to many Scottish nationalist that curious phenomena the Celtic 'Uncle Tom' looking not towards Edinburgh but towards London.

Few Scottish nationalists will miss him, whilst those in Ulster will have to get used to the arrogance - once Reid's learning curve is complete!

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

25/01/01

MANX LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENTS

A number of Manx language groups have banded together to actively promote the preparation of a modern language teaching programme.

Yn Chesaght Ghailckagh (the Manx Language Society), Mooinjer Veggey, the preschool education group, and the Manx Heritage Foundation are to promote a modern teaching programme. The three groups are to make funds available for both teachers and learners of Manx Gaelic.

A course officer has been appointed and the intention is that the Manx language should be taught in the same way as other modern languages.

This is the most recent of a series of initiatives being progressed this year to promote Manx Gaelic.

In the autumn a Manx Medium Unit is to be established to offer education to primary and secondary school children. This will complement the language programme already under-way in Island schools.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

26/01/01

WILD LIFE AREA SAVED

League call for National strategy to protect the Ayres and extend the area of land in MNH ownership

A proposal to construct a long wave radio transmitter in an ecologically sensitive area on the north west of the Isle of Man has been rejected by the Manx government following a planning enquiry.

The Celtic League had opposed the decision to site the transmitter in the area and supported the fight by the tiny local authority, Bride Commissioners, against the plan.

The League raised a number of concerns in November 1999 (see Celtic League newsgroup) and subsequently alerted the Irish government to suggested problems that the proposed frequency of the transmitter might pose to maritime radio signals.

Campaigning groups have welcomed the decision to reject the plan and are understandably pleased that the area is secured. However, ongoing government land-fill in the area and also aggregate working continue to pose a concern. The transmitter controversy has highlighted the need for a National strategy to protect the Ayres and also a critical requirement to extend the area presently administered by Manx National Heritage (MNH).

Unfortunately, as emotions ran high during the course of the controversy the radio station developers were cast as the villains. In reality however it is the failure of government to protect the Ayres and abrogate its responsibilities that led to the Islands smallest local authority having to fight the development.

Now government should take the initiative to ensure the area is protected in the future

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

26/01/01

'WELSH' LABOUR PLAN MAY BACKFIRE

Before Welsh Labour kick-off their campaign against Plaid Cymru it might like to consider John Reid's faux pas when he 'wrapped himself' in the Union Jack.

There is an element of déjà vu about reports that Labour in Wales is to seize upon remarks made by Plaid Cymru Councillor, Simon Glyn, when he called for strict controls on immigration into the North Wales area. The councillor had said that English people moving to Wales should be strictly monitored and made to learn Welsh. He also said that the mainly retired people moving from England to Wales were "a drain on resources".

Labour are hoping to highlight the remarks as illustrative of widespread nationalist xenophobia and indeed they seem at the time to have caused some embarrassment to the Plaid hierarchy.

However, Glyn's remarks, if taken in context are perfectly valid. The area concerned in North Wales and Anglesey is unique and the main repository for the language and culture of the country. Surely 'Welsh' Labour would accept that?

In any case these attempts by Labour politicians to misrepresent the nationalist position can often backfire.

Eighteen months ago, in Scotland, MSP Andrew Wilson referred to the Union flag as an 'offensive symbol'. Labour politicians proceeded to 'wrap themselves in the flag'. No one was more outspoken than recently promoted Ulster Secretary John Reid then occupying the position of Scottish Secretary. Not content with attacking Wilson for his remarks Reid evoked the memory of 'generations of dead servicemen' who had 'fought under it'.

However, some saw Reid's 'principled stand' as somewhat hypocritical given this was the same John Reid who was happy, whilst a junior minister at the MOD, to perpetuate the smear against two dead RAF aircrew during controversy surrounding the Kintyre Chinook helicopter crash in 1994. In the face of mounting evidence that the pilots were not guilty of crew error, but were flying a defective helicopter, both Reid and his boss George Robertson choose to continue the cover-up initiated by the Conservative government.

Before Welsh Labour kick-off their campaign against Plaid Cymru it might like to consider Reid's faux pas and ensure that their campaign is not recognised for what it is; opportunistic rhetoric aimed at confusing the real issues on which an election should be fought.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

26/01/01

WRITING ON THE WALL FOR TROUBLED NUCLEAR PLANT

The news that the troubled nuclear plant at Wylfa, on Anglesey, may have to close permanently is welcomed by the Celtic League. The League, along with other groups and the Irish government, have long called for the suspension of operations at the plant and for its decommissioning.

The nuclear plant is presently closed down, following reactor fuel core problems, in what has become the longest of many such closures.

British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) was hoping that Wylfa nuclear power station, could start to use a new super fuel, magnox, which would keep the station open for longer. However, yesterday, BNFL announced that the new fuel is no longer thought to be suitable and the station now looks set to close earlier than the projected 2021 date anticipated.

BNFL are putting a brave face on things. Spokesman Colin Bennett said the plant should be reopened using its present fuel source within the next few months but unless a substitute fuel can be found it will be decommissioned by 2009.

BNFL also have to satisfy British nuclear safety regulators (The Nuclear Installations Inspectorate - NII) that the plant would be safe before it could be re-opened and continue its current operations.

However, as we revealed in August of last year, it has had a chequered safety record with unplanned shutdowns on 30 occasions over the past decade. It has also been subject to a number of fines for safety breaches. The most serious in 1994 resulted in a £250,000 fine plus costs after a refuelling grab fell into reactor fuel channel. Given these facts any decision by the NII to re-licence would be highly irresponsible.

Built in 1972 the Magnox station had a planned life of twenty years and passed its sell-by date several years ago. It has posed a threat to communities around the Irish sea for too long.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

26/01/01

BRITISH ARMY PRESSED ON LAND POLLUTION

The bases in South Armagh are more than a noisy oppressive irritant to the predominantly nationalist community; they are a potential source of horrendous pollution.

British Army reports accept that even small quantities of some of the POL products they use have the capacity to pollute and render undrinkable several million cubic metres of water.

Yet these bases, which have been literally thrown up without proper services (in many instances the location makes this impractical), and which in some instances have continued to grow, have stores of all the products (fuel oil, lubricant, de-icing fluid, degreasant etc.) that pose the most risk. They are in effect an environmental time-bomb and the situation is made worse by the fact that the military do not seem to have been monitoring for possible pollution.

Four years ago the Celtic League highlighted that the environmental standards within the military fell short of what is acceptable. In 1996 Michael Portillo indicated that Land Quality Assessments (see below) would be carried out at 600 locations across the UK but so far few, if any, of these surveys have been published.

We have again written to the MOD asking that LQA's should be made available in an affordable form to the public. We have concerns about a number of military locations in Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and N. Ireland.

In respect of the latter we have specifically asked if Environmental impact assessments have been carried out on the temporary bases in border areas like South Armagh.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

27/01/01

CRIMINALS WELCOME TO SERVE IN NATO - ROBERTSON

The Secretary General of NATO has responded to Celtic League concerns about the service with NATO of convicted murders Mark Wright and James Fisher. The two men were convicted in 1992 of the murder of Belfast man Peter McBride.

The League had asked "why NATO apparently has no Code of Practice or Standards that precludes convicted murders serving in its armed forces" and "also advise which NATO countries allow those convicted of serious crimes such as murder to serve in their armed forces".

Astonishingly, the Secretary Generals Office has written back indicating that NATO has no ethical code which covers the situation.

They say "each of the 19 NATO member States retain the final and full sovereign authority with respect to the composition of their armed forces".

The League has expressed its outrage at the situation pointing that in effect this means that "if States choose to deploy murderers, rapists thieves etc. as part of their NATO commitment then the organisation would not have a view on this".

The League have also asked for a specific response to our query asking which countries other than the UK deploy convicted murderers as part of their NATO contribution.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

30/01/01

(text of response to NATO Secretary Generals Office)

*Mr. Desmond Bowen
Director of the Secretary General's Private Office
Boulevard Leopold 111
B-1110 Brussels
Belgium*

Dear Mr. Bowen,

Thank you for your letter in response to our query to the Secretary General about the deployment to NATO, by the British Army, of two convicted murderers.

With out wishing to sound offensive we believe that your response sets out to evade what is a very reasonable and sensible query, from our group, about an important issue.

We did not address a question to you about the individual sovereignty of contributing states. We asked if NATO had a Code or Standard that precludes such deployment. On the basis of your reply it would seem that there is no ethical foundation underpinning the contribution by States of individuals to NATO forces. If this is true we find it astonishing. Are you seriously asking us to believe that if States choose to deploy murderers, rapists thieves etc. as part of their NATO commitment then the organisation would not have a view on this?

I also asked specifically which countries include convicted murders as part of their contingents to NATO. Again this is a question that the Secretary Generals Office should be able to answer and I would respectfully request a response.

I hope you will give further consideration to our queries and respond in good faith. NATO does itself a disservice by evading the ethical issues raised to this issue.

*Yours sincerely
Bernard Moffatt*

30/01/01

GENERAL OPPOSITION TO INCINERATION GROWS

A public debate over the past six months, in Ireland, has seen opinion swing against the negative effects of mass burn incineration. We ask why do governments, both there and in the Isle of Man, seem intent in railroading through policies which threaten public health.

The depth of emotion and opposition to the construction of an incinerator in the Isle of Man is being mirrored In Ireland.

Last Thursday, at Duleek in Co. Meath, 600 people crammed a tiny village hall to set out clearly their opposition to incineration as a means of resolving waste management problems. This is just the latest in a series of concerns expressed in Ireland. Last summer the local authorities in the west of Ireland, at Galway, rejected a proposed plan to site an incinerator there.

However, just as in the Isle of Man the feelings of local communities are being trampled on and the Irish government, via its environment Minister, is threatening to set aside the concerns of local people.

The Irish government is being accused of attempting to subvert local democracy and railroad through its plans. Ironically the same charge could be levelled at the Manx government - *deja vu* indeed!.

It is clear that the debate about the merits or otherwise of incineration is becoming not simply a local but rather a regional issue. Opposition is growing across Europe to the

technology associated with mass burn as a strategy for waste management. Ironically, it seems the Isle of Man will have its incinerator up and running before possible negative side effects for public health and the environment are understood.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

30/01/01

CONFLICTING MESSAGE IN MANX POLICE REPORT

A new report on public perception and staff satisfaction within the Isle of Man Police has been launched with so much 'spin' it is difficult to work out where the spin stops and the substance begins.

From detailed press information we have seen, released early for good effect but embargoed by police, a fairly mixed picture emerges.

Public satisfaction appears to be on the increase standing at an incredible 90% (in one area 100%) However, there could be a fairly straightforward explanation for this. Repeated police initiatives on crime may have heightened concerns which when not realised create a feeling of security. Another possible explanation is the admitted low return 40% of the random sample of 1000 people.

In the area of Staff satisfaction a much more bleak picture emerges with evidence of discontent, alluded to in parts of the media recently, clearly revealed. A higher (60%) response rate is probably more indicative of accuracy. However, it is strange that on a staff sampling issue of this type 40% should opt out.

It is commendable of the Manx Force to publish the two conflicting sides of the coin. However that in itself creates a conundrum. If public perceptions are so high at a time when staff satisfaction is low the conflict is difficult to reconcile.

Maybe analysis of the overall report will provide a clearer picture, Disappointingly, despite the fact that the reports findings were well trailed in the media, attempts to obtain copies at the Tynwald Library drew a blank. Enquiries at the Department of Home Affairs also proved negative, although a copy has been promised direct from the CPHQ.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

HOMBOLDT - MANX IN POSITIVE GESTURE

More support for fight to retain Celtic Studies at Berlin University

The Celtic League understand that the Manx government, via the Department of Education, have confirmed, in principle, support for the project to maintain the Chair of Celtic (Celtic Studies Department) at Humboldt University, Berlin.

We also understand that support, on a proportionate basis, will be made for a ten year period. Although no figures have been confirmed.

The Manx decision follows an earlier commitment from the Irish government which initially specifies support over a four year period but is subject to extension for the ten year term.

Support is also being sought by the University from other Celtic countries including Wales and Scotland. However, the significance of the Manx commitment coming ahead of any firm decision from the larger Celtic countries is impressive.

A full prospectus of work in respect of each Celtic country has been formulated and for the first time the Manx language and culture would be a distinct part of the University programme.

The Celtic League have campaigned for some years against proposals to discontinue the Celtic Department at the University, which has been at the forefront for over a century of Celtic studies. A breakthrough came last year when the closure was put on hold. At the time it was hoped that the funding commitment by Ireland would be matched by the other Celtic countries. The Manx support makes it more likely that other those countries will now firm-up their intentions.

A wide range of political leaders in all the Celtic countries have supported the project.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

LEAGUE CAST NET "ACROSS THE POND"

Over the past two decade the Celtic League has worked with a wide range of community groups and local authorities. We have supported environmental campaigns and protests against military activity in Wales, Scotland, Cornwall and Ireland. Last year we endorsed and assisted Bride Commissioners on the Isle of Man in their fight to oppose the siting of a LW commercial radio transmitter on the Ayres.

Most recently however our assistance to local groups has taken on a transatlantic dimension.

Bogue Field is a US Marine Corps facility in North Carolina used for takeoffs and landings and part of the largest East Coast US Marine Coast Air base complex at Cherry Point. Residents groups have been concerned about the high incidence of accidents with Marine Corps AV-8 aircraft, better known in this part of the world as the Harrier jump jet, which use the complex. Last year AV-8s, exclusively operated in

the US by the Marine Corps, were grounded. Although now they are once again cleared for operations residents remain concerned.

The Harrier was one of the aircraft we highlighted in our report some years ago into Post Crash Management Techniques. We exposed the extreme toxic danger posed by the type in crash/fire situations because of the high incidence of carbon fibre material in its construction. We recently supplied a copy of our report to the residents in the area and these concerns were cited in recent discussions.

The Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) is a joint project set up by the military and civil groups in the area as a cooperative effort to manage both environmental impact and other factors pertaining to the military operations. At a recent meeting (30/1/1) of the JLUS a residents group presented a draft resolution calling for a moratorium on AV-8 (Harrier) operation. It was eventually agreed to adjourn the resolution but, from reports to the Celtic League, the residents concerns are being taken seriously by the USMC.

The example of the US military authorities should be emulated by the British military who seem deaf to the concerns of community groups in Wales and Scotland about low-flying. In addition the Ministry of Defence should come clean about the dangers posed when aircraft such as the Harrier (and others) are involved in crash fire situations.

Toxic pollution from such incidents should not simply be an issue that the US military have woken up to.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

LUDLOW MURDER - PROPOSALS SOON

The Department of Justice, in Dublin, has said that the Minister for Justice John O'Donoghue, TD "hopes to put proposals to...the Irish Government as soon as possible" to end the impasse over an enquiry into the murder of Séamus Ludlow.

The Celtic League had added its voice to calls for an independent enquiry into the murder of the Co. Louth forestry worker in 1976.

Mr. Ludlow was killed in an apparently sectarian attack by a Loyalist paramilitary gang. Controversy has surrounded to brutal killing for many years and there is believed to have been knowledge of or complicity in the killing by the British Security Services.

Following requests from the Ludlow family, the Celtic League wrote to the Irish Premier, Bertie Ahern, backing calls for a public enquiry in line with their wishes. Parallel correspondence to the Northern Secretary querying the extent of British

Security Services collusion prompted an ambivalent response via the RUC.

It is hoped that the Irish government will move soon to resolve the inertia around the case.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

"NOT GUILTY" SAY POLICE

Devon & Cornwall Police have denied that 3 Cornishmen arrested last year for removing English Heritage signs were improperly held in custody prior to their case being heard.

The three Stannators (members of the Cornish Stannary parliament) had been involved in a programme of direct action which saw a large number of signs removed, in some cases with oxyacetylene gear, from various locations in Cornwall.

Devon & Cornwall Police "Area" commander has refuted concerns by the Celtic League about the men's detention and has also said that any suggestion of a political aspect to the case is "irrelevant".

However, the League believe that actions such as those carried out by the three are inherently political and therefore the police action against it must have a political dimension.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

SECTARIAN ATTACKS - TO LITTLE TO LATE?

The announcement that the RUC are to initiate an action plan to address the spate of sectarian attacks on Catholic families and businesses in Coleraine is welcome. However, the question must be posed why is it only now that this action is being taken.

Reports on day to day activities in Ulster have tended to focus in the British mainstream press on the difficulty surrounding the peace process. Regular exchanges between nationalist and unionists politicians about RUC reform or decommissioning have dominated headlines. However, behind the headlines a nasty spate of sectarian attacks, most directed against the nationalist community, have proliferated. Violent attacks, petrol bombings, pipe bombs and less direct forms of intimidation have in

many instances become a fact of life in some areas. People have been forced from their home.

The RUC's eight point plan has been announced to address the problems in Coleraine and yet action in other areas is also needed. Examination of the plan also reveals that many of its provisions should be a feature of everyday police work in any case.

If this is the best the force can do it is some distance from becoming a credible guardian to the embattled nationalist community in parts of the North of Ireland.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

Below - The RUC Eight Point Plan

1. Request for councillors, clergy, community groups and individuals to express their revulsion at this bigoted activity, which does not represent the main majority of Coleraine residents.
2. To provide a professional and sympathetic response to victims of these attacks.
3. To work closely with the media and keep them abreast of developments.
4. Seek to obtain greater forensic analysis of items recovered from these crime scenes.
5. Police will initiate searches of property.
6. Police will increase the level of stop and search of individuals and vehicles.
7. Appeals for more information from the public, including those in the plumbing trade.
8. Police and military operations including covert operations will be increased. Those who carry out these attacks often look out for patrol vehicles. The covert operations will counter this tactic

DEVELOPMENTS FOR MANX PRESCHOOL MOVEMENT

Mooijer Veggey the Manx Gaelic preschool education movement has released the following about new developments.

Celtic League newsgroup subscribers active in the language movements please circulate this information in your own countries.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

31/01/01

Newslist messages for February 2001

UK POLICE WERE ISSUED WITH DEFECTIVE CS

Canisters of the CS spray issued to Police Forces in the United Kingdom failed to meet standards laid down by the Police Scientific Development Branch of the Home Office the Celtic League has learned.

In September last year one company ordered tests on all products from its suppliers after concerns over massive variations in quality and concentration.

We understand that in total supplies from four companies failed to meet standards on the basis that their product delivered too much spray.

The Celtic League have been researching the background to the use of CS spray by police forces in Scotland, Wales and the Isle of Man.

We wrote to Home Secretary Jack Straw, in early January, asking about the results of reports prepared by the Chemical and Biological Research Establishment at Porton Down. One of the reports suggested that the spray posed a serious hazard and could cause cancer. So far the Home Office remain tight-lipped on the matter.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

04/02/01

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SELLAFIELD FIRE A 'MINOR INCIDENT' SAYS MEACHER

Michael Meacher, the Minister for the Environment, has told the Celtic League that a fire at the Sellafield plant which occurred on Christmas Eve last year was a "minor incident which was not formally reportable".

The League had written asking what steps are taken by the British government to ensure that neighbouring States such as Ireland and the Isle of Man are notified about such occurrences.

From his reply however it seems that an actual "release (or potential release) of radioactivity which could be of radiological significance to another State" triggers any inter-governmental warning mechanism.

The Celtic League do not share Mr. Meacher's complacency and we believe that any incidents involving fires at the plant no matter how innocuous the risk initially appears should be widely notified.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

04/02/01

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ARMY DRUGS BUST HIGHLIGHTS HYPOCRISY

The dismissal of a further eleven Scottish soldiers from the British army indicates once again the hypocrisy of the Ministry of Defence about acceptable standards for servicemen.

The eleven men, from the Black Watch, were serving in Germany where, coincidentally, the two convicted murders Guardsmen Fisher and Wright are serving.

A Black watch spokesman said "having drug users upon whom I cannot rely is unacceptable". Obviously however the British Army find those convicted of murder the type you can rely on.

Disappointed former squaddies fired from the service in the past twelve months might like to investigate the human rights position. We can only hope that disgruntled soldiers will consider taking the MOD to Court. Obviously, discharge from the service for drug abuse whilst murderers are positively lauded smacks of discrimination.

Meanwhile, more bad news for the MOD, a naval warship heading for the Caribbean and drug trafficking patrol work has been forced to confront a drugs problem amongst its personnel.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

10/02/01

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DEVOLUTION AN AGENDA PARIS CANNOT IGNORE

An international conference being held in Brittany will highlight the experiences of a number of small countries in Europe given devolved powers by the "Nation States" to which they are tied.

It is certain to highlight the lack of progress by the French government which has been slow to adopt the principles of devolution developed in, for example, the United Kingdom and Spain.

The conference is being hosted by the Breton Democratic Union and is the latest in a series of cross-Europe events which are bringing greater coordination between small nations seeking greater autonomy or independence from the "Nation States " with which they are historically linked.

The conference is likely to focus on the experiences of countries such as Wales, Galicia, Flanders and Andalusia

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

10/02/01

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VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN FOR WELSH LANGUAGE ACT COMMENCES

A series of demonstrations throughout Wales calling for A new Welsh language Act has commenced with protests in North Wales by members of Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Cymraeg the Welsh Language Society.

The group are calling for an Act which will integrate the private sector and a feature of the campaign is to target banks, building societies and other high profile institutions.

Cymdeithas will ask these institutions to adopt comprehensive bilingual policies which in the case of the banks will extend to everything from on-line services to cheque books.

More demonstrations to follow will target all main town and cities in Wales including Aberystwyth, Swansea and Cardiff.

League branches should send messages of support for the campaign to the media in Wales. They should also encourage National language organisations in their home country to do likewise.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

10/02/01

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SUB TRAGEDY LATEST IN GRIM CATALOGUE

Japanese should get answers from US government following latest incident the cover-up surrounding incidents in European coastal waters should not be repeated.

The possible loss of nine people on a trawler which was struck by a US nuclear submarine is the latest in a grim catalogue of incidents which may have claimed several hundred lives worldwide.

In the Cold War period between 1979-89 there were scores of accidents at sea caused by the submarine activity of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact navies. In British coastal waters there were a significant number of such incidents and the Celtic League built up a detailed dossier of suspicious sinkings. The problem ultimately led to new codes of practice being introduced by submarines and UN conventions to address the issue. With the departure of both the US and Russians and the general decline in British undersea power the problem has dissipated in the coastal area around the British Isles.

In its wake however were left the unexplained deaths of scores of fishermen many of whom disappeared without trace together with their vessels. The tragedy affected coastal communities in Ireland, north and South Wales, Scotland and Brittany. The most suspicious incidents occurred either in submarine "choke-points" or in designated exercise areas.

Some incidents such as the Welsh MFV "Inspire" loss in 1988 point unerringly towards involvement by the Royal Navy. The MFV Mhari L from Kirkcudbright in SW Scotland disappeared in almost perfect weather in an area frequented by US Subs. Some, like the MFV Cite D'Aleth, a large deep water boat, with a 13 strong crew, managed a Mayday but most vanished without trace.

A call by the Celtic League following the end of the Cold War for an enquiry into all the tragedies went unheeded and August 26th 1994 Officers of the Celtic League sailed to a submarine exercise area in the south-central Irish sea and laid a wreath listing 20 fishing vessels on which over 100 fishermen had died.

It is to be hoped that the Japanese government get full cooperation from the US authorities concerning this latest tragedy and that the cover-up perpetrated in European waters is not repeated.

J.B. Moffatt
pp. Celtic League

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BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND ENGLISH HERITAGE UNDER ATTACK

"Sadly it is a matter of record that, wherever they have gone in the world, the English have done their level best to destroy and assimilate other cultures. One only has to ask the people of Ireland, India or South Africa"

The above quote, from Cornish Nationalist and member of the Cornish Parliament, Craig Weatherill, appeared recently in the Plymouth based Western Morning News*.

In the article Craig Weatherill sets out clearly the separate identity and rights of the Cornish people putting them in a succinct but clear historical context.

He also launches a devastating attack on the record of English Heritage (EH) in Cornwall and refutes their right to represent the history and culture of Cornwall and the Cornish people.

A major campaign is ongoing in Cornwall at present in which signs erected by English Heritage are either being removed or defaced.

There is however a more deep seated sentiment than a simple rejection of EH. Many Cornish people are awakening to the fact that as other areas in the British Isles and in Europe are achieving devolved status Cornwall's legitimate aspiration to devolution and ultimate independence is being ignored.

Weatherill also has a sting at the end of the article for any who would attach Cornish nationalism as anti-English he says:

"I neither deny nor belittle the rights of an Englishman to be English. Is it too much to ask for them to afford Cornish people the same courtesy".

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

10/02/01

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MANX GAELIC INITIATIVE IN TYNWALD

Peter Karran a member of the Lower House, the House of Keys, of the Manx Legislature is to move a number of amendments to the new Manx Education Bill. If adopted the amendments will strengthen the position of Manx Gaelic Education

One amendment seeks to include a clause whereby:

"If it appears to the Department (Isle of Man Department of Education) that the number of parents desiring their children to be taught through the medium of Manx Gaelic is sufficient to enable a school to be maintained for providing primary education or secondary education through that medium the Department shall make either -

a) an order under section (1) establishing such as School, or

b) an order under subsection (2) altering the character of an existing school so as to provide for the teaching in the school to be through the

medium of Manx Gaelic"

Another clause seeks to stimulate the provision of teachers for the language programme - text as follows:

"The Department shall make arrangements for teachers in provided schools and maintained schools, if they so wish, to undergo training for the purpose of enabling them to carry out their duties through the medium of Gaelic"

Other proposals he will move cover the involvement of organisations concerned with promoting the language in an advisory role and the provision of Gaelic library facilities at all libraries maintained by the Department.

If adopted Peter Karran's proposals will give a firm emphasis in the bill to Gaelic. Peter is an outspoken proponent of the language and he seems certain to put every effort into persuading his 23 colleagues in the Keys to support his stance.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

10/02/01

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GAS BLAST SCARE AT SELLAFIELD

Allegations that safety warnings were ignored for three hours as build up of explosive gases occurred

The latest safety scandal at Sellafield shows that few if any lessons have

been learned following the series of safety deficiencies uncovered last year.

A major disaster was narrowly averted at Sellafield's nuclear waste plant in Cumbria, last month, (26/01/01) when more than 2,000 tonnes of high-level nuclear waste almost exploded. The British government are aware of the incident but once again it seems to have been a situation which did not result in warnings being given to nations such as Ireland and the Isle of Man that have long standing safety concerns about the complex

It has been alleged that safety procedures were so lax at one of the plant's waste storage facilities that workers ignored alarm warnings of a build-up of explosive gases for nearly three hours. The gases were accumulating in the 21 tanks that each store 100 tonnes of deadly waste. Had the situation continued for several hours longer the tanks would have become explosive.

As usual BNFL are talking down the incident but admit they did have to close down the Thorp plant during the incident. However, some UK politicians and independent nuclear safety experts believe the situation was one of the most serious the plant has faced in recent years.

Nuclear consultant John Large said 'Those 21 tanks of waste contain huge quantities of the most hazardous materials on the nuclear site, if not the planet' said John Large, one of the world's leading nuclear engineers. 'A similarly sized tank blew up in the Russian area of Chelyabinsk in 1957 and on its own devastated an area the size of central London.'

This latest safety scare coincides with renewed shipments of waste to the plant from Germany and the Netherlands. The Celtic League which has already made representations about the shipments will renew its call for a moratorium whilst the safety standards at Sellafield are assessed. we understand that other environmental groups are also expressing concerns and the German Office of Greenpeace has voiced its concerns to the German Environment Minister, Juergen Trittin

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General - Celtic League

12/02/01

=====

SCOT'S 'THUMB UP' FOR CS SPRAY

However, Home Office still tight-lipped on unpublished Porton Down

research

The Police Division of the Scottish Executive Justice Department has said that the introduction of CS Spray by some Police Forces in Scotland "was not taken lightly and was developed in consultation with numerous public and independent bodies". They also set out the distinct research undertaken in Scotland before its introduction.

The statements are contained in a response to a query from the Celtic League which has been surveying the introduction of CS Spray in various Celtic countries.

The Scottish Executives response balances some of the concerns over the introduction of CS Spray and is welcomed by the Celtic League. The League are also impressed by the thorough and independent manner in which Scottish Authorities approached the introduction of CS Spray. However, we are disappointed that a parallel response from the United Kingdom Home Office failed to address the issue of unpublished research into the effects of CS carried out at the Chemical & Biological Research Establishment at Porton Down.

The Celtic League intend to continue to press for this information to be released.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

=====

ANOTHER BNFL BLUNDER

The HSE has published a statement critical of safety provisions at BNFL. On this occasion it is the companies facility at Hunterston in Scotland that is in the firing line.

The HSE comment issued as part of its third quarter statement (for 2000) of Nuclear Incidents at Nuclear Installations reveals that

contaminated
material was 'lost' at the plant and has not been located.

HSE say:

" On 9th august 2000, staff at Hunterson A (Power Station) discovered that a high energy beta radiation source could not be located and that the source may have been exported from the site as part of a consignment of scrap metal".

They go on to outline the procedures followed and the failure to locate the missing material. The report concluded that the incident indicated "significant failures in safety provisions".

BNFL operates a chain of nuclear installations around the Irish sea including the troubled and accident prone waste reprocessing plant at Sellafield. This latest report indicates that BNFL safety standards generally still fail to meet acceptable standards.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

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MANX NATIONAL HERITAGE UNDER ATTACK

Manx National Heritage (MNH) which oversee Museums and Trust Lands on the Isle of Man has recently come under attack from a number of members of the House of Keys (MHKs) because of operating deficits. MNH is reputed to have an operating loss over five years of over £1,000,000.

Paradoxically some years ago the organisation was under attack from some quarters for being too commercial in its approach and some still see its decision, made some years ago, to re-brand itself as a mistake. Others criticise a perceived failure to promote more prominently the Gaelic culture and language of the Island at its sites.

Between the conflicting arguments however one thing is very clear

MNH has engaged in a programme of expansion which has made its presentation of Manx history more relevant and presentable. It has also won considerable International respect which is no mean.

It is obvious that its flagship project the House of Mannanan has lost considerable income. However there was a conscious decision taken to site it in the west of the Island thereby stimulating the tourist development potential of the area and whilst this may have affected visitor numbers it was almost certainly a correct decision.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

=====

CULTURE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE - NO THANKS

There has been much derision on the Isle of Man following an attempt by outspoken politician, Peter Karran MHK, to move an amendment to the Income Tax Bill which would have given tax rebates to Manx Gaelic speakers based on the achievement of certain competence levels.

The media competed with themselves to either directly deride or talk down the proposal.

It appears that no one was aware that two decades ago in Ireland similar moves, which introduced tax breaks for artists, writers etc. were introduced. Also in Ireland benefit concessions, including higher levels of house purchase support for those in the Gaeltacht were introduced.

Whatever one thinks of Peter Karran's proposal, often delivered in characteristically outspoken fashion, they do contain more than an element of substance.

This week he again unsuccessfully attempted to persuade his well-heeled Tynwald (Manx Parliament) colleagues that an Island awash with money should, as a Social imperative, introduce a minimum wage of £5. He was of

course defeated.

It is not Karran, who has spoken out for the Island's culture and on behalf of the wage disenfranchised that should be derided. It is the spineless members of Tynwald who refused to vote with him and support the two resolutions which were respectively innovative and just.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

=====

MANX GAELIC EDUCATION CONTROVERSY

A House of Keys member was unsuccessful in his attempts to move several amendments to consolidate the position of Gaelic Education when the Isle of Man government moved to the clauses stage of the new Isle of Man Education Act. Despite support from several other members he failed to get the necessary votes.

The new Bill contains for the first time a stipulation that the language, culture and history of the Island must be part of the curriculum. It also includes provision for the Department of Education to consult with language organisations about future policy.

However, this was not enough for Peter Karran MHK. He moved several amendments the most important of which sought to have established an advisory committee, drawn from interested language groups, to advise on how the Gaelic education programme should develop. He also sought to include provision for the training of more staff to resource the Gaelic education programme and specific provision for the inclusion of Gaelic units in schools.

The Manx government, via its Education Minister, Steve Rodan MHK, could scarcely conceal their irritation with Mr. Karran's amendments. The Manx government maintain that the new Act does include provision for the further development of the Manx language. Minister Rodan said he was "disappointed with the reaction to what he saw as a progressive Bill".

Mr. Karran also came in for criticism from the media. The Islands main tabloid paper, the Manx Independent, ran an editorial with the leader " Don't shout to loudly, Mr. Karran". The editorial said:

"No one can deny educating children about Manx culture is paramount in a society some say is losing its sense of national identity.

The Education Bill, making its way through the Island's political system, is one huge and positive step towards restoring that loss"

The editorial goes on to suggest that Mr. Karran's crusading might backfire provoking an adverse public reaction.

However, Peter Karran seems unlikely to let the matter rest. He told Tynwald (the Manx legislature) "This country shouldn't be ashamed of its past but proud of its heritage". He also attacked that attitude of what he described as 'moronic' Ministers for their stance towards the language.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

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Gaelic Medium School Saved

Perth and Kinross Council have shelved plans to cut the Gaelic medium primary and nursery unit at Perth, other cuts to Gaelic education support services have also been dropped.

The ground swell of opposition against the proposals was such that they were not even considered as part of a general cost cutting exercise.

Gaelic language organisations in Scotland have extended their thanks to all who supported the campaign in which several branches of the Celtic League became involved.

The cost cutting proposals however should give all those committed to promoting the Celtic languages 'food for thought'. Gaelic education services were apparently listed along with such areas as grass cutting and

general maintenance. This is a shocking indictment of the value that some individuals in the education service in Scotland place on their language.

The episode also highlights the need for widespread co-ordination and rapid response from the inter-Celtic movement when language promotion and education is threatened in any of our countries.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

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MOD NOT A "GOOD NEIGHBOUR"

Ireland criticised for failing to take more robust stance on DU testing

The decision by the MOD to allow its research quango, DERA, to resume testing of depleted uranium munitions (DU) is clearly at odds with previously stated environmental policy spelled out by the Department.

In a letter to Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon the Celtic League point out that in the MOD Environmental Policy published five years ago and signed by the former Defence Secretary Michael Portillo the MOD insisted that from an environmental point of view it would strive to be a "good neighbour".

The League have cited the widespread concern expressed by local people, politicians and environmental groups both in England, Scotland and the Isle of Man saying that the MOD's blatant disregard for the concerns of this wide swathe of public opinion flies in the face of its avowed good neighbour credentials.

Meanwhile the League has also blasted the Irish government because of their inertia on the DU issue.

In a letter to Irish Premier, Bertie Ahern, the Secretary General of the Celtic League he was disturbed at reports in the media that the Irish government were apparently unconcerned about continuing military pollution of the north Irish sea.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

17/02/01

=====

"DIRTY MAN OF EUROPE" AT IT AGAIN

Despite assurances given by the British government to reduce pollution from the Sellafield reprocessing plant the Celtic League believe that BNFL plan to increase the level of discharge.

As part of the plans Sellafield's discharges of technetium-99 (Tc-99) are set to continue until at least 2006. Tc-99 remains dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years, and builds up in the food chain, particularly in lobsters.

The UK Environment Agency (DETR) is currently undertaking public consultation on Sellafield's discharges, particularly technetium-99. Although discharges of the radioactive substance, which started to appear in noticeable amounts ten years ago, were reduced between 1995 and 1998 they have since increased. A failure by concerned parties to involve themselves in the current consultation process will be seen as a green light by BNFL, and sympathises in the DETR, to step up discharge of this and other pollutants.

Assurances given by the UK to the OSPAR Commission in 1998 provide an illustration of the British governments double dealing on this matter. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott 'blathered' that "this is the day the UK finally throws off its mantle as the Dirty Man of Europe. We have promised to do all we can to clean up the seas". However, since that time pollution from Sellafield has increased.

Concerned groups and individuals should write to the British Environment Agency* before the deadline for consultation of 5 March 2001.

The Celtic League will be submitting our concerns and calling for an end to BNFL's production and discharge of Tc-99 and other wastes.

SELLAFIELD REVIEW - ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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J B Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

21/02/01

=====

FORMER IRISH MINISTER OWNS UP TO OFF-SHORE ACCOUNTS

It is past time there was an on-Island enquiry into the reasons for this influx of confidential Irish-sourced monies

Former Irish government Minister, Ray Burke, who told the Irish parliament three years ago that he did not have off-shore bank accounts has now admitted, to a Dublin Tribunal*, that in fact he had three.

During the question and answer session in the Dail, on September 10 1997, which followed a statement on the matter by Mr. Burke (then Minister for Foreign Affairs), Jim O'Keeffe TD asked if Mr Burke had lodged money in overseas accounts since 1989 and in particular in an account in the Isle of Man.

Mr. Burke replied that he found the question "offensive in the extreme". He went on to deny that he had any overseas bank account. It appears however that his beneficial ownership of the accounts predated the question. Yesterday (22/02/01 at the Dublin Tribunal enquiring into these matters Mr. Burke owned up to bank accounts in the Isle of Man and other jurisdictions.

The revelations, which seem set to continue, are the latest in a series which link Irish people from all walks of life to confidential accounts here since the late 1980s.

It is this confidentiality which is intriguing the tribunal. Counsel

for the Tribunal, Pat Hanratty SC, asked Mr. Burke why he went to such lengths to conceal his identity in the overseas accounts.

"Confidentiality" was the response.

This has led one Irish newspaper (The Irish Independent) to query "confidentiality from whom or what?" Evidence from Mr. Burke indicated that all the money was legitimate and came in the form of up-front political donations and was used to fund elections and look after constituents and party workers.

The paper asks, "why then was it so important that his identity be hidden away?".

The variety of names used for the accounts was also a source of bemusement to the media. Raphael Burke or Ray Burke as he was more commonly known, became Raphael P. Burke, Raphael P.D. Burke, PD Burke, Patrick Burke, Raphael Patrick Damian Burke The paper speculates that "there may be other variations".

It seems likely that the Tribunal will uncover more details as it continues taking evidence from Mr. Burke. It seems likely that this enquiry will also lead to further linkage of Irish nationals to Manx bank accounts.

It really is past time that the Manx government initiated some investigations of its own into why there was this influx of "Hibernian cash" from a variety of separate sources.

Alternatively we can await the steady drip of revelations from Justice Flood's Tribunal.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

23/02/01

* The Flood Tribunal - chaired by Mr. Justice Flood.

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CAMPAIGNERS DELIGHTED AT WELSH MEDIUM SCHOOL VICTORY

Campaigning parents are reported to be "delighted" after winning their campaign for a Welsh-medium primary school in one of the most predominantly English-speaking counties in Wales.

The struggle to establish the unit began two years ago in south Monmouthshire because children had to endure a one-hour journey to Welsh schools in either the north of the county or in neighbouring Newport.

There appears to have been initial opposition within the local Council however the issue was resolved when Labour councillors who had previously opposed the plan reversed their decision

Campaigner Rhiannon Edwards said "It is also a victory for Wales, its culture and its heritage. We can now look forward to children getting the education they want and without having to travel so far."

This latest good news for the Celtic languages comes hard on the heels of positive language education initiatives in Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

23/02/01

=====

NATIONALISTS DON'T NEED LESSONS ON RACISM FROM LABOUR

It is bemusing, if not a little embarrassing, for nationalists in other Celtic countries to watch events unfolding in Wales following comments made by Plaid Cymru Councillor Simon Glyn.

The Gwynedd housing leader sparked an angry response over comments about curbing the number of incomers. There have been calls for his resignation, predictably choreographed by the (Welsh) Labour Party,

and he has also received hate mail from English right-wing groups. Most disturbing however is the reaction of his own party who seem to be lurching between supporting and disowning him.

Glyn has been labelled a racist for his remarks, when sensible analysis of these would indicate that he was simply highlighting a position which if unchecked could lead to racism. In any case, given the history of the Celtic countries and their treatment by the English government over many centuries, it 'sticks in the craw' a bit to see Celtic nationalists labelled as racist.

All the Celtic countries have sustained immigration. In the case of the two smallest Cornwall and Mann that immigration has been substantial.

Speaking at the annual commemoration for an executed martyr on Jan. 2nd the Chairman of the Manx Nationalist Party launched an outspoken attack on the impact of immigration into the Isle of Man, where the indigenous population is now a minority. He said:

"Those who don't like the Manx people having a say in planning should leave the Island.

More broadly, we should never be afraid to say to anybody who comes into this Island and disrespects the Manx people that they are more than welcome to leave.

Manx is not a tax status. Manx is not a residential status. Manx is not having a work permit for five years.

He went on:

Many non-Manx people living here are now openly claiming that our minoritised status removes our right to primary consideration.

I will say this to that sort of person: as long as this country has one Manx person left in it, then it is nobody else's".

Strong stuff indeed. Many in Plaid Cymru who hear of this might believe that the next day there was a mass exodus of all the non indigenous people who have come to the Isle of Man and integrated, become members of the Manx National Party or involved themselves in the language and cultural revival. Well there was no exodus because people who move to a community on the basis of accepting that countries values and customs are not offended by such comment.

Plaid should get up of its knees and support the position taken by

Simon Glyn. Hiding from the Labour Party did not get Plaid Cymru to the position that it now holds in Wales. If anything the reaction of the Labour Party indicates that they fear open debate, seeking diversions which in the long run will be more socially divisive than any warning about immigration from England.

If Labour in Wales, England, Scotland or wherever wish an open debate about racism they should start with an assessment of the reaction of Home Secretary Jack Straw to the bullying and violence which immigrants to South-East England and the Channel ports have received. Instead of using his powers to tackle the racists he dispersed those seeking asylum around the United Kingdom, in most instances against their will. The present attitude to asylum seekers by the Labour government is the most shameful episode since the UK closed the door to immigrants fleeing repression in pre-WW2 Europe.

The Labour government whose record on racism Gleny's Kinnock seems to believe is so commendable has pursued a more iniquitous approach to immigration than their Tory predecessors (no mean feat). People have died in racist attacks without proper enquiry into the circumstances. People have died as a result of the immigration strictures which the Labour government apply.

Institutions that Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw presides over such as the Metropolitan Police and parts of the Prison Service have had to own up to institutionalised racism, which still goes unchecked.

I think before we hear any more criticisms of Simon Glyn some of Jack Straws Labour colleagues in Wales should give him the benefit of their received wisdom on the subject.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

24/02/01

=====

FOOT & MOUTH - BORDER THREAT

As stringent efforts are initiated throughout the British Isles to combat the foot and mouth outbreak one area which will not be subject to controls appears to be the border area of N. Ireland. Military activity, particularly the movement of army foot patrols across country, already blamed for the spread of disease such as brucellosis in cattle seems set to continue.

Today it was announced that military training in country areas of Great Britain will be curtailed. This is obviously good news for the Farming communities in Wales, Scotland and Cornwall. However, it appears that good sense is not going to prevail in N. Ireland, already the site of a suspicious stock death.

South Armagh farmer Henry McElroy criticised the border military activity in today's Irish News newspaper saying:

"The disease is spread through soil in tyres and boots from patrols. The Department of Agriculture needs to address this problem if they want to avoid an epidemic".

McElroy is one of a number of South Armagh Farmers in the area long-critical of the disregard shown by the military force which occupies the area in considerable numbers.

In January, in a feature article in the United Kingdom Guardian newspaper, he alleged that substantial numbers of his stock had died of diseases spread by troops traversing the area.

With the entire British Isles on the alert to eliminate the threat posed by the spread of foot and mouth the Ministry Of Defence should take urgent action to ensure it plays its part - and that includes curtailing its patrol activity in border areas of N. Ireland and S. Armagh.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

24/02/01

=====

PLUG IT! SELLAFIELD REVIEW TOLD

The Celtic League have written to the review currently considering future discharges from the Sellafield reprocessing plant (see below).

The League have called for an end to the discharges. We have also urged the conversion and storage of existing liquid wastes, particularly technetium-99 (Tc-99), in solid form.

Tc-99 has caused specific pollution problems within the marine environment any further discharges will pose an intolerable environmental and economic threat to communities which depend on sea fisheries:

"We write to register our opposition to any decision to allow continued discharge of technetium-99 (Tc-99) from the Sellafield reprocessing plant.

The Management of the plant, throughout its operation, have shown scant regard for safety. In almost forty years of the operational life of the plant there have been a series of accidents and mishaps. In the past twelve months a series of revelations have uncovered serious safety shortcomings which indicate that despite its previous appalling record no lessons have been learned.

In the circumstances, to even consider allowing the plant a licence to continue its discharge levels or increase them would be disastrous for the marine environment of the Irish sea, an area which the British government and BNFL have already seriously polluted.

We trust the present review will conclude that the production of Tc-99 and other radioactive wastes should cease and that the planned closure of BNFL's Magnox reactors should be accelerated.

We also trust that the review will recommend that all existing liquid waste be converted to solid form as the "least bad" option to contain this problem and to restrict further harm to the environment"

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Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

26/02/01

Newslist Messages for March 2001

ARMY INEPTITUDE IN FACE OF DISEASE THREAT

A week ago the Celtic League said:

"with the entire British Isles on the alert to eliminate the threat posed by the spread of foot and mouth the Ministry Of Defence should take urgent action to ensure it plays its part".

The comment was made in the context of the decision by the British Army to continue foot-patrols across farmland in South Armagh.

Farmers in South Armagh, already concerned at the spread of other stock diseases by patrol activity, were also calling for foot patrols to be suspended until the situation stabilised.

At the time, the military were well aware of the danger that their activities posed. They had for example announced a suspension of training on exercise areas in Gt. Britain.

Today, the military authorities in N. Ireland have announced that they are to "modify" patrol activity. Their response, following an outbreak of the disease in S. Armagh, still shows a failure to grasp the seriousness of the situation. In any case their ineptitude and disregard of the threat posed may make even this "modification" move ineffectual.

With the disease outbreak in S. Armagh confirmed, if it does spread across the border the impact both North and South may be catastrophic. It surely is not too early to ask why prudent measures, adopted by the military in England and Wales, were not extended to N. Ireland before the disease took hold?

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

01/03/01

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HYPOCRISY OF NEW TERROR LAW

The Celtic League have hit out at new so-called anti-terrorism legislation in the UK which they say will be used to perpetrate abuse against ethnic minorities.

Yesterday, the UK Home Secretary, Jack Straw, outlawed 21 groups. A high proportion of these groups were associated with Ireland or with Islamic countries. The Government also outlawed the Basque separatist group ETA.

The League say the the legislation based on its precursor the Prevention of Terrorism Act will be used by the British security services to target legitimate groups.

They also attack the hypocrisy of the British government pointing out both they and other governments have been themselves indicted for involvements in terrorist acts.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

01/03/01

Text of protest to British Home Secretary below:

The United Kingdom Home SecretaryMr. Jack Straw MPThe Home OfficeQueen
Anne's GateLondon SW1H 9AT

Dear Home Secretary,

Ref: Terrorism Act - Proscription of Organisations

We understand, from media reports, that you have, under the aegis of new Terrorism Provisions, issued orders proscribing a number of organisations.

The information we have seems to indicate that in addition to proscribing Irish / Ulster organisations, which were previously listed under the prevention of Terrorism Act, you have extended these more draconian provisions to a large range of Islamic groups and also some groups operating in Europe.

The Celtic League is totally opposed to violence as a means of resolving political conflict or achieving self determination. However, we would be extremely naive if we did not recognise that in some instances National groups are left with little alternative because of racial intolerance shown towards them as an ethnic group or because of a failure to provide political structures and institutions which enable conflict resolution in a meaningful manner.

It is particularly ironic that your government is using the failed apparatus of previous administrations to resolve the perceived threat of 'Irish terrorism'. The Prevention of Terrorism Act, POT, which proceeded this legislation, was thoroughly discredited. It was quite blatantly used as a racist instrument by agencies of the British State particularly at entry ports to the UK from Ireland to harass and intimidate innocent people. The POT provisions were also the precursor to some of the most iniquitous miscarriages of justice that the British State has ever perpetrated.

We note that you were advised, in the compilation of your 'Proscribed Organisations List', by the military intelligence services of the United Kingdom. This is hypocrisy of the highest order for in fact some elements of your security services have a track record of involvement in terrorist outrages perpetrated both in Ulster and in the Republic of Ireland.

In this regard the British government has common guilt with the government of Spain which orchestrated a series of outrages and killings in the Basque country, running a paramilitary terrorist structure, the GAL, which killed Basque nationalists. Paradoxically, we note that you have chosen to outlaw the Basque separatist group ETA despite the fact that ETA and other Basque Nationalist organisations have indicated that they would accept meaningful structures for non-violent conflict resolution.

Some of the Islamic organisations listed we have limited knowledge of and therefore we will restrict our comment in respect of these. However one is left with a concern on studying the list that it appears to include groups who have a genuine struggle against great injustice and abuse of human rights. The list also gives us cause to suspect that the inclusion of so many Islamic groups, who have carried out no abuse of UK law, could be the harbinger of oppression of the Muslim community similar, to that which the Irish community in Britain suffered following the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism legislation.

We have no doubt that the Home Office, and the British government, introduced this legislation with good intentions. However, the manner in which it is structured, the ethnic approach in which it is directed and the experience of previous exercises of this type, we believe it will prove iniquitous. It is a Charter for the abuse in the United Kingdom by the Security Services of minority and ethnic groups. We oppose it. We will continue to speak out against it. We will continue to speak out on behalf of groups, both in the Celtic countries and globally, who are forced by the intransigence of Nation States or power blocs to defend themselves.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

01/03/01

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WHOSE 'NATIONAL' NEWS?

A debate about the continued centralised control of news from the BBC has raged in Scotland since devolution was achieved. It begs the question, is the BBC, as it is currently structured, relevant to the changed and changing political circumstances of the United Kingdom?

The agenda now being pursued politically in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff is not the political agenda formulated, as the current First Minister for Wales put it, "around dinner tables" in London.

The BBC, because of the centralisation of what it terms "the National news", also tends to lose any sense of objectivity. This was particularly apparent in respect to Northern Ireland where attempts for many years to achieve in-depth and objective

examination of the root cause of the problem consistently failed.

The "Regional" operations of the BBC, which should now theoretically produce high quality news programming to meet the new "National" needs of Scotland and Wales, cannot deliver whilst this centralised mind-set within the London Offices of the BBC hold sway. Pointedly, in this context, we have not mentioned BBC N. Ireland because, unlike the Regional operations in Scotland and Wales which seem anxious to break free from the grip of "Broadcasting House W1A", the Ulster brethren seem unable to shake off their "Radio Orange" persona.

The BBC, dreamt up in the days of the Empire, has almost certainly had its day. It seems unable to make the transition necessary to service, from a news and current affairs perspective, the needs of this somewhat less, United Kingdom.

Secretary General
Celtic League

03/03/01

=====

BNFL OFF THE RAILS AGAIN

It has been revealed that a train, carrying nuclear fuel flasks, came off the rails near Dunbar in Scotland on Friday 2 March. The incident is the latest in a series which have occurred involving these transports and it highlights the dangers posed in transporting dangerous radiation waste of this type throughout the United Kingdom by rail.

As usual, BNFL have played down the accident. A spokesman for their rail subsidiary, Direct Rail services, said "It was a very minor derailment which happened at low speed and not on the main line." Last August a rail wagon containing low level nuclear waste was derailed near the Sellafield plant in Cumbria. That incident was described as "very minor".

Public concern about the dangers posed by these transports is kept in check by the dearth of information that both the industry and the Environment Agency provide. Most people are unaware that nuclear traffic of this type passes through cities and main conurbations in the UK on a regular basis.

The train involved in the latest incident was collecting waste from the Torness nuclear power station in Scotland.

Secretary General
Celtic League

03/03/01

=====

NATIONALIST PARTY FAILS PEOPLE CLAIM

A failure by the Nationalist Party in Wales to confront the dangers posed to the Welsh language and culture by unrestricted immigration could lead people to turn away from politics and return to direct action it has been claimed.

Former Plaid Cymru member Dewi Prysor's comments came after Plaid Cymru failed to support comments made by councillor Simon Glyn who had warned about the effects of immigration by English speakers in to the predominantly Welsh speaking areas of north-west Wales.

In the past there have been periodic outbreaks of direct action and in the 1970 & 80s a campaign of arson attacks against holiday homes occurred. Mr. Prysor said that many other nationalist were dismayed that the Party was not standing by councillor Glyn's remarks. He said that the Party had "finally turned its back on the plight of the language". He also said that the Party's statement, renouncing curbs on immigration, "speaks the sad language of turncoats and cowards".

Many, both within Wales and in the wider inter-Celtic movement, may disagree with Prysor's condemnation of Plaid. However, he makes some pertinent points which the Plaid leadership should take heed of. Immigration control is an established facet of policy for most countries. Indeed, the British Labour and Conservative Parties vie with each other to promote the toughest policy.

Plaid could have turned what they seem to have perceived as potentially embarrassing remarks from councillor Glyn to their advantage by attacking the hypocrisy of Labour.

They could still go on the offensive and point out that protective immigration control for parts of Wales is less repugnant than the avowedly racist immigration controls implemented by Labour Home Secretary Jack Straw in the United Kingdom as a whole.

Secretary General
Celtic League

03/03/01

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NORWAY BARS BRITISH TROOPS

Last week the Norwegian government barred British troops from participation in a NATO exercise (Exercise Joint Winter 2001) because of concerns over foot and mouth disease.

Approximately three hundred troops had been scheduled to join 1500 British troops, already in Norway since before the foot and mouth outbreak, but strict measures introduced by Britain's NATO partner saw led to their deployment being cancelled.

In addition, a quantity of equipment to support the troops already in Norway including helicopters was subject to restriction. The helicopters, it is reported, were thoroughly disinfected before being allowed in.

Paradoxically, whilst the British and Norwegians are cooperating so thoroughly to eliminate risk, military deployment by the British Army is continuing in the area around the contaminated farm in South Armagh. Furthermore, military helicopter traffic between Britain and Ireland - which occasionally drops in at the airfield in the Isle of Man - appears to be unaffected. The helicopter units are deployed as part of the military effort in N. Ireland in the contaminated area.

A few days ago the Celtic League received an e-mail from the South Armagh Farmers and Residents Group which confirmed that foot patrols and dozens of helicopter landings were taking place in the South Armagh area.

The situation poses a two-way threat. Military traffic between Britain and Ireland could give the disease a free ticket to enter uncontaminated areas.

Perhaps we are overreacting, However it seems strange that NATO can agree restrictions on military exercises and equipment several hundred miles away from the United Kingdom in Norway whilst it is "business as usual" in the UK.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

14/03/01

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DRUG REPORT GELLING 'IN THE DARK'

Manx Chief Minister Donald Gelling, who recently launched a campaign against drug abuse, has no information on the importation into the Isle of Man ten years ago of a quantity of drugs which was the subject of an enquiry by the United Kingdom DPP.

The Celtic League Secretary General wrote to the Chief Minister five months ago saying:

Ref. Drug Strategy

I draw your attention to the attached correspondence between the UK MP George Foulkes and the British Home Secretary in 1991. The matters referred to relate to allegations, made in 1990, that as part of what was assumed was a bungled police operation a large quantity of drugs were allowed into the Isle of Man. The story first surfaced in a Manx free-sheet (the Manx Herald) in January 1990 and although the allegations were in part denied it was confirmed, by HM Inspector of Constabulary (HMI), that the 'incidents' was subject to investigation. This latterpoint was confirmed by the Home Office a year later.

Both HMI and the Home Office confirmed that a report was prepared by the United Kingdom DPP but no prosecution was undertaken. The DPP report has lain 'under wraps' for the past decade.

The strategy produced by your Office recently would seem to set the time frame for the present serious drug problem as a decade old (Ref. Drug Strategy Chapter 1 Pages 7/8). It does seem prudent therefore that any suggestion that quantities of illegal drugs were allowed into the Island during a period which coincides with the expansion of the drugs scene should be examined - crucial to such examination would be further consideration and release of the DPP report. Could we ask if you will consider this. I appreciate that as no prosecution resulted it would be improper for the names of those involved to be identified should the document be released."

Mr. Gelling has replied saying he has no information on the incident to which we refer. However correspondence that the League have from the then British Home Secretary Kenneth Baker to Labour MP George Foulkes clearly says:

"in July 1989 a man was arrested (in the United Kingdom) whilst committing an offence of burglary. When interviewed he made a number of allegations against officers of various United Kingdom Police Forces but also claimed that an officer of the Isle of Man Constabulary had permitted him to import a quantity of cannabis resin into the Isle of Man.

Subsequently, a report was submitted to the Director of Public prosecutions for England and Wales"

It seems peculiar that the Manx Chief Minister is 'in the dark' over this and apparently cannot get sight of the report after ten years?

Bernard Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

14/03/01

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NUCLEAR PLANT RESTART POSES IRISH SEA THREAT

The controversy surrounding the possible restart of the Wylfa nuclear power station on Anglesey continues. The elderly station was closed down last April with defects on both reactors. The stations operators, BNFL, anxious to restart power generation because the station is reputedly losing up to £400,000 per day have rejected the safety concerns.

However, this week in a report to the Welsh assembly it was alleged that repairs to allow the station to restart its reactors would not address the serious safety deficiencies which exist.

It is feared that a failure of weakened welds within the reactor could spell disaster.

Internationally-recognised nuclear safety expert, John Large, highlighting the

potential danger of defective reactor welds and the deterioration of other vital reactor components, said:

"The 'worst case scenario' accident for Wylfa was, in fact, far more serious than had previously been admitted by the Nuclear Installation Inspectorate (NII).

If Wylfa is allowed to re-open, a failure of the welds and the weakened reactor components could combine to result in uncontrolled, large-scale releases of radioactivity."

The Celtic League has long criticised the operational safety record of the Wylfa plant. Last year we revealed that the station had suffered 30 unplanned emergency shutdowns during the past decade as the plants operations continue beyond the expiry of its original service life.

16/03/01

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PROTESTERS STRIP SEARCHED

The Celtic League have written to the Chief Constable of Strathclyde Police seeking information on why a group of Irish women involved in a peaceful protest at the Faslane nuclear base in February were strip searched after their arrest.

In a letter to Sir John Orr the League say:

"We understand that a number of Irish women detained at a peace demonstration against the Faslane nuclear base on February 12 were subsequently subjected to strip searches.

Could you explain why persons arrested at peaceful protests of this type are subjected to strip searches. Could you also clarify how many persons (male and female) were subjected to strip searches after the recent protest".

The Irish government are also seeking an explanation for the incident and there is a concern that the human rights of the women may have been violated by the police action.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

16/03/01

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GILLIGAN GETS 28 YEARS!

Dublin mobster peddled drugs and made a fortune but who were his bankers and why

have they not been exposed?

The acquittal of Dublin mobster John Gilligan on charges connected with the murder of Dublin journalist Veronica Guerin has been made more palatable to a shocked Irish public by his conviction and twenty-eight year sentence on drugs charges.

Gilligan was part of a network of criminals who, using the drugs trade, have destroyed communities in Dublin and Ireland all the while growing rich on the proceeds of their crime.

Anyone who stood in the way of these gangs is mercilessly swept aside. The murder of Veronica Guerin showed just how far the drugs cartels were prepared to go.

However, the tentacles of the evil empires built up by Gilligan and others could not have existed for long if they had not been able to disperse and launder the proceeds of the drugs trade. Gilligan's crime empire had a turnover of £40 million and the proceeds were laundered across Europe and in the off-shore centres.

Last year the Celtic League wrote to Irish Justice Minister, John O'Donoghue, after another of the Dublin criminal fraternity, Thomas Meehan (related to Brian Meehan already convicted for the Guerin slaying) was reported to have opened a bank account in the Isle of Man. This was used as a "stepping stone" to accounts in Vienna.

The Dublin criminal Mafia use the international financial sector to "grease the wheels" and hide the proceeds from their crime and we urged O'Donoghue to name banks involved in this business.

Unfortunately, the Irish Justice Minister did "not consider it appropriate for the naming in public of any such institutions in a context which would infer involvement in money laundering".

It seems that this failure to "Name and Shame" banks involved in handling the accounts of people subsequently connected to serious crime is to continue. It is an insult to the memory of Veronica Guerin that the banks who profited from laundering the proceeds of the drugs Mafia she tried to expose have not been forced to account for their sloppy procedures.

Today the financial services sector speaks eloquently of regulation and meeting best international standards but at the time the drugs business was created by mobsters such as Gilligan that same sector were his bankers!

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

17/02/01

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DU CONTAMINATION TO CONTINUE

The value of sea fisheries as a source of unmodified and uncontaminated protein is likely to increase dramatically.

The coastal communities in Cumbria, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man should speak with one voice to seek an end to all military testing in the Irish sea area.

The government Defence quango DERA (DEFENCE EVALUATION & RESEARCH AGENCY) has insisted that the testing of depleted uranium rounds poses no environmental threat.

The statement comes in correspondence to the Celtic League, who had written to the Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon MP, calling for a moratorium on the firing of DU rounds into the N. Irish sea.

In our correspondence to the Defence Secretary we stated:

"We refer to current concerns about the radiation pollution associated with the use of depleted uranium munitions.

We understand that for many years ordnance of this type has been test fired from ranges on the coast of SW Scotland and Cumbria. Can you provide an indication of the quantity of ordnance fired from these ranges during the period that depleted uranium rounds have been in use?

In the light of the concerns about the environmental impact of these munitions will the MOD or the Environment Agency be carrying out a new study to ascertain if this material, the debris from which the MOD did not recover, poses any long term threat to the marine environment."

In their response DERA confirm that firing of DU rounds has taken place into the Solway Firth. They say that environmental monitoring, since the 1980s, on sea water and sediment and on shell fish samples has never shown any concentration of DU beyond natural background levels. Pointedly, they do not mention recent environmental monitoring which had to be aborted when the test rig was "lost" in bad weather.

They say that testing of the DU rounds will continue and a moratorium "is not feasible".

Depleted uranium weapons are currently in focus following revelations that troops and civilians exposed to them in the Balkans and Iraq have contracted cancer. A number of deaths are alleged to have occurred.

The Celtic league recognize that test firing into the sea would reduce any threat.

However, it is a concern that an area, already heavily polluted with radiation by the BNFL facility at Sellafield, has this added environmental pollutant. The Solway coast and bay area is a key nursery area for some species of sea-fish. The League are not satisfied that the MOD have demonstrated that the accumulated pollution caused by

the extensive testing in the area will not pose a long-term threat.

The DU testing is a continuation of a long history of weapons-testing in the N. Irish sea area which has contaminated many valuable fishing grounds with toxic pollutants or dangerous unexploded munitions.

Paradoxically, due to the successive scares surrounding agriculture the value of sea fisheries as a source of unmodified and uncontaminated protein is likely to increase dramatically.

The coastal communities in Cumbria, Scotland, Ireland and the Isle of Man should speak with one voice to seek an end to all military testing in the Irish sea area.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

17/03/01

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DPR FIASCO HIGHLIGHTS GOVERNMENT INEPTITUDE

The Chief Ministers comments about Manx Data Protection legislation show how increasingly out of touch he is with the need for organisations and business to function effectively in an increasingly electronic communications environment.

It is the ineptitude of government, in addressing this area, that have lead to the difficulties created through current interpretations by the Office of the DPR.

It is also clear that the changes currently in the pipeline have only been generated by problems inherent in current DP law and the government is therefore as usual being reactive rather than pro-active. The current data law was produced a decade and a half ago. In the meantime electronic communications have transformed the globe.

A range of organisations have experienced difficulties with the current data protection legislation. However, Mr. Gelling and his colleagues unaffected directly by the difficulty are adopting a head in the sand attitude which unfortunately is becoming a characteristic of the dying days of this administration.

Mr.Gelling assures us a new Act will ease the burden on organisations and businesses in respect of registration but the very fact that these difficulties arose are indicative of government clumsiness

This issue also calls into question if so called e-initiatives announced by the government are more spin than substance.

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

23/03/01

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IRISH SEA DISASTER QUESTIONS STILL REMAIN

Thirty-three years after the Irish seas worst air crash questions still remain unanswered about the possible involvement of the British military in the tragedy.

Following a review of evidence last year the Irish government has established a further expert enquiry but this is still to report.

On Sunday March 24th 1968 an Aer Lingus Viscount airliner with 61 passengers and crew on board crashed in the Irish sea, whilst on a routine flight from Cork to London. The crash occurred over the safety area which surrounds the British Aberporth missile testing range. This fact, coupled with the presence in the area of several naval units, has led to suspicions that a rogue missile or target aircraft caused the crash.

The British government have always denied the involvement of the Aberporth range, which they say was closed on the day. However, the British case has not been helped by their having destroyed or lost crucial records.

Last year the Celtic League wrote to the British Embassy pointing out that once again, inaccurate information had been supplied by Britain to the inter-governmental review of evidence. Again, in January of this year, we re-iterated our concerns.

It is clear that a grave catastrophe overcame the Aer Lingus plane that Sunday morning, over thirty years ago. It fell out of control from eighteen thousand feet taking several minutes to reach the sea. During that period the airliners crew were unable to send any emergency Mayday call to alert air traffic controllers as to their fate.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

23/03/01

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'SNOOP' POWERS - MINISTER TIGHT-LIPPED

Manx Home Affairs Minister, Allan Bell MHK, is remaining tight-lipped about police powers to use surveillance equipment during investigations.

The Celtic League wrote to the Minister in December last year (see below) asking what section of current Criminal Justice or Police Powers legislation regulates the operation of such equipment.

Despite several telephone calls to the Department of Home Affairs the query remains unanswered.

Twenty years ago the Celtic League highlighted the abuse of human rights which is posed by lack of regulation. We specifically citing UK Home Office guidelines which at that time were followed in the Isle of Man.

Despite changes in the United Kingdom no publicised rules have been issued in the Isle of Man nor does the practice appear to be covered by Manx criminal justice legislation.

Both the Department of Home Affairs and the Police need to get their act together on this. A judgement last year in the European Court of Human Rights (Khan v The United Kingdom Application No. 35394/97) found that the operation of unregulated surveillance in a clandestine fashion can pose a breach of several of the Conventions articles destined to protect individual freedom.

Meanwhile it is ironic that Mr. Bell is exercising his "right to silence" on the issue as this is a right that he removed from suspects in recent criminal justice legislation enacted in the Isle of Man.

Bernard Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

23/03/01

(Below: Correspondence to Minister Bell - December 2000)

Mr. Alan Bell MHK Minister for Home Affairs
Department of Home Affairs
Holmfield Douglas Isle of Man

Dear Minister,

Could you advise what section of current Criminal Justice or Police Powers legislation regulates the operation of police undercover operations.

Specifically, is the use in such operations of surveillance equipment regulated by statute?

For information, I understand that in the early 1980s the then Chief Constable of the Isle of Man issued a version of a Home Office guideline covering these matters. However, subsequently in the United Kingdom when this "guidance" was made public it was held to be deficient and new procedures introduced. However, as far as I am aware, no parallel moves to control usage of mechanical or electronic devices in aural or visual surveillance operations was introduced here. At the time of the introduction of guidelines in the UK it was generally accepted that there was a need for such sensitive operations to periodically be mounted by the police - the primary purpose of aural and visual surveillance being to help confirm or dispel a suspicion of serious crime, and not to collect evidence.

As you are aware there have been several fairly weighty tomes of police procedure

and criminal justice legislation introduced on the Isle of Man in the past decade. Could you please indicate which legislation controls this sensitive area of police operations.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General

27/12/00

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BRITISH - IRISH COUNCIL HAS NO CREDIBILITY

The establishment of the British - Irish Council with its involvement of the devolved parliaments and assemblies in Scotland Wales and Ireland and the inclusion of Mann and the Channel Isles was greeted by many (including the Celtic League) as one of the most positive spin-offs of the British Irish peace process.

However, the early promise of both the main institution, and the sectoral groups it spawned, has been squandered because of the general inertia in the British Irish peace process.

Another and more disturbing aspect, which must call into question the Council's future credibility, is the way in which the participating States have let this occur.

The British (mainly) and Irish governments have been able jointly and unilaterally to adjourn or postpone the meetings. This has been done without any serious protest from the smaller governments such as the Scots parliament, the Assemblies or the Manx and Channel Islanders.

It is clear that the British - Irish Council was, what some of its critics dubbed it at the outset, a stunt by the Blair and Ahern on the back of the peace process.

It should now be left to die. Plainly the the Scots, Welsh and Manx governments did not have the collective will to overrule Blairs hijack of its agenda.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

23/03/01

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POLICE MISSING CASH - DEJA VU

Several weeks ago the Police announced that they were carrying out an 'intense' review of procedures following an incident, last summer, when a large sum of money

went missing from Ramsey police station.

An investigation carried out into the loss had failed to turn up either the cash or any explanation as to how it disappeared. Ironically, despite the fact that far less serious instances of mal-administration, in other areas of the public service, can cost people either promotion or their jobs, no one apparently is being held to account. Indeed, the Police hierarchy seem to be almost dismissing the issue as a problem that can be addressed by improvements to procedures. They seem to have forgotten that last September they were promising the public that the investigation would remain open until it was 'satisfactorily' closed.

There is an element of déjà vu about all this. Four years ago (1996), following an alleged theft of sports Club Funds, the police set in train "improvements in the regularity of checks and general administration" and hoped that the loss "though upsetting and expensive, will not be allowed to be repeated". At that time enquiries into the allegation were not pursued because "it would be distressing to all concerned to be singled out and interviewed without real hope of a successful outcome". Patently the constabulary are not always so sensitive about the distress to individuals their enquiries might cause. Indeed, to be realistic any chance of achieving successful policing would evaporate if the police were to apply such a "pussyfooting" attitude as a general rule.

It really is not good enough. A determined effort needs to be made to find where the cash at Ramsey, and any other cash lost in recent years, has gone to.

Police forces that lose money from police stations lose something else - credibility!

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

23/03/01

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MILITARY BASE POLLUTION - ARMY IS CLEANING UP ITS ACT CLAIM

The Ministry of Defence have revealed that they have carried out a considerable programme of work to eliminate environmental pollution caused by temporary British Army base structures in South Armagh and other areas of N. Ireland.

They have also assured the Celtic League that "the Army in South Armagh takes all possible precautions to prevent pollution" and if pollution does occur "a remedy is sought and the matter speedily resolved". They also go on that "remedial action has included removal and disposal, and / or bio remediation of polluted soil".

The Celtic League has campaigned for over a decade to highlight the problems posed by poor environment policy pursued by the military at bases throughout the Celtic countries. We specifically cited locations in Scotland, Wales and the temporary military installations in N. Ireland. Eight years ago we prepared a critique of MOD

deficiencies and this subsequently led to the issue being raised in the British parliament with, the then Defence Secretary Michael Portillo. Action and openness was promised but the MOD show a distinct reluctance to highlight the extent of the problem or details of the action taken.

Temporary structures in N. Ireland pose particular problems because of their hasty and poorly planned construction. The League have long suspected that domestic waste and lubricant pollution could cause serious problems.

It is particularly interesting that the MOD confirm that work only took place over the past three years to correct deficiencies as many of these installations have existed for a decade or more.

It is also disappointing that investment in this type of infrastructure continues despite the period of time which has elapsed since the Good Friday Agreement.

Whilst the Celtic League welcome this latest information we will be pressing the MOD for more site-specific detail about the extent of pollution and the nature of remedial work carried out.

The South Armagh installations are all in upland or hilltop locations and any potential pollution must be a source of more widespread contamination of water catchment areas.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

24/03/01

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Mr. Jack McConnell
MSP Minister for Education
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

24/03/01

Dear Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Celtic League to express our concern at the current shortage of Gaelic teachers which is strangling the development of Gaelic education at present. If teacher supply is not substantially increased with immediate effect then there can be little doubt not only that growth in Gaelic medium education will be impossible but also that existing Gaelic units will close.

We would appreciate clarification of the following issues:

(1) Can you assure us that the Gaelic medium teacher training course in Lews Castle

College on the Isle of Lewis will begin in September 2001 as previously announced by the deputy minister with responsibility for Gaelic?

(2) When does the Scottish Executive intend to make the Gaelic medium teacher training course available in other venues such as Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and Inverness College as also promised by the deputy minister with responsibility for Gaelic?

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretay General
Celtic League

c.c

Alasdair Morrison MSP, Deputy Minister for Gaelic
Jamie McGrigor MSP, Scottish Conservative Gaelic Spokesman
John Farquhar Munro MSP, Liberal Democrat Gaelic Spokesman
Mike Russell MSP, SNP Gaelic Spokesman

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RENEWED CALL TO SCOTS OVER HUMBOLDT PROJECT

The Celtic League has urged the Scottish government (see below) to firm up support for the project to retain the Department of Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University Berlin.

The Celtic department at the Berlin University has played a pre-eminent role amongst continental universities in supporting the languages and culture of the Celtic peoples. This year it celebrates its centenary.

Both the Irish and Manx government have already indicated their willingness to support the project financially and its hoped that the administrations in Scotland and Wales will do likewise.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

Henry McLeish MSP
First Minister
Scottish Executive
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh EH1 3DG

24/03/01

Ref: Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University - Berlin

Dear First Minister,

For some years now the Celtic League have been supporting the campaign to retain the Chair of Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

When we first started our campaign the closure of this pre-eminent centre of learning seemed inevitable. However, there was a considerable weight of support, in principle, elicited from a wide range of sources to retain the Celtic Department at Humboldt.

In Scotland your predecessor, the late Donald Dewar, was one of the first to support the campaign. He said that he recognised the importance of Celtic Studies, " in particular in the light of the great interest shown by many German students and academics in the field of Scottish Studies". Indeed this was the case and some of the early work at Humboldt at the beginning of the last century was involved in recording the various Celtic languages, including Scots Gaelic. However, the focus of the Celtic Department has been broadly based and considerable work has also been carried out in the area of literature and folklore.

The initial wave of support, in principle, has been recently translated into practical commitment.

The Irish government has pledged a considerable sum of money and the Manx government has also indicated a commitment to financially support the project.

I am writing to request that the Scottish Executive also throw their weight behind the project by way of a financial commitment.

I should stress that the Celtic League is simply supporting the campaign by academics and students to retain this seat of learning. Any commitment on the part of the Scottish people should be directed to the University authorities.

(Prof. Dr. J Mlynck, Humboldt University, Unter den Linden 6, D-10099)

I do hope that the Scottish Parliament and Executive will translate the initial interest shown by the former First Minister into a practical programme of support.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

Mr. Brian Monteith MSP, Conservative Spokesperson on Education, Arts, Culture and Sport
Mr. Ian Jenkins MSP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson on Education, Arts, Culture and Sport
Mr. Jack McConnell MSP, Minister for Education
Alasdair Morrison MSP, Deputy Minister for Gaelic
Jamie McGrigor MSP, Scottish Conservative Gaelic Spokesman
John Farquhar Munro MSP, Liberal Democrat Gaelic Spokesman
Mike Russell MSP, SNP Gaelic Spokesman

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AOL ON THE LINE

Welsh language activists are challenging major multi-national Internet provider AOL

for its failure to provide a Welsh language option with its service.

A spokesperson for AOL said in response to criticisms:

"At AOL UK we are keen to provide content of interest to all of our members. The AOL brand is global - however the content and services we deliver are produced by local teams in each country.

The vast majority of the population of the UK are not Welsh speakers, therefore I'm afraid it is simply not economically feasible for us to produce bespoke AOL software for Welsh speakers".

However, this rather patronising argument, and also an assertion that all Welsh AOL users will understand English anyway, has been furiously rejected by AOL's critics who point out that other languages including Celtic languages such as Irish are catered for.

The full debate which promises to continue until AOL see the error of their ways can be monitored on:

<http://hometown.aol.com/beatboxtaffia/myhomepage/profile.html>

League members should support the campaign and also those with links to National languages organisations should add their voice.

Developments in computer technology and the Internet should be used to support indigenous language not diminish them.

Bernard Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

25/03/01

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DAIL PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE QUERY

The Celtic League have written (attached) to the Chairman of the Irish parliament's Public Accounts Committee, Jim Mitchell TD, asking about the committee's enquiries into Irish bank deposits in the Isle of Man.

The League have also welcomed comments made by Mr. Mitchell last year in which he suggested that there should be stiffer penalties for tax evasion.

We have also expressed our disappointment that Banks which are utilised for financial crime are not named. We cite a specific case, which we drew to the attention of Irish Justice Minister John O'Donoghue TD last year, of a money laundering conviction.

The Justice Minister told the League that as "no financial institution was convicted of an offence" he did not "consider it appropriate for the naming in public of any such institution".

Quite frankly this is not good enough. It enables financial institutions to evade their responsibilities by pleading ignorance.

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

25/03/01

Mr. Jim Mitchell TD Chairman Public Accounts Committee Dail Eireann Kildare
Street Dublin 2 Ireland

25/03/01

Dear Sir,

I understand that in December of last year the Public Accounts Committee of the Dail expressed concerns about the level and nature of deposits held by Irish banks in the Isle of Man.

I draw your attention to correspondence forwarded by the Celtic League recently to the head of the Isle of Man Financial Supervision Commission. We have asked what action, if any, has been taken following the increasingly frequent references to Manx financial institutions at proceedings both in the Irish High Court and other judicial enquiries in Ireland.

Indeed, in a quote attributed to you in one of the Irish newspapers you refer to these matters. You are also quoted as saying that where tax evasion is concerned "it is time for jail terms to be enshrined in legislation to get the message across that tax evasion is no longer fashionable".

We share your concern that penalties for tax evasion and financial crime generally should be stiffened. However, it is disappointing that the present administration in Ireland take a less robust stance. In May 2000 we wrote to the Irish Justice Minister, John O'Donoghue TD, asking if he would publicly name banks involved in handling criminal assets. He declined to do so. (I enclose a copy of his letter with the other enclosures.)

I understand that your committee was to call evidence on the question of Irish - Manx financial links in January. Could you advise if your enquiries into these matters are now concluded and if any report of the conclusions reached is publicly available.

I look forward to hearing from the Committee in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

25/03/01

cc Mr. John O'Donoghue TD, Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform

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ANOTHER LOW FLYING TRAGEDY

Just weeks after the Celtic League highlighted the danger posed by low flying exercises over TTAs in Scotland and mid Wales, two USAF F-15s have crashed with their crews in the Highlands. A search for survivors was called off last night.

In January we warned that operations by RAF aircraft many of which are approaching obsolescence posed a risk not only for aircrew but also to civilians in the TTAs.

(See Celtic League newsgroup report
at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/celtic_league/message/215).

Questions have also been raised in the US about the age and operational effectiveness of some military types. A series of continuing crashes of US Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aircraft have caused the media and community groups to query if US aircraft are also being operated past their sell-by date. In July last year National US media network CBS posed this question.

One of the F-15s which has disappeared in the Scottish Highlands was reportedly in difficulty prior to the crash.

These aircraft have now been operational for almost quarter of a century and it is questionable if these types and comparable RAF machines such as the Tornado are now past their sell-by date.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League 27/03/01

Celtic League News Archive - April 2001

TAX DODGERS - NO HIDING PLACE

Comments by the Celtic League about the use of off-shore financial institutions for the evasion of tax are to be considered by the Public Accounts Committee of the Dail (Irish parliament).

The League had written to PAC Chairman, Jim Mitchell TD, following a number of high profile cases linking financial institutions in the Isle of Man with tax evasion and other illegal activities in Ireland.

The move coincides with the news that one British bank has written to all customers who hold accounts in its off-shore branches telling them it is to begin reporting

income they earn from savings to the Inland Revenue in Britain. The moves are prompted by the introduction of a new Finance Act in Britain.

However, the move will not impact on Irish investors because the Irish Revenue Commissioners would not have automatic access en bloc to information held by the UK Inland Revenue on accounts held offshore about which they are notified.

Ireland's Revenue Commissioners can seek information on a case by case basis but until reciprocal agreements are entered into by the UK and Ireland no comprehensive exchange of information can take place. It does however seem inevitable that greater exchange of information between Britain and Ireland will be formalised.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

01/04/01

RACISM COMES IN MANY FORMS

Irish community groups have reminded the Commission for Racial Equality that racial discrimination is not simply based on colour prejudice.

CARA, the Irish Housing Association, spoke out following a high-profile advertising campaign that featured TV commercials with celebrities whose skin changes from black to white during the course of the advert.

CARA spokesperson John Brennan said " One only has to look to the Holocaust and the Balkans, not to mention Anglo-Irish relationships over centuries to see that millions of white people have perished due to racism".

There is no doubt that the Asian and Black communities in Britain, despite years of supposedly positive anti-discrimination legislation, face extreme discrimination and prejudice still. However, the basis of racism is more deep seated than colour prejudice.

In a parallel to the CARA statement Labour MP Kevin McNamara, who campaigns vigorously for the rights of the Irish community in Britain, reminded the Commission for Racial equality that two years after an investigation found evidence of discrimination against Irish people nothing has been done to address the situation.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

31/03/01

'BUREAU' DUBLIN OFFICE TO CLOSE?

The Celtic League understand that the Dublin Office of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) is to be closed.

A language organisation with Offices in Brussels and Dublin, EBLUL, promotes "linguistic diversity, ensure linguistic rights and support communities and organisations that are coping with these matters". The work includes "lobbying, facilitating an exchange of information and experiences, and rendering practical assistance on the ground to linguistic communities".

The Dublin Office, according to the Bureaus web-site "established in 1984, plays a major role in the field of publishing and promoting linguistic diversity".

Certainly, those active in the language movements in the Celtic countries will be well aware of the positive nature and extent of its work.

The Celtic League are currently investigating the reports of the impending closure of the Dublin Office and we will, of course, be doing all that we can to reverse the decision.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

31/03/01

Query to Secretary General EBLUL below:

Tom Moring
Secretary General
European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages
Brussels Office
Rue Saint-Josse / Sint-Jooststraat 49
B - 1210 Bruxelles / Brussel

Dear Mr. Moring,

The Celtic League are disturbed to hear that the Bureaus Dublin Office may be closed.

The Dublin Office establish in 1984, according to your Bureaus own web-site " plays a major role in the field of publishing and promoting linguistic diversity".

Certainly, those active in the language movements in the Celtic countries are well aware of the positive nature and extent of its work and we are extremely concerned to hear it may be closed.

Could you advise on the current position and if any final decision on the future of the Dublin Office has been taken.

Yours Sincerely
Bernard Moffatt

01/04/01

SOCIAL MARGINALISATION OF TRAVELLING PEOPLE - STUDY

A £200,000 study is to be undertaken into problems faced by the Irish travelling community in Britain, funded with monies from the National lottery.

The project will "investigate the extent and consequences of the criminalisation, social marginalisation and ethnic disqualification of the Irish travelling community in Britain.

In 1995, as part of our paper "Human Rights on the Celtic Fringe", we highlighted what the Celtic League described as "open manifestations of rights abuse". We focused on the travelling community whom we said were subjected to "special treatment" by both central and local authorities in Ireland and Britain.

A year before we spoke out the Criminal Justice Act, introduced in the United Kingdom in 1994, had virtually criminalised the way of life of the travelling people.

However, the introduction of new Human Rights legislation, based on the European Convention of Human rights, gives new hope that repression of this small community of people can be ended. Fundamental to understanding the extent of the problem is properly funded research and this project should fulfil this.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

31/03/01

PRESSURE ON BRETON PRISONERS

Celtic League to call for International action to investigate the shameful conditions of political prisoners in the Jails of France.

The Celtic League are investigating reports that Alain Solé, a Breton political prisoner, tried to commit suicide, last Saturday 24 of March, in Villepinte prison.

Alain is one of a number of prisoners whose plight we highlighted several months ago. At the time we wrote to the French prison authorities and also European prisoners rights bodies highlighting the extreme pressure being applied to both Bretons and other political prisoners in French jails.

Our pleas went unheeded by the French authorities and it seems that a tragedy has only just been averted.

The situation, once again, highlights the need for the medical requirements and psychological welfare of political prisoners held by France to be properly monitored.

The Celtic League will again be contacting the French authorities and also pressing International human rights groups to investigate the scandal of the treatment of political prisoners in France.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

31/03/01

Correspondece to French Justice Minister & CPT below:

Mrs. Marylise Lebranchu
Minister for Justice
Justice Ministry
13 place Vendome
75042
Paris

Dear Minister,

I wrote to you in November last year raising concerning about a number of Bretons detained in prisons in the Paris area (a copy of the correspondence is enclosed).

You will see that we alleged that the French authorities were not applying best practice under European Regulations governing the treatment of detainees.

The Celtic League now have reports that one of those detained, Alain Solé, a Breton political prisoner, tried to commit suicide, last Saturday 24 of March, in Villepinte prison.

The situation highlights the fact that the medical requirements and psychological welfare of political prisoners held by France needs to be properly monitored.

The Celtic League will be pressing International human rights groups to investigate the treatment of political prisoners in France.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

01/04/01

The Secretary

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading
Treatment of Punishment
Council of Europe (CPT)
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
FRANCE

Dear Sir,

We wrote to you in November last year enclosing correspondence to the French Justice Minister raising concerning about a number of Bretons detained in prisons in the Paris area.

We alleged that the French authorities were not applying best practice under European Regulations (Model Prison Rules) governing the treatment of detainees.

The Celtic League now have reports that one of those detained, Alain Solé, a Breton political prisoner, tried to commit suicide, last Saturday 24 of March, in Villepinte prison.

The situation, in our view, highlights the fact that the medical requirements and psychological welfare of political prisoners held by France needs to be properly monitored.

We request as a matter of urgency that you investigate the treatment and physical well being of all political detainees in French Jails.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

01/04/01

NAVY TESTED DU IN NW IRISH SEA

The MOD confirm testing of depleted uranium weapons at the West Freugh complex, adjacent to Belfast Lough. However, ranges off the Isle of Man and at Pembrey in Wales are DU free.

The MOD have reiterated their contention that depleted uranium (DU) munition testing in the N. Irish poses no health risk. The assurance comes in a detailed response to the Celtic League, who addressed a wide ranging query about possible DU testing in the N. Irish sea and also at a range in Wales.

The MOD confirm that firing was undertaken at ranges in Cumbria and into the Solway Firth off Kirkcudbright, Scotland.

They also confirm that the West Freugh facility in Galloway was used for testing of the naval Close in Weapons System (CIWS) Phalanx. These tests took place from 1988-90 and involved the firing of several hundred rounds.

The West Freugh facility, immediately north of the Isle of Man, includes a firing range in Luce Bay and also an exercise area off the Galloway close near the entrance to Belfast Lough. The Celtic League had not been aware of testing in this area and the MOD have not indicated if it was simply confined to the navy CIWS system.

However the MOD also give an assurance that A-10 tank-buster aircraft, which use DU rounds operationally, have not expended any on training ranges around the British Isles. The League had asked about the (now disused) range at Jurby, off the Isle of Man, and a range at Pembrey in S. Wales.

The Ministry of Defence say the only recorded air crash involving one of the A-10 aircraft, at Capel-Y-Fin, Powys, Wales did not result in DU pollution. They say the aircraft was only carrying 'training projectiles.'

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

31/03/01

CAIRNGORMS DOUBLE CRASH ONE OF A SERIES

Close flying tactics which over training areas in the Highlands, south-west Scotland and mid Wales create a risk to the rural community.

The crash last week in the Scottish Highlands, of a USAF F-15 fighter-bomber was the latest in a series of dual accidents involving the type.

In Jan. 1999 two F-15s crashed after colliding over the Gulf of Mexico and six months later another two aircraft crashed after a collision near Nellis Air Force base in the United States. While the Cairngorms incident occurred in a remote area, it seems that the close-flying tactics which the pairs of aircraft carry out extensively over training grounds in the Highlands, south-west Scotland and mid Wales carry with them an inherent risk.

It is past time that these low level operations which are claiming a grim toll of both RAF and US aircrew, were restricted. If action is not taken it seems inevitable that a major tragedy, involving the civilian population of the rural areas over which they exercise, will occur.

In January we warned that many RAF aircraft were approaching obsolescence and it was increasingly difficult, from a maintenance point of view, to keep them airborne. The MOD rejected this at the time but figures recently released indicate that our contention about serviceability was correct.

In the United States similar concerns have been raised about older aircraft types such as the F-15 which first entered service over twenty-five years ago. An F-15 from the same wing as those that crashed in the Cairngorms crashed five months ago whilst on a training mission in the US.

The Celtic League has been calling for years for height restrictions on military aircraft to be lifted to at least 1000 feet.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

01/04/01

SELLAFIELD SEEKS GOVERNMENT BAIL OUT

Britain's nuclear albatross, BNFL, is reportedly in debt, and will be looking to the British government to underwrite some of its liabilities ahead of the much touted privatisation.

Last year it was revealed that workers had falsified safety data for one of the companies prime customers Japan. This led to a crisis of confidence amongst customers and management changes at the plant.

Now balance sheets are in the red. The Magnox reactor division, which includes the troubled Wylfa nuclear station, reportedly had losses of approximately £100 million last year. Continued uncertainty about the future of Wylfa can only compound matters

The Company has taken the decision to axe its Magnox operation over the coming decade and is hoping that the British government will underwrite liabilities and also give approval for the operation of its Mox plant.

However, most communities around the Irish sea hope, that the British government will take a much more realistic economic decision about BNFL and stop its re-processing activities permanently!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

01/04/01

OFFENCES AGAINST STATE ACT

With the cease-fire in N. Ireland and moves to enshrine Human Rights provisions domestically many had hoped that the Offences Against the State Act (OASA) would be scrapped and there would be a return to the ordinary rule of law. However, instead of reforming OASA the Irish government have strengthened its provisions.

Many people in Ireland (North or South) and England will be delighted that the Irish government appears to be taking a firm stand against those allegedly involved with paramilitary groups not on cease-fire.

The arrests of several persons in Ireland last week and their questioning over involvement with the Real IRA has resulted in one of those detained, Michael McKevitt, being charged with 'directing the activities of an illegal organisation'. If convicted McKevitt could face life imprisonment.

The Irish government have been under pressure to act following a series of actions by the Real IRA and because of growing frustration over the failure to bring anyone to justice for the Omagh bombing.

A well-orchestrated media campaign has targeted those ostensibly connected with the Omagh outrage and other RIRA incidents. However, many believe that this media focus ultimately will be demeaning to the judicial process because if or when actual charges are brought individuals already exposed in the media will argue, justifiably, that their right to a fair trial has been prejudiced.

In the case of Michael McKevitt it is also somewhat disturbing that the only mechanism that the Irish government has been able to use to effect charges against him is the Offences Against the State Act (OASA).

Ireland is a State, which like others across Europe, is embracing the principle of incorporation of International Human Rights protections into domestic law. Given this OASA is something of a paradox. Its provisions, and the Special Criminal Court which give them effect, have been criticised by the United Nations.

With the cease-fire in N. Ireland and moves to enshrine Human Rights provisions domestically many had hoped that OASA would be scrapped and there would be a return to the ordinary rule of law. However, instead of reforming OASA the Irish government have strengthened its provisions. This is all well and good until challenges on the basis of Human Rights violations are made.

If there is one lesson that both the Irish and British government should have learned over the past thirty years it is that the application of unsound law leads to unsound convictions.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

01/04/01

BASQUE-CELTIC CONNECTION REINFORCES TIES

New research has indicated that there are genetic connections between the Basque and Celtic peoples.

Research involving a sample group of males from both Wales and Ireland has shown what described as a "strikingly similar" genetic pattern.

The work carried out by University College London, Oxford University and the University of California said that the Basque, Welsh and Irish sample formed a "Y-chromosome, community with members more closely related to one another than they were to the other European populations".

This is the first clear genetic evidence linking the Basque and Celtic people although ties, even in recent years, have been strong.

The Bretons, in particular, have developed close links with the Basque people and provided support and in some instances asylum to the Basques as they fight for independence.

The Celtic League has also been vociferous in its support. This new evidence of a 'link' will harden our support for our Basque "cousins".

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

05/04/01

WHERE ARE BRITAIN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS?

Why are no nuclear weapons stored in England? Nationalists in Scotland are being urged to pose the question to candidates at forthcoming elections.

The current issue of the Scots Independent reveals that the United Kingdoms 200 nuclear weapons are all stored in Scotland with the focus for this weaponry being the nuclear weapons complex on the Clyde.

The paper reveals that from 28th May to June 4th the base will pay host to a doomsday gathering of submarines from the NATO powers and erstwhile NATO adversary Russia.

However, columnist Margery Dougan says that whilst "Trident is the obvious totem with most protesters, there are 200 nuclear weapons spread about" Scotland.

News-group users and League members can subscribe to the Scots Independent - the paper for those who want Independent news about Scotland can be obtained from:

THE SCOTS INDEPENDENT
51 COWANE STREET
STIRLING FK8 1JW
SCOTLAND

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

05/04/01

BRITAIN IN THE DOCK ON LAWYER MURDERS

UN special rapporteur on the Independence of Lawyers and Judges, Param Cumaraswamy, will deliver a damning indictment of the British security services and their alleged involvement in the murder of two leading lawyers in Ulster to the United Nations Human Rights Commission today.

For many years controversy has raged over the killing of Belfast Lawyer Pat Finucane and the failure of the British government to adequately investigate the crime and bring to justice the killers. It has long been believed that the British security forces were involved in the murder.

There is also controversy surrounding the death of Rosemary Nelson, another prominent solicitor, who like Finucane had gone on record to say that threats and intimidation were directed at her by the security services.

Now Param Cumaraswamy who has carried out a painstaking investigation into the killings is likely to criticise the British governments failure to cooperate with his enquiries. He will also question the impartiality of any police investigation. He is expected to call for a full judicial public enquiry.

Many campaigning groups, including the Celtic League, believe that the RUC is too tainted by its involvement with the security services to adequately investigate collusion by those same organisations in the killings.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

05/04/01

FINANCIAL SUPERVISION 'WAFFLE'

The Financial Supervision Commission has responded to a series of questions from the Celtic League concerning high-profile scandals linking Manx banks and financial institutions with illegal activities in other jurisdictions.

The FSC seem to want to evade any criticism by claiming that the events involved occurred many years ago, before Manx regulations were tightened up.

The FSC cite, for example, the case of Irish gangster Thomas Meehan who was convicted of money laundering offences in May 2000. FSC Chief Executive, John Aspden, says:

"The reports of which I am aware indicated that the offences occurred in 1995 and 1996." He goes on "As you are aware, the legislation and the detailed requirements in relation to anti-money laundering and 'Know your Customer' (KYC) systems and procedures for financial institutions did not come into effect until 1 December 1998".

However, strangely in 1991, seven years prior to Mr. Aspden's assertion about KYC, the Chief Secretary's office wrote to the Celtic League, who at that time were investigating alleged money laundering through the Isle of Man by paramilitary gangs in Ulster. Tim Craine, for the Chief Secretary told us:

" I think we all share the wish that no dirty money should be handled by the Isle of Man" he went on "with the above in mind the FSC has adopted a Know Your Customer policy which it expects all banking institutions to adhere to.

Clearly this policy, put in place over a decade ago, did not frustrate Meehan's attempts to use Manx banks to salt away his illicit funds and it calls into question whether things have improved. It also proves that Aspden and the FSC should do their homework before coming out with pompous assertions that don't stand up.

Moreover there is an even greater indictment of the FSC.

Thomas Meehan is known to have been associated with the gang members charged in connection with the slaying of Dublin journalist Veronica Guerin.

In 1996, when Meehan was utilising 'banking services' here the Celtic League wrote to the FSC pointing out that there were strong rumours that persons suspected in connection to the death of the journalist were using accounts here. We called for an Isle of Man investigation.

We are not aware if any follow up action was pursued, although the FSC did tell us in October 1996 that if any licence holders (banks) were involved:

"the FSC will take a serious view of the matter".

Apparently not serious enough to warrant a prosecution!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

05/04/01

BLAIR LASHED OVER LANGUAGE INSULT

The Celtic League has attacked the British government over its failure to include the Cornish language when ratifying the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

The ratification, which comes into effect in the summer, will confer status and support on a number of languages in the United Kingdom, including several of the Celtic languages.

However, the Cornish language has been omitted from the list and the move continues a policy of the present British government of failing to give parity of esteem to the Cornish people.

The British government has pointedly ignored the status of Cornwall and the Cornish people when advancing policies on devolution for other Celtic areas. This latest move by the Blair government compounds that stance. It is in the view of the Celtic League, an insult to the Cornish people.

The League have written to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, which is the organisation responsible for the treaty, asking that he use his 'good offices' with the British government to reverse its decision.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

08/04/01

Correspondence to Tony Blair and the Council of Europe below:

The United Kingdom Prime Minister
Mr. A Blair MP
10 Downing Street
London

Dear Prime Minister,

I write to express our concern and dismay that the United Kingdom government has failed to include the Cornish language when agreeing to ratify the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages.

We understand that the Charter will come into effect on July 1 this year and will commit the British government to protecting and supporting the status of minority languages in the United Kingdom including Irish Gaelic, Welsh, Scots and Ulster Scots.

The Celtic League obviously welcome any steps which your government takes which recognise and stimulate the Celtic languages. However we cannot accept a situation whereby the Cornish language is excluded.

The British government seems unfortunately to have set itself against conferring on the Cornish people the same elements of self-determination recently granted to the other Celtic peoples. This latest insult to the status of the Cornish language is unpardonable and we urge that the British government reconsider the matter and accord what is one of the oldest tongues used in these islands the status it deserves.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General

8/4/01

Secretary General of the Council of Europe
Palais de l'Europe
BP 431 R6
F-67006 Strasbourg Cedex
France

Dear Sir,

I write with reference to the ratification of the European Charter for Minority languages by the United Kingdom.

We understand that this comes into effect on the 1st July but that the United Kingdom has not included Cornish amongst those languages covered by the terms of its Treaty ratification.

Quite frankly this is totally unacceptable and you will see from the attached correspondence that the Celtic League have protested this omission most forcefully to the British government.

We trust that you will use your good offices with the United Kingdom government to urge a rethink on their current stance.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

8/4/01

THIS EVIL WEAPON

"arguments about the relative 'attributes' of the old or new baton round should not obscure the facts about this evil weapon"

The use of Plastic baton rounds, and their equally lethal predecessor the rubber bullet, by the security forces in N. Ireland has been an unmitigated disaster.

So called guidelines covering the use of the weapons have been repeatedly flouted. In addition to a staggering 17 people killed (8 children), by this supposedly safer method of riot control, many scores of people, many of them children, have suffered horrendous injuries.

Against this background the British governments decision to introduce an upgraded version of the plastic bullet which is according to leaked reports, even more lethal, must be deplored.

However, arguments about the relative 'attributes' of the old or new baton round should not obscure the facts about this evil weapon

The United States Congress, reporting on human rights in 1993, concluded that "Scientists, doctors and munitions experts consider the plastic bullets to be the most dangerous crowd control weapon in use world-wide". It also pointed out that despite the carnage wreaked by the weapons in the hands on Britain's security forces "neither soldier nor policeman has been convicted for murder, maiming or misuse of a weapon - it appears the security forces are unofficially granted immunity from prosecution".

The US congress are not the only body to have criticised these weapons and their use (or more accurately misuse). The European Parliament has called for a ban and the UN Committee Against Torture has criticized their use.

In 1997, following a particularly horrendous incident in which a plastic bullet was fired into the face of a child (Gavin McKenna of Lurgan), we wrote to the British government and the United Nations condemning the incident and the continued use of these weapons. The UN Committee on the rights of the Child considered the complaint and re-iterated concerns it had expressed two years earlier to the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom however, via the Northern Ireland Office, simply repeated its assertion that the plastic bullet was not used against children.

This failure by the British government to recognise the strong opposition, both inside N. Ireland and in the International Community, to their use of this weapon and also their failure to own up to the abuse inflicted on young people by this weapon augurs ill for the future.

More deaths and more maiming seem inevitable if this weapon is not withdrawn from use.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

08/04/01

GAA - 'OLD GUARD' GET IT RIGHT

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) have decided, by a narrow margin, to retain the exclusivity of its grounds for National Games.

There had been pressure in Ireland for it to 'modify' its rules and allow the use of its grounds and stadium for other sporting activities. Not surprisingly the decision has led to some criticism and in one instance (the Irish edition of the Observer newspaper) the GAA 'Old Guard' are referred to as dinosaurs. The article patronisingly extolled the 'fine qualities and many fine members' of the organisation before going on to attempt a hatchet job on its governing board for putting Gaelic Sport first. For good measure the Irish government were also attacked for announcing a £60 million funding package for the GAA for its participation in the new proposed national stadium. The argument appears to be that had Ahern held off the funding package the GAA may have been induced to accept the rules amendment in order to earn much needed cash.

The Celtic League are delighted that the Irish government has not fallen into the trap of allowing sports funding to become a weapon to apply leverage to the GAA or any other sporting body.

The decision taken by the GAA is the correct one. When it was established Irish National Sport was in decline (almost extinct). That position has, over the past century, been dramatically reversed and the focus and control of that revival has been in no small part due to the adherence of the GAA governing body over the years to strict principles.

The advent of mass media and the commercialisation of International Sport, such as soccer, and also the rising impact in Europe of US sourced sporting activities make retaining the distinct nature of Gaelic Sport a greater imperative.

The real dinosaurs are not what the Observer patronisingly referred to as the 'Old Guard' of the GAA but those who attack its success.

The GAA have been criticised for missing the chance "to join the rest of modern Ireland in the twenty-first century. However, the Celtic Tiger and modern Ireland may have as much longevity as concepts as Blair's 'Cool Britannia'. Why should the GAA have risked a century of success on such a shallow premise.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

08/04/01

SCOTTISH ENVOY TO UNITED STATES

The decision of Scottish First Minister, Henry McLeish, to send an envoy to Washington to represent Scottish interests is to be applauded.

The move is likely to lead to some mild ribbing from the Scottish National Party, which has long supported the principle of representation of Scotland's interests directly overseas. It will also seem to run counter to the previously stated Labour Party position on such issues.

However, it is to be hoped that all political interests in Scotland will recognise it for the positive first step it is in ensuring that Scotland's interests are promoted directly overseas.

Based within the British Embassy the new post holder - effectively Scotland's unofficial consul in the US - will be an Executive official working on trade and technology links.

The role could, depending on who is selected and the latitude allowed, stimulate both an enhanced and effective focus for factors economically strategic to Scotland.

Where Scotland leads today other Celtic countries will follow. We feel sure the proposal will be keenly evaluated - not least in Wales.

The Celtic countries, who came under the Westminster orbit, have started to realise what the national movements and the Celtic league have said for years. London's self-interest is invariably pre-eminent when it comes to the Celtic countries.

Even the tiny Manx government, who have previously deferred to Westminster to represent their interest internationally, have increasingly taken to representing their own case to bodies such as the UN and OECD.

All these developments show an increased awareness and self-confidence by the devolved governments and they are therefore healthy politically for the British Isles as a whole.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

08/04/01

MUNITIONS MENACE

Calls for action go unheeded as deadly debris poses danger to fishermen and the civil population of the Isle of Man, Antrim and Scottish coasts.

The incident last week off the north west coast of the Isle of Man in which a fishing vessel dredged up a potentially lethal parachute mine once again highlights the hazards posed by discarded munitions.

Since the closure of the Jurby sea bombing range, ten years ago, there have been repeated calls by the Celtic League for a clean-up of the sea bed in the area.

The situation off the north west coast is compounded by other explosive debris which leaches out of the explosives dump ten miles to the north in the Beaufort Dyke. Debris

from this area periodically washes ashore in the Isle of Man, South West Scotland and on the Antrim coast of Northern Ireland exposing fishermen and civilians to danger.

Repeated calls for action go unheeded. In the case of the Isle of Man the government continue to pay millions of pounds annually for defence and common services while the United Kingdom resist calls for a clean up of the area polluted primarily by the Royal Air Force and the United States Air Force.

Last weeks incident indicates that the hazard posed to these coasts is not restricted to small incendiary devices, deadly lethal as they are, such as those which have come ashore here and on the Antrim coast. Devices like this latest 5-6 feet long parachute mine and others netted in recent years can contain up to 1000lb of explosives.

Motor Fishing Vessels from both N. Ireland and the Isle of Man have over the years have snagged similar dangerous munitions. As the skipper in this latest incident said, "If something happens god forbid".

Action on this issue is required. The next incident has the potential for real tragedy!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

11/04/01

MILITARY MASTS OPT-OUT UNBALANCED

The Celtic League has said that any environmental consideration about the implications for health of radiation emissions from phone masts etc. which excludes military installations in N. Ireland would be unbalanced.

The League have written to N. Ireland Assembly Environment Minister, Sam Foster, welcoming the report of the Assembly's environment committee into the implications of radio communication (phone) masts and the potential health hazard posed.

The League say that installations, such as the military installations constructed in border areas of N. Ireland which have grown up on an ad hoc basis, must pose similar questions about safety to those posed by potentially less powerful civil mobile phone masts.

The League point out that it recognises the issue is an emotive one and that question-marks surrounding the military installations are not helped by a culture of secrecy which has seen the MOD reject verification and assessment by its the British governments own emissions watchdog the National Radiological Protection Board.

The Celtic League campaigns on a broad range of issues and has previously supported campaigns on environmental grounds against military communications installations in Wales and the Isle of Man.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

11/04/01

Correspondence Minister of the Environment, N. Ireland below:

Mr. S Foster
Minister of the Environment
Northern Ireland Assembly
Stormont Buildings
Belfast
N. Ireland

11/4/01

Dear Minister,

I write with reference to the statement issued recently by the Northern Ireland Assembly Environment Committee on the subject of radio communication (phone) masts and the potential health hazard posed by emissions.

I believe the Committee's conclusions are well balanced given the uncertainties that surround this sensitive issue.

The question of these installations is of great concern throughout the United Kingdom and indeed the British Isles generally. The Celtic League have expressed reservations about the potential hazard posed by radiation emitted by civil, and particularly, military installations. We have also tried where possible to work with community groups that share a concern about the issue.

I attach a copy of the submission that we made, in 1999, to the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones in which we urged EU sponsored International action to try and bring together the disparate range of research carried out to date.

We also highlighted our concerns about the lack of regulation of military facilities and specifically cited those installations which have grown up on an ad hoc basis in areas of N. Ireland.

In this regard we are bitterly disappointed that the Ministry of Defence, two years ago, turned down our suggestion that these facilities, and other military installations in the United Kingdom, should be subject to the independent verification of a reputable body such as the United Kingdom's National radiological Protection Board.

The Ministry of Defence in relation to its various installations in Northern Ireland, Britain and overseas has said that it:

"strives to be good neighbour at home and abroad"

MOD ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT M Portillo 1995

MOD policy, as further amended, also sets out that it will ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, a healthy and safe environment is to be achieved:

"through the identification of potential hazards; their assessment and control with reference to appropriate health and safety standards and the best current practices"

And that it will pursue:

"the monitoring, measurement and evaluation of performance against these standards"

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE MOD A Policy Statement by the Sec. of State for Defence 1997

The MOD have told us that their equipment is assessed and deployed to the UK guidelines issued by the NRPB but they consistently refuse to allow any independent monitoring.

As indicated we welcome very much the conclusions of The Assembly Environment Committee and in particular its recommendation:

"To acknowledge the significant gap in scientific knowledge on the non-thermal health impacts of radio frequency emissions from masts, the Department of Environment should actively support rigorous precautionary measures within the planning legislation, pending the outcome of the Stewart Body investigating these emissions."

We hope that their sensible and conservative approach to this issue will be supported in other areas. We also trust that the Department of the Environment (NI), which has to consider the issue in its totality, will not ignore the significance of the non regulation and verification of safety standards within the military sector. Any overall environmental strategy relating to non-ionising radiation which ignores the military installations issue will obviously be unbalanced.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

BASQUE / CELT LINKS - GENETICISTS 100 YEARS LATE!

The media in Wales and Scotland recently reported new research that indicates genetic links between the Celts and the Basque peoples.

The Basques are one of Europe's oldest races with their own distinctive language and culture and although there have been strong contacts for many years between the two peoples this was cited as the first evidence of a definite link.

However, Celtic scholars were advancing a link over 100 years ago which whilst not founded on the science of modern day genetics was fairly compelling. Indeed it suggests that the Basque link with these Islands and what we now term the Celtic areas of Western Europe may be of even longer standing.

In his "History of the Isle of Man", published in 1900 by A W Moore, MA, the Basque connection is briefly touched on. Moore says:

"But, however these matters of detail may be answered, there can be little doubt that neolithic men inhabited the Isle of Man for a very long period, and they appear to have left in the present population of the island distinct traces of their physical

characteristics which are said to have been small stature, long heads, dark complexions and black hair and eyes. They are supposed by some authorities to belong to the same non-Aryan section of mankind as the Basques, while it has been ably maintained by Professor Rhys that they were also identical with the people known in history as the Picts or Cruithni;"

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

11/04/01

CORNISH LANGUAGE LEADER RETIRES -NOT QUITE!

After over twenty years as the general secretary of the the Cornish Language Board (CLB) Wella Brown has retired. At the organisations AGM, held recently, he stood down. The new Secretary is Maureen Pierce and Graham Sandercock was re-elected as Chairman.

The CLB has enjoyed considerable success in recent years in promoting the language and last year received County Council funding to support its work.

A measure of the current strength of interest in the language is illustrated by the fact that the 1,000 copy Cornish Language dictionary published, in 1998, has sold out. A new dictionary, compiled by Dr. Ken George, with a print run of 3,000 is being published.

It is too early however to wish Wella Brown a pleasant retirement as for the present he moves sideways in the organisation, taking on the role of Treasurer.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

11/04/01

MILITARY HELICOPTER SAFETY - WATCH THIS SPACE!

Restricted training / regular accidents / bits fall off / operating with defective parts -
The Ministry of Defence is indifferent to the safety is with its own personnel but does it have the right to put others at risk?

This weeks helicopter crash in the Balkans (two died) once again highlights the obsolescence of British military helicopters. The type involved in the latest accident, the Puma, is like its smaller equally obsolete cousin the Lynx, well past its sell by date.

Twelve months ago the Celtic League criticised the continued operation by the British Ministry of Defence of obsolete helicopter types. We said they posed a risk to both their aircrew and the civil population in the areas over which they operated. The types

are deployed in Ulster and also operate over rural training areas of Scotland and mid Wales.

We particularly highlighted the daily shuttle operations which lumber in and out of bases in the N. Ireland border area. Within days of our comments the MOD had to ground one of the types used for these missions, the Lynx, following a number of serious crashes. They admitted that the machines were being operated with a known defect.

In April of last year eighteen men were injured when a Puma helicopter crashed near RAF Leeming in England. More recently a large section of the engine cowling of one of these machines fell off near RAF Benson, the base for helicopters deployed to N. Ireland.

Community groups, such as the South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee, have consistently reported incidents and accidents with these flying junk-heaps which ferry not only troops but under-slung loads over the farmsteads and villages of the County.

It seems inevitable that a serious accident is waiting to occur. Both the Puma and the Lynx are now over thirty years old and as indicated above have in some cases been allowed to continue operations despite known defects.

As if this situation were not bad enough a report in the Daily Telegraph (not normally noted for its criticisms of the military) in October last year reported that Puma pilots were having their flying training restricted - watch this space!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League
11/04/01

LANGUAGE BUREAU - MANX BRANCH ATTACK CLOSURE

The Celtic League Manx branch has added its voice to concerns expressed over the proposed closure of the Dublin Office of the European Bureau of Lesser Used Languages.

In a strongly worded protest to Bureau Secretary Tom Mayer the Manx branch Secretary Crislt Jerry says:

"The Mannin Branch of the Celtic League is very concerned to learn that the Dublin Office of your organisation is to close. This points to a complete lack of concern for minority languages within Europe, many of which are struggling against all odds for survival.

We believe this a seriously retrograde step and suggests a cynical disregard to all those language groups making such great efforts to restore their languages, without which Europe will be the poorer."

Early this month the Celtic League Secretary General contacted all League branches asking them to alert National language organisations to the impending closure. He stressed the major role in the field of publishing and promoting linguistic diversity

played by the Bureau's Dublin facility and expressed concern to hear that was to be closed.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

GREEN LIGHT FOR SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL PARK

Scotland's first National Park has moved a step closer with the publication of a report into the issue and costs involved.

The ninety page document from Scottish National Heritage together with supporting reports will now go to the Scottish Executive.

The Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park will occupy a massive 1675 square kilometre area to the North of Glasgow. The predominant area of the park is in Stirling with an eastern tip stretching into Perth & Kinross. In the west a large portion extends into Argyll and Bute almost to Loch Fyne.

The Celtic League supported the creation of this first National Park for Scotland, submitting at the consultation stage It will provide valuable public safeguards to an important area of north-central Scotland. The new park will be comparable in size (slightly larger) to the N.

Yorks. Moors National Park in England and will of course provide a valuable amenity area for the Scottish people.

Costs associated with its operation are mooted to be around £5.3 to £5.8 million.

It is vitally important that steps to protect the environment, via the creation of publicly administered Parklands, are supported for all the Celtic countries.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

SELLAFIELD - THE 'NEIGHBOUR FROM HELL'

It has been announced that a shipment of waste from two reactors in southern Germany is to be transported to Sellafield.

The Celtic League have written to the EU Environment Commissioners addressing some pertinent points and expressing concern at the laissez-faire attitude shown by her Office to the legitimate concerns of the governments and people around the Irish sea.

The decision that the German government is to resume shipments of nuclear waste to the Sellafield nuclear reprocessing plant is not unexpected. Last December the Dutch government resumed shipments despite the fact that the plants appalling safety record

over the years was even more fatally compromised recently when it was discovered that not only were they negligent but also fraudulent.

Falsification of safety documents led to several dismissals of comparatively 'small fish' amongst the work-force whilst some senior management were waved goodbye with golden handshake.

The German and Dutch governments show a real contempt for the legitimate concerns of people around the Irish sea who have to live with this NEIGHBOUR FROM HELL, BNFL.

Perhaps more disquieting however is the total inertia of the European Union which pays and staffs an Environmental Commissioners Office. This purportedly has a role to protect and respect not just the environment of the EU countries but globally.

As BNFL and their German and Dutch friends play nuclear chess with casks full of toxic waste the EU maintains a stoney silence.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

Correspondence to EU Environment Commissioner below:

Margot Wallström
EU Environment Commissioner
c/o Environment Directorate-General
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Dear Commissioner Wallstrom,

I write to express the concern of our organisation at plans by the German government to resume shipments of nuclear waste from that country to the re-processing facility at Sellafield in the United Kingdom. The German shipments follow transportations of waste from the Netherlands four months ago.

You will be aware that several EU member States have concerns about the operation of the Sellafield facility, whose safety record over many years has been little short of scandalous.

An objective of your Office is to ensure that there is effective environmental protection policy in place throughout the EU. This extends to the protection of the civil population against radiation pollution. The Office of the EU Environment Commissioner would seem to have an ambivalent attitude to the threat posed to coastal communities in the area of the Sellafield plant by the continued transports, storage and reprocessing of nuclear waste at the facility.

Can we ask what, if any, role that your Office has had in monitoring the negotiations that have led to the resumption of these shipments?

Are you aware of the safety shortcomings of the Sellafield plant and the dismissals and compulsory retirements of senior managers that occurred following falsification scandals last year?

Has anyone from the Directorate of the Environment Commission verified British assurances that safety standards at the plant have been improved?

Is the Commission aware that in the past sea transports have been used that were of a totally unsuitable ro-ro type?

What steps, if any, are you aware of to ensure safe transportation?

Finally, how does the Office of the Environment Commissioner square commerce of this type between two nuclear operators (the United Kingdom & Germany) with the well documented opposition of countries in the area of the Sellafield plant such as the Irish and Manx who are vehemently opposed to the plants continued operation?

I believe that community groups and environmental campaigners are disgusted by the indifferent attitude shown by both the German and Netherlands governments to their legitimate fears about the operation of the Sellafield plant.

The attitude of both governments towards the expressed opposition of the Irish and Manx parliaments also shows unbelievable arrogance to EU partners.

However, I believe many people who had some faith in the principles of 'the new Europe' in which affairs between States would be more fairly regulated will also be concerned by the laissez-faire attitude of your Office in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Moffatt

13/04/01

MANX GAELIC MEDIUM UNIT CONFIRMED

Moves to continue the promotion of Manx Gaelic continue apace. In the latest move a language unit is to be created, with the backing of the Department of Education.

The new unit will allow for the teaching of initially 12 primary age children (later up to 25) exclusively via the medium of the language.

The new project will be housed in its own facility at St. Johns, in the west of the Island (due for completion in 2002). Until the premises are completed, and so as not to delay the project, the unit will first open, in September 2001, at an existing school in the Douglas area.

The group behind the new initiative, Sheshaght ny Paarantyn, (parents for Gaelic Medium Education), say that the new unit, " will enjoy a certain amount of independence" but "will be within the mainstream education system ensuring the children enjoy facilities and activities

available to other children and can join with other children for sports, assemblies, meal times and playtimes".

They point out that, " Research carried out in the Gaelic units in Scotland has shown that children adapt well to an additional language at this stage, listening to and absorbing the language first, as with newborns, not questioning points of grammar, simply accepting them within the context of the spoken language".

The latest move follows an expansion in the availability of Manx preschool places provided by Mooinjer Veggey (Reported in CARN 112 - the Celtic League journal).

The move would appear to confirm the commitment of the Manx government to the Manx language. Education Minister, Steve Rodan MHK, said, "I am very pleased that we are in a position to bring forward these plans for primary teaching through the medium of the Manx language".

An ambitious Manx language programme is now well underway at various levels of the Education system and the main impediment to future progress is likely to be the ready availability of teaching and support staff with Gaelic language skills

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

PRISONERS COMMITTEE CONSIDER SOLÉ CASE

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) will consider the case of Breton prisoner, Alain Solé. Alain attempted to commit suicide in Villepinte prison in March because of stress caused by his detention which was aggravated by a lack of proper medical treatment.

Earlier this month the Celtic League wrote to the CPT highlighting his case and pointing out that it had previously warned about the circumstances surrounding the detention of Bretons, Basques and other political detainees.

A letter from CPT Deputy Executive Secretary, Geneviève Mayer, replying to the League confirms that our concern will be looked into. She says:

"Thank you for your letter of 1 April 2001, concerning the situation of Breton prisoners in France and, more particularly, of Mr. Alain Solé at Villepinte Prison.

"Your concern about the quality of medical care and psychological support for prisoners will in due course be brought to the attention of the members of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)."

Alain Solé is one of a number of Breton prisoners who went on hunger strike last year to draw attention to the situation of political detainees in the jails of France.

To date, a parallel protest sent to French Prison Minister, Marylise Lebranchu, has not received a reply.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

HUMBOLDT - 'DISAPPOINTING' SCOTTISH DECISION WILL NOT DERAIL PROJECT

The Scottish Executive has turned down a request for funding to support the continuation of Celtic Studies at the Humboldt University, Berlin.

The decision is an astonishing reversal of the support shown some years ago when the Celtic facility first came under threat. At that time it was the interest and commitment shown by both Scottish First Minister, the late Donald Dewar and Irish Premier Bertie Ahern that encouraged the Celtic League to join the campaign by those at the University fighting to save Celtic Studies.

Since that time financial support from Ireland, and a commitment from the Manx government, have forced a rethink at the University. A decision has been taken, in principle, to continue Celtic Studies.

Obviously the decision of the Scottish Executive is a disappointment but will not derail the project. The Celtic League will be contacting opposition parties in Scotland to see if they can prompt a rethink by the Labour government. In the meantime other initiatives, including possible commercial sponsorship, to raise the balance of funds needed are in hand.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

13/04/01

CANCEL TT CALL BY NATIONALISTS

The Manx Nationalist Party has launched a swingeing attack on the Manx government for failing to reach a decision to cancel the TT motor cycle raced on the Isle of Man.

The Isle of Man is currently totally clear of the foot & mouth disease which is sweeping Britain and is also now confirmed in Ireland.

The TT races (a fortnight at the end of May / June) is a major International sporting event which attracts ten of thousands of spectators into the Island. It is held on a circuit which spans the Island and involves spectators using farmland around the course for good vantage points.

Despite the governments public position that no decision has yet been reached on whether or not to go ahead there is a scarcely concealed battle going on behind the scenes between Tourism and agriculture interests.

The Nationalists say that the TT can be cancelled without causing it irreparable damage however, for the Island to loose its Foot & Mouth free status, and have its livestock herds built up over decades destroyed, will do irreparable damage.

The TT does provide a useful fillip to the Islands ailing tourism industry by kick-starting the season. In recent years though, economically, it has become less important as the island has developed off-shore banking and insurance interests together with a large shipping register.

The Nationalists say the Islands economic buoyancy should be used to assist those in Tourism who would suffer if the event is cancelled - but cancelled it should be.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

14/04/01

The statement from Mec Vannin Chairman Mark Kermode is set out below.

Mec Vannin - The Manx Nationalist Party

Isle of Man TT Races - Lack of decision by IoM government deplorable.

The continued prevarication by the Council of Ministers in relation to the holding of the TT shows the true quality of our government when faced with the need to make clear decisions. No-one could pretend that this is an easy decision but that's what government is there for.

The real value of the Ministerial system of government once again shows itself to be lacking as the conflict of interest between agriculture and tourism holds the situation in deadlock. In such a situation, the responsibility for the matter falls fairly and squarely upon the shoulders of the Chief Minister.

An early decision was correctly called for by Onchan MHK Geoff Cannell. Once it became clear, a fortnight ago, that the UK's Foot and Mouth epidemic was not being contained as predicted, the TT should have been cancelled. The pattern of outbreaks in the UK shows that the disease is spread by direct rather than indirect contact and that the fears of airborne and bird-carried infection, whilst not unfounded, do not appear to have any significant bearing upon the epidemic.

In view of this, we are NOT in the hands of fate. Without shutting down the Island entirely, we cannot be selective about who comes and who doesn't and many people may still arrive during TT week for pre-booked holidays, but there will be significantly fewer, thus reducing the absolute risk and giving point-of-entry authorities better chance to deal with the incoming visitors.

More importantly, the lack of the races themselves will remove a very strong incentive for the public to use agricultural land for either spectating or movement during road closure.

It is abundantly clear that, at this late stage, the infection will not be sufficiently contained and all clear period elapsed before Practice Week.

What the DAFF has failed to make sufficiently clear in its pronouncements on the foot and mouth situation is our special derogation in relation to European Trade that is a result of our foot and mouth free status over the past 50 years. The real issue is not its containment should it get here, for the UK's experience indicates this to be all but impossible in our limited environment, but stopping it coming here in the first place and, to that end, even more stringent measures at all points of entry are justified.

The TT can be run next year, but the loss of live-stock to farmers is very likely to be a death-blow for that industry, thus destroying a way of life, a stable, earning element of our already insufficiently diverse economy and leaving huge areas of our best and most scenic land up for grabs as potential building sites.

Those who claim that the farmers will be compensated do not appreciate the work involved in establishing herds. Equally, though the government cannot be held absolutely responsible for a decision forced upon it by an emergency situation, our current economic bouyancy means that those who can demonstrate dependency upon the TT for their livelihood should be considered for compensation.

At the same time, the DAFF should introduce measures to put an end to what makes the public's overwhelming co-operation with the emergency measure look futile: The trails of mud leading in and out of farmers' fields onto main roads. If this means spending money on disinfectant spray apparatus for farmers or closing certain entrances, that's what must be done.

It is clear that by doing nothing, as ever, the Council of Ministers are hoping that this situation will just go away of its own accord.

IT WON'T!

Mark Kermode
Chairman
Mec Vannin, The Manx Nationalist Pary

14-04-01

ANTI-WELSH COMMENTS REFERRED TO WCAR

Anti Welsh comments, twice broadcast by the BBC, have been referred to the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR).

The United Nations has selected this year to highlight the need for opposition to racism and intolerance and a major conference is to be held in the Autumn in Durban, South Africa.

In correspondence to the UN High Commissioner for Human rights reference to anti-Welsh comments broadcast earlier this year by the BBC on the comedy show Room 101 is cited. The Celtic League ask that the forthcoming WCAR should consider the

special role that national broadcasters have in ensuring that what may be construed as racist attacks or expressions of intolerance are not broadcast.

In separate correspondence to the European Union the Celtic League also highlight the issue. Four months ago the Nice Summit approved a fundamental Charter of Rights aimed at promoting anti-discrimination and respect for cultural diversity. The League say, given this fact, it finds it "extremely offensive that a National broadcaster of an EU signatory can allow broadcasts which stretch the boundaries of respect for racial and cultural diversity on not one but two occasions".

Bernard Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

17/04/01

(Attached correspondence UNHCHR & EU)

United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations
1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

17/04/01

Dear Commissioner,

Re: International Year for Mobilization against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance - World Conference Against Racism.

I refer to the decision of the United Nations to designate this year to exposing and opposing all forms of racism.

I draw your attention to the attached correspondence which relates to the offence caused by remarks made on a BBC entertainment programme, broadcast in March this year, in which Welsh people and their language were ridiculed in a allegedly racist attack.

The comments caused considerable offence both within Wales and the attachments enclosed with this correspondence list a wide range of sources, political figures, pressure groups and even employees of the BBC itself who registered concern.

The legitimate concerns which were raised are given an added resonance by the fact that the BBC, a organisation of International repute, allowed the offending comments to be twice broadcast. This despite the condemnation of the initial broadcast.

The specific nature of the comments also gives considerable cause for concern. Speaking in the context of people using their native language the broadcaster identified this as a reason to "dislike" Welsh people. The comments being given added emphasis (see attached).

The broadcast by the BBC of an attack on one of the Celtic languages is particularly disturbing. Although in recent years the respect for and promotion of these languages

has become accepted, within living memory acts of discrimination were practised against them by the British government.

Other more disturbing comments were also made. The British Broadcasting Complaints Commission has apparently accepted that the comments made were deliberately destined to be provocative but have astonishingly failed to acknowledge the allegedly racist nature of them

Sadly, it is almost impossible to proscribe intolerance or bigotry by individuals but I trust you will agree that broadcasting organisations should not facilitate such attacks. This is the main purpose in our correspondence to you. I would request that the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) will consider the role of broadcasters and the special responsibility that they have in combating Racism and Intolerance.

I would be grateful if the comments of the Celtic League could be passed to the WCAR secretariat.

I trust you will raise the specific issue of this broadcast with the British government.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General

cc

Romani Prodi, President of the European Commission
Antonio Vitorino, EU Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs

Mr. Romano Prodi
President of the Commission
European Commission
200 rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

17/04/01

Dear Mr. Prodi,

I draw your attention to the attached correspondence forwarded today to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I understand that the European Union recently adopted a 'Charter Fundamental Rights' and I refer specifically to articles 21 and 22 of that Charter which address issues of non discrimination and respect for cultural diversity.

Quite frankly I find it extremely offensive that a National broadcaster of an EU signatory can allow broadcasts which stretch the boundaries of respect for racial and cultural diversity on not one but two occasions.

I trust the Commission will raise the issue with the British government.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt
Secretary General

cc. Antonio Vitorino Commissioners for Justice and Home Affairs.

NEW IMPETUS IN SHUT SELLAFIELD CAMPAIGN

The arrival, in the Irish sea, of a Norwegian pressure group , the Neptun Foundation, heralds a new dawn in the campaign against Sellafield.

Yesterday the groups vessel anchored off the Sellafield plant and divers from the vessels gathered samples of the contaminants emitted by the nuclear re-processing facility. They had carried out similar operations on their journey from Norway at locations in the North Sea and around N. Scotland.

Later today, in Douglas Isle of Man, the Secretary General of the Celtic League visited the crew of the Neptun Foundation vessel and pledged support in any joint campaign to shut the nuclear complex.

The Norwegian voyage to the Irish sea gives a useful fillip to the anti-Sellafield movement at a time when the BNFL facility and the overall company operation have been attracting widespread condemnation throughout Europe. It highlights to campaigners in the Irish sea area that opposition to the plant is more widespread than simply the coastal communities of the Irish sea.

The Neptun Foundations Irish sea campaigners told the Celtic League Secretary that they hoped to build a co-ordinated campaign to stop polluting discharges from Sellafield and they hoped that a wide range of groups would join the effort. They also indicated that the Isle of Man was an ideal location to base the operation against the Sellafield plant.

The Celtic League have long believed that the Isle of Man could play a pivotal role, given its location, in forcing the closure of Sellafield's reprocessing operation. We hope that all campaign groups will support the Neptun Foundation initiative.

We also trust that both the Manx and Irish governments will welcome the campaigners and build their own political links with governments such as those in Scandinavia concerned about Sellafields operations.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

18/4/01

Details of the Neptun Foundation web site are set out below together with a sample press release issued by the organisation to mark the commencement of their campaign.

<http://www.stopsellafield.com/english/news.htm>

(This is an extract of a telefax sent by Katrine Kristiansen, pressspokeswoman of the Neptun Foundation, Norway, to the office of the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair early this morning.

"A group from the Neptun Foundation anchored today - at 06:00 UTC - right next to the nuclear waste pipes coming from Sellafield.

They do this in an attempt to stop the radioactive Technetium-99 from being pumped out into the sea.

This is a non-violent action.

The fact that the British Government allows the discharge of wastewater containing Technetium-99 from Sellafield is totally unacceptable. Technetium-99 is contaminating all oceans in the northern hemisphere.

We expect the British Government and Tony Blair to promote immediate actions that will lead to the closure of Sellafield.

As you allready know, there is a substantial international resistance to the continued discharges of Technetium-99 from Sellafield. The Neptun foundation will make use of all legal approaches - among them, non-violent actions - to make sure that the radioactive Technetium-99 contamination is permanently stopped.

The Neptun foundation is a Non Government Organisation. It receives its financial support from the Norwegian people.")

REMEMBER LANGUAGE CENSUS CALL

Manx language campaigners have issued their own call (see below) to language supporters to ensure that the strength of the language is adequately reflected in Census returns.

There statement echoes concerns issued in other Celtic countries about the degree of thought reflected through the Census process to the needs of the Celtic Languages.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

18/4/01

Statement below from Phil Gawne Manx Language Development Officer,
Manx National Heritage and the Manx Heritage Foundation.

Don't Forget the Manx Language on Census Night!

Manx Language Development Officer, Phil Gawne, is urging parents of children who have attended lessons as part of the Department of Education's Manx Language teaching programme to record their child's ability in the language. He is also asking parents of children who have been to Mooijner Veggey , the Manx playgroups, to remember that their children are likely to be Manx speakers.

Mr Gawne pointed out that "many parents are unaware of their children's ability in Manx. Children who may speak Manx to their teacher or playgroup leader are unlikely to speak Manx to their parents (especially as the majority of parents don't speak Manx). However, the teaching of Manx has made significant progress since the subject was introduced into the schools in 1992."

"Most children who have been to Manx lessons at school will be able to read and speak a good deal more than the few words and phrases of Manx which the census form asks for. Children who have attended Mooinjer Veggey groups are also very likely to speak more than a few words or phrases of Manx - indeed most of them are singing Manx rhymes and songs after only a few weeks at play group."

Estimating the number of children who could now be eligible to record some degree of fluency in Manx Mr Gawne was fairly optimistic. "There have been over 100 children registered with Mooinjer Veggey since it was formed 4 years ago and almost all of these have a good knowledge of spoken Manx. In the 1991 census only 13 children under 5 were recorded as having a knowledge of Manx; in this year's census that figure could well be 4 or 5 times higher, if all eligible children are recorded."

"The numbers in schools are even more encouraging. In 1991 134 children aged between 5 and 19 were recorded as having a knowledge of Manx. Even using the most conservative figures there have been more than 20 times that number of children attending Department of Education Manx lessons, and again the overwhelming majority of these will have sufficient knowledge of Manx to record themselves as speakers and readers of Manx."

Phil Gawne is also asking adults to register their linguistic knowledge. "Manx speakers and learners who consider themselves to be able to speak, read or write more than a few words or phrases of Manx are urged to register this fact on the 2001 Census. Clearly the numbers of Manx Gaelic users recorded in the census may well have an impact on the level of Government support for the language in the future."

"A recent survey of Manx speakers and learners indicated that the number of adults with a good knowledge of Manx is set to rise, following the trend of census results since 1961. It is always risky to predict the outcome of such things as the coming census, however, providing parents don't forget their children's abilities when filling in the census form the number of people with a good knowledge of Manx in 2001 looks set to be substantially higher than that number in 1991.

The census has also been in the minds of Gaelic speakers in Scotland. The lack of a Scottish Gaelic census form has caused a great deal of disappointment and anger amongst the Scottish Gaelic community.

Language supporters felt that it is irrelevant that Scottish Gaelic speakers are bilingual and fully competent in English. They pointed out that all Welsh speakers, like Gaelic speakers, are also fluent English speakers but no one in Wales would ever make the argument that services shouldn't be made available for Welsh speakers in Welsh on the grounds that they can speak English too. They pointed out that the census information leaflet for Northern Ireland is available in Irish despite the fact that there are far fewer fluent Irish speakers in Northern Ireland than there are Gaelic speakers in Scotland.

There are no calls currently from Manx language organisations for census forms and/or information leaflets to be provided in Manx, but who can tell what the new breed of Manx speakers coming through our schools might demand in the future?

Phil Gawne
Manx Language Development Officer,
Manx National Heritage and the Manx Heritage Foundation

WYLFA - £150 MILLION LOSS

As BNFL faces the threat of a new co-ordinated and more wide-ranging campaign of opposition at its Sellafield plant at the other end of the Irish sea things are also looking bleak.

The company's troubled Wylfa nuclear power station, on the Island of Anglesey, is reported to have clocked up a staggering £150 million loss since its shut down last April.

Tiny flaws (the company insist they are not cracks) in the piping to a reactor led to first the shut down of one reactor and then the other on site.

This latest protracted interruption to supply is the longest in over thirty unscheduled shutdowns at the facility which we Celtic League publicised last year.

Losses are now running so high that it would be less costly for BNFL to flush £50 notes down the waste out-fall from the plant.

The losses are also leading to serious lobbying by the nuclear industry for the resumption of operations at the plant.

Wylfa has not often been out of the news in recent years. Six years ago a serious event at the plant led to the most dangerous incident that the British nuclear industry has faced since the 1950s Sellafield fire.

The operation of these old Magnox stations is under constant attack by environmental groups around the Irish sea and on Anglesey.

The Irish government also oppose the operation of Wylfa which is just 55 miles from Dublin. This station and others around the Irish sea pose a constant threat.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

18/04/01

FOOT & MOUTH - *Continued Army patrol activity - borders on the reckless*

The Celtic League have written to the British armed forces in N. Ireland expressing concern that operations, by foot patrols and military helicopters, have continued during the recent foot & mouth emergency.

We have also asked about the transit of contaminated Army helicopters from the UK and the measures taken to sterilise same. Britain's NATO partner Norway recently banned British Army helicopters destined for a military exercise in that country

The League have also pointed to procedures circulated by the US Army some years ago. These covered extensive decontamination of the external and internal surfaces of Army helicopters & aircraft that found themselves operating in areas contaminated with foot and mouth. We do not believe that similar procedures are in place in N. Ireland and have asked for clarification

We have also stressed to the GOC N. Ireland that the US Army instructions highlighted that the first option should be to avoid a scenario involving operation into suspect areas.

In the circumstances the decision by the British army to continue its normal pattern of patrol activity and instate limited decontamination procedures which are not properly vetted in our view borders on the reckless.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

19/04/01

(See below)

The General Officer Commanding
British Forces Northern Ireland
Lisburn
nr. Belfast
N. Ireland

19 April 2001

Dear Sir,

Ref: Foot & Mouth Emergency

I understand that during the ongoing foot and mouth emergency operations by British army foot patrols and military helicopters have continued into affected areas and also areas where cases were suspected in Northern Ireland.

Can you advise if your Command carries out regular decontamination of helicopters and troops involved in these operations and would it be possible for a copy of the procedures used to be supplied to us?

Are you aware that approx. four years ago the US Army Aviation Command issued comprehensive instructions to cover the operation of aircraft and helicopters in contaminated environments involving foot and mouth. Those procedures provided instruction not just covering the spraying of skids and wheels but also internal and external decontamination of Army helicopters / aircraft.

The comprehensive procedures, I should stress, were issued to ensure that safety was not compromised by decontamination procedures and a section of the order

specifically highlighted that where possible operations into contaminated or suspect areas should be avoided.

Is comprehensive decontamination of both the internal and external area of British Army helicopters involved in the transport of troops involved in patrol activity carried out.

Finally, the operation in N. Ireland necessarily involves the passage to and from the United Kingdom of military helicopters which may have been in suspect (or contaminated areas).

Could you advise if civil airfields that they transit through are notified of necessary decontamination procedures which should be followed and do you as a matter of course advise civil authorities of any possible risk.

I would conclude by saying that notwithstanding the decontamination methods followed we find the decision by British Forces N. Ireland and the MOD to continue operations into suspect and contaminated areas border on the reckless.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS CONCERN

The Celtic League have expressed concern to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child about child care provision in the Isle of Man.

The League believe the transfer of children taken into care in the Isle of Man to the United Kingdom (England) is potentially a breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Such transfers are infrequent but this does not excuse any possible breach.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

21/04/01

(see below)

High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
Palais des Nations
CH 1211
Geneva 10
Switzerland

For the Attention :

The Secretary
Committee on the Rights of the Child

Dear Sir,

I write to express our concern that, in some instances, children taken into care in the Isle of Man are transferred to the United Kingdom (England).

I am aware that when the United Kingdom - Isle of Man supplied a report to your committee in 1998 (CRC/C/11/Add19) it highlighted (para 58) that:

" In a very few cases, usually where a child is placed in the care of the Department by a court following conviction of a criminal offence, the child's needs cannot be met in the Island, and with the leave of the court he will be placed in a specialist unit in England".

We accept that in recent years the Isle of Man has developed better domestic facilities to address the needs of those convicted of juvenile crime. There are however another much more vulnerable group.

The United Kingdom - Isle of Man authorities did not highlight to the CRC at the last report stage that where very young children are taken into care because of perceived family protection problems these children can also be transferred or considered for transfer to the United Kingdom (England).

These children, in some instances, have a distinct Manx identity and it is therefore unacceptable that forced transfer, whatever the domestic circumstances, should take place.

I have studied carefully the Convention on the Rights of the Child and I believe that by effecting transfers of children to the United Kingdom (England) because of child protection concerns based on domestic circumstances there is a possible breach of the spirit of the Convention. In effect the domestic circumstances surrounding the family life, and the difficulties inherent in same, are being resolved by putting distance between the natural family and the child.

I would particularly draw the attention of the Committee to Article 19 (2) and Article 20 (3) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I hope that the Committee will ask for a clarification from the United Kingdom - Isle of Man when the next report on the application of the Convention to the Isle of Man is considered.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt
Secretary General
Celtic League

21/04/01

NEW BATON ROUND - A PROVOCATION

Irish leader, Bertie Ahern, has expressed “grave reservations” following confirmation that the British Army and RUC are to use a new plastic baton round in Northern Ireland. The Celtic League welcome the fact that the Taoiseach has recognised that this action by the British is a deliberate provocation at a sensitive time in the peace process.

Earlier this month the Celtic League condemned British governments plans to utilise the new weapon. We cited the appalling record, operationally, of both the British Army and RUC in their use of the older baton rounds. These weapons, often discharged randomly at demonstrators, have over the years caused a series of deaths and horrendous injuries. There is also strong evidence that despite so called guidelines aimed at strictly controlling their operational use the weapons have been discharged at close range, often towards the head, with a view to causing the most serious injury.

Several of those killed have been children and because of the random nature of the weapon's use scores of children have also been injured. Both the US government and the United Nations have criticised their usage.

It remains to be seen if the condemnation by the Taoiseach will translate into firm action by the Irish government. The introduction of the new weapon flies in the face of agreements over demilitarisation and normalisation included as part of the Good Friday settlement. It is therefore a deliberate provocation which the Irish government will ignore at its peril.

According to test information, restricted by the British government, the new weapons are potentially more life threatening than those they are designed to replace.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

CLEAN UP RANGE CHALLENGE TO MOD

Half way round the world the indigenous tribes people of Kenya are taking on the MOD. Meanwhile the Manx government is sitting on its thumbs over the munitions pollution issue.

The British Ministry of Defence is likely to find itself 'in the Dock' shortly for failing to clean up the debris from military ranges.

The Masai and Samburu tribes people of Kenya, who have suffered terribly because of the failure of the MOD to clean up ranges used by the British Army, are initiating legal action for redress.

The British military have used ranges in the tribes peoples homeland for almost fifty years. The MOD say they take "a great deal of trouble to ensure ranges are clear of munitions or ordnance".

This statement will come as news to Manx fishermen, told last week by the Manx government to steer clear of potentially rich fishing grounds off the Island north west coast because of a similar munitions pollution problem.

Perhaps the Isle of Man government and its Chief Minister should contact the Masai and Samburu people. The example of these poor indigenous people's reaction to the arrogance of the British Ministry of Defence might give the Isle of Man government, which is infinitely better resourced financially to take on the MOD, some ideas - or backbone!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

PANA & THE NICE TREATY

Delegates from various Celtic countries, meeting in the Isle of Man over Easter, heard reports from Irish branch representatives on concerns in Ireland about the Nice treaty.

The Irish branch has thrown its support behind PANA (the Peace and Neutrality Alliance) which is campaigning with others for a No vote in the referendum to be held in Ireland over acceptance or rejection of the treaty.

The Peace & Neutrality Alliance was established in 1996 to advocate an Independent Irish Foreign policy, maintain Irish Neutrality, and promote the United Nations and the OSCE as the institutions through which Ireland should pursue its security concerns.

PANA represents a wide range of NGO's peace groups, political parties and individuals that support its objectives. They have submitted a detailed case outlining their concerns about the Treaty to Dail Eireann, the Irish Parliament.

PANA see the campaign against the militarisation of the European Union, which is the implicit objective of the Nice treaty, as part of the overall international struggle against militarisation. They say a yes vote will be a victory not only for PANA but for the international peace movement. The Celtic League has endorsed this view and practical effect to our support will be given by Conradh Ceilteach, the Irish branch of the League.

There is no doubt that PANA will face fierce opposition from the government and the military establishment who strongly support Nice and the inherent military linkage via the EU to NATO. However, there is a strong grass roots feeling in Ireland in support of the countries traditional neutrality. Ireland has a reputation second to none for its work with the United Nations. Its troops discipline and scrupulous impartiality in International peace

keeping have ensured the high regard in which they are held. All this could be undermined at a stroke if Ireland links to this European military pact.

Far from being a force for peace the new European Army will be structured for offensive operations and the Celtic League, as part of our commitment to the campaign by PANA, will be researching some of the hidden facets of the treaty implications already becoming apparent.

League members and subscribers to this news site can get information about PANA and regular updates on its campaign by contacting them direct.

Outside Ireland please contact the PANA International Secretary with queries or support:

Main Address
Feargus MacAogain
Secretary
Peace & Neutrality Alliance
113 Springhill Ave.
Blackrock
Co. Dublin

Te. 353 1 2806878

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

ARMY SENSITIVITY

THE MOD ARE SENSITIVE ABOUT DRUGS POLICY & PETTY CRIMINAL RECRUITMENT - BUT CONVICTED MURDERERS ARE OK!

The British Ministry of Defence is planning to relax its rules on drug taking to ease a shortage of recruits, but is progressing the issue sensitively.

Over recent months we have highlighted a number of expulsions from the Armed Forces when troops have tested positive in random checks. Numbers of troops testing positive have grown in recent years. In the first ten months of last year 580 were discharged whilst in 1999 the total was 485.

This year multiple discharges have occurred in a number of key regiments. Eighteen soldiers from the Kings Regt. were kicked out in February and Fifteen members of the Light Dragoons went in the previous month. More lenient treatment is meted out to Officers with a second lieutenant in the RAMC allowed to "resign his commission".

The possible change of policy on drugs, revealed last month, coincides with a relaxation of rules on convicted criminals. Last November it was announced that the Army was to send recruiting officers into jails in an attempt to enlist recruits to meet

its intake targets. The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that the Army were keen to introduce the scheme "on a low key basis" to avoid criticism.

However, the MOD's sensitivity over both the drugs and prison issue is strangely at odds with its continued insensitivity over the retention in the service of convicted murders like the two Scots Guardsmen Fisher and Wright, who murdered Belfast man Peter McBride.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

DATA PROTECTION CRITICS FINED

One would have to be overly sensitive to ascribe anything sinister to the fact that Internet news agency provider Bee Media and associated companies have been fined for failing to register for Data Protection purposes. The Court summons initiating action against Bee Media occurred shortly after their new agency Bee Manx had carried a series of items critical of the Data Protection Office (ODPR) and the timing is therefore unfortunate.

The company will pay £2,250 plus costs and it has its own legal fees to cover - quite a hefty sanction.

There seems to be a general acceptance by both the government and the ODPR that the regulations under which the agency currently functions are obsolete. It also has to be more than a point of speculation as to whether the legislative programme of the Manx government will be able to keep pace with the evolving electronic data scene even when they get their act together and amend the law. The Internet and the world of e-commerce have about as much in common with current ODPR regs. as the medieval Roman Catholic Church had with the reforming sciences of the Middle Ages. (Fortunately the principals of Bee Media won't be burnt at the stake - a fine will suffice!).

News-groups subscribers outside Mann might not appreciate the significance of this issue but any suggestion of interference, however legitimate, with a service, such as Bee Media, which provides independent news is a cause for concern.

It also seems somewhat draconian that the Courts in the Isle of Man should apply all their weight to a comparatively minor infraction of regulations. A useful parallel would be to enquire when the last penalty was imposed for breach of Manx Control of Employment legislation or when serious action was taken over Health and Safety infringements?

After all, Bee Media were not putting anyone at risk and they were not doing anyone out of a job. Was this penalty really justified?

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

COMBAT HELICOPTERS & A NEUTRAL STATE

The appointment of Finnish General, Gustav Haggland, to the presidency of the EU Military Committee has caused controversy. We ask why the Defence Forces of his neutral State suddenly strive for offensive weapons?

The apparently innocuous appointment of a senior Finnish military figure to head the new EU military committee has caused concern in several EU member States. Most bizarrely however it is suggested that Ireland's government and military establishment have actively supported and campaigned for the appointment. It is also suggested that behind the scenes activity by sections of the French, German and Irish governments clinched the deal for the Finnish contender.

There are obvious attractions, for those keen to make the new European military order all inclusive, in having a military figure from such a key neutral State as titular head of the new structure. It is also of immense propaganda significance for those seeking to embroil Ireland in the new European army.

Paradoxically however Finland also provides a useful pointer to those in Ireland campaigning against involvement in Europe's new all-embracing military structures.

We can reveal that Finland, whose arms forces have to date had a strictly limited none offensive role, are expanding their strategic objectives. The Finnish Defence Forces say that they will require combat helicopters to complement new transport 'choppers' on a joint-Nordic shopping list.

These 'fighter' helicopters have a number of applications in addition to the transport protection role. They can be used independently for surveillance, fire support and anti-tank missions. A clear example of the application of this type of hardware is that provided by US machines in Kosovo. They are in effect an interventionist weapon.

The procurement of these weapons in itself can also cause further Defence Forces proliferation. Required wisdom from services such as the US Armed forces, which routinely operate transport & combat helicopter formations. is that they require further combat air support. The cost of such weaponry is staggering. Combat helicopters of this type cost \$35/40 million each. If anything this illustrates the pitfalls for neutral States such as Ireland and Finland if they commit their forces to European Defence Strategies hammered out in Nice.

We can be assured that those in Ireland, who may exploit the appointment of this Finnish General as a benign facet of the new EU military strategy, will not highlight the fiscal cost of his countries military ambitions.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

CHILDREN REMOVED FROM "CULTURE & BACKGROUND"

The Manx government have responded to concerns by the Celtic League about child care in the Isle of Man.

The League had written to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child asking if it would investigate situations whereby children of indigenous Manx parents were placed, fostered or adopted off the Island. We specifically asked if this was a breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of The Child.

In their response the Islands DHSS Children's section have dismissed any concerns. However, they do seem to accept some inconsistencies. A spokesperson told the local media: "I have to admit there is a cultural issue; we are removing them from their culture and background"

He went on to clarify that the placements are handled in such a way as to ensure that, "they do not forget where they come from".

Paradoxically, in "dismissing" the League's concerns the government spokesperson has highlighted the crux of the issue which is that children should not be divorced from their "cultural" environment. In effect no amount of sensitivity in the handling of such cases can offset the trauma associated with this.

The spokesperson also presented the argument that the paramount issue was the interest and welfare of the children. However, this argument was advanced during the last century to support regimes of child care subsequently found to be flawed.

The Isle of Man government should meet its child care responsibilities towards children of indigenous Manx people domestically. We will be reinforcing our concerns to the UNCRC and citing the government's own acceptance that it is removing these children from "their culture and background".

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

27/04/01

NATIONALISTS AFFIRM HARD LINE ON FINANCE SECTOR

The Manx Nationalist Party (Mec Vannin) has held its annual general meeting. The Party was founded almost forty years ago and has campaigned ceaselessly for Manx independence. About twenty years ago it adopted a republican strategy and since that time it has campaigned for a complete severing of any link with both the United Kingdom and the Crown. (The Island is at present a self governing dependency of the Crown).

Over the years Mec Vannin has not fought shy of promoting a non-populist agenda on an Island whose government seems to embrace growth at all costs. The Party has

vigorously opposed development associated with the Islands burgeoning financial services sector and this years AGM re-iterated that theme.

Mec Vannin has a web site which can be accessed via the Manxman domain at:

<http://www.manxman.co.im/mecvan/index.html>

A statement issued by the Party, following the AGM, is set out below.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

28/04/01

Mec Vannin held its AGM on Wednesday, 25th April.

Officers were elected as follows:

Chairman - Mark Kermode
Secretary - Gregory Joughin
Treasurer and Vice Chairman - Cristl Jerry
Editor - Alan Comish
Cultural Officer - Phil Gawne
International Relations Officer - Illiam Costain
Campaigns Officer - Jonathan Sless
Youth Officer - Wendy Hurst

The following resolutions were passed:

1. This AGM:

a) views with concern the crisis over teacher supply and retention. Mec Vannin believes that the present problems result from the wholesale adoption of the educational policies and contracts from England and Wales.

b) urges the government and the Department of Education to implelment contracts similar to Scotland's "New Deal," in consultation with the teachers' unions.

2. This AGM:

a) considers that the aspirations of that segment of the population who favour the finance sector must, by now, be well satisfied and, in view of this, Mec Vannin feels it is high time that the views of those citizens who disagree with its further encroachment of our way of life were taken into consideration.

b) calls upon the Government to actively investigate all reasonable methods to restrict further growth of the finance sector.

A subject that saw particular discussion was the ongoing, if not increasing use of this country for less than savoury business dealings in the form of money laundering, sanctions breaking, fraudulent dealing etc.

Mec Vannin directly raised its concern over the obvious abuse of company formation in Mannin whilst he was still Treasury Minister. The Edwards Review endorsed our concerns. Nonetheless, the economically attractive business of company formation

which permits crooks to profit and launder their proceeds using our country as part of an international chain, continues to be positively encouraged by the government.

Just as with the flawed reaction to foot and mouth, we may have been black-listed by the OECD and criticised by the UK "Edwards Review" but the message is still, "We are open for business."

Mark Kermode
Chairman, Mec Vannin

Statement ends.

CONRADH CEILTEACH - ACTIVE MEETING

The NICE Treaty and British government handling of Foot & Mouth in the 'firing line' at Irish branch meeting.

Conradh Ceilteach - the Irish branch of the Celtic League held its annual general meeting in Dublin this week.

The meeting recieved a report from the Convenor of the Celtic League on general league issues including the recent meeting of General Council Officers in the Isle of Man.

After the consideration of formal business the branch agreed resolutions on several key areas. These are to be progressed with both immediate effect and also at the full AGM of the Celtic League organisation in Cymru later this year.

Two areas in particular were identified requiring immediate action.

The branch re-emphasised its support for the campaign of opposition to the NICE treaty which it sees as a step which will not only "further weaken the independence of Ireland" but also "reduce democracy in the European Union".

The branch also expressed its concern about the British governments handling of the Foot & Mouth outbreak.

The full text of all adopted motions are set out below with subject headers:

NICE TREATY

The Celtic League opposes the NICE treaty as it will further weaken the independence of Ireland and reduce democracy in the EU.

The influence of the smaller nations will be lessened through the weighted voting system.

Ireland will lose the right to nominate a Commissioner in the future and the foundations are being laid for a two tier Europe.

The treaty is opposed particularly as it will put an end to Ireland's military neutrality and create the basis of a new European army.

FOOT & MOUTH OUTBREAK - BRITISH GOVERNMENT NEGLIGENCE

This AGM condemns the negligence of the English Government in allowing the foot and mouth epidemic to develop and spread.

We call on the Ministers of Agriculture in both parts of Ireland, Wales and Scotland to make a joint demand for compensation to the London government for the damage caused to the Irish, Welsh and Scottish economies.

IRISH LANGUAGE BILL

This AGM of the Celtic League is gravely concerned at the long delay in the introduction of an Irish Language Rights Bill in Dáil Éireann. Rumour, well founded, has it that the permanent Civil Service is strong in its opposition to the very concept of the Bill.

We call on the Irish Government to expedite the publication of the Bill and to ensure that it contains the provisions endorsed over the years by the League and the Irish Language organisations.

GAA - USE OF CROKE PARK

This AGM supports the right of the GAA to make its own decisions with regard to the use of its national headquarters stadium, Croke Park, in Dublin without outside or Government interference.

If it ever so chooses to facilitate other sports it should be allowed to do so on its own terms.

A VOTE FOR ALL IRISH CITIZENS

The Celtic League calls on the Irish Government to introduce electoral reform to allow Irish citizens in the North and citizens overseas the right to exercise their franchise in Referenda, Presidential and National elections.

In addition to the above the branch meeting also considered other general business. There was a discussion on the implications of the planned closure of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages.

Relations and contacts with other branches were considered. It was noted that the Inter Celtic forums, organised with Trinity College Celtic Students group, continued to be successful. It was hoped these would continue and that other pan-Celtic initiatives and further political, language and general cultural issues could be stimulated via the Irish branch.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

28/04/01

FOOT & MOUTH - ARMY REPLY

The British Army in Northern Ireland has said that it "is taking all steps to prevent the proliferation of Foot and Mouth to, from or within Northern Ireland".

The Celtic League had written querying the transit arrangements for helicopters within the Province and we had also requested information about decontamination procedures.

The MOD say that "all military personnel and equipment that has been in contact with agricultural land are decontaminated in accordance with DARD (Department of Agriculture and Rural development) recognised procedures.

However, we had specifically asked if the MOD/ Army were aware and using US Army procedures circulated some years ago. These covered extensive decontamination of the external and internal surfaces of Army helicopters & aircraft that found themselves operating in areas contaminated with foot and mouth. We did not believe that similar procedures were in place in N. Ireland and this would seem to be the case. Last month Britain's NATO partner Norway banned British Army helicopters from a military exercise in their country.

The Army also reject are assertion that their continuation of foot patrols, when the extent of the Foot & Mouth problem became apparent, borders on the reckless. They refer to "elements of the community who remain intent on conducting acts of terrorism" and say these groups "have shown no respect for the combined efforts of the whole community who are involved in containing and preventing the spread of this terrible disease". They say the Army patrols are necessary to provide support to the Police in their attempts to stop illegal movement of livestock.

However, the main focus of continued security force activity is in the agricultural border areas and the assertion, which seems aimed at deflecting attention from military inertia over contamination concerns in the early stages of the Foot & Mouth crisis, seems fatuous.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

30/04/01

LEUKAEMIA RISK - CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

The new research, by Dr. Chris Busby which reinforces his earlier identification of increased leukaemia risk associated with radiation pollution is cause for extreme concerns.

The circumstances of so called leukaemia clusters at Seascale, near the Sellafield plant, remains undetermined and Busby new identification of a similar problem near Oldbury power station on the River Severn must focus us on the potential impact on public health these installations cause.

It is certainly not good enough for BNFL (ironically the operators of both Sellafield and Oldbury) to dismiss Dr. Busby's research.

Organisations, like the Celtic League, are well aware that in the past efforts have been made to rubbish his research and particularly his findings that the incidence of cancers around Irish sea coasts was higher than the norm. On that occasion his work based on information originally held by the Welsh Cancer Registry was called into question when the body which took over that data base (the Wales Cancer Intelligence & Surveillance Unit) inexplicably removed 3.500 cases from the original sample base.

It is perhaps too strong an assertion to say that official statistics were gerrymandered to frustrate the impact of Busby's research but the issue of the missing statistics is still unresolved. In addition BNFL's attempts to cry foul this time sound increasingly empty when one considers the recently litany of deceit exposed within the Company over safety issues.

There is no doubt that many communities around the Irish sea have a serious concern about the incidence of cancers caused which may be attributable to pollution from Sellafield.

Given this fact it is an appalling indictment of the British government that it has failed to coordinate statistical data adequately to clarify those concerns. Indeed, various Departments have if anything conspired to ensure as little release of UK data as possible. Additionally there has been no attempt to correlate all data with that which should be held in both the Republic of Ireland and the Isle of Man.

A conspiracy of silence indeed!

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

30/04/01

LUDLOW - GOVT URGED TO HEED ENQUIRY CALL

The Celtic league has re-iterated its support for calls by the family of a Co. Louth man murdered 25 years for a public enquiry into the circumstances of his killing

Seamus Ludlow was a 47-year-old forestry worker from Thistlecross, Mountpleasant, near Dundalk who was murdered on the 2nd of May 1976.

It is believed his killing was a case of mistaken identity and that his killers were a loyalist murder gang, at that time operating in the Armagh border area of N. Ireland.

There is also a strong suspicion of complicity in the killing by the British security forces, who it is alleged were using murder gangs in the north at the time. The use of such irregular forces was based on a counter insurgency theory developed by Frank Kitson an intelligence officer with the British Army.

In January the Minister for Justice, John O'Donoghue, indicated in correspondence to the Celtic League that he was considering ways of meeting the Ludlow families concerns. The Irish government had proposed a private enquiry headed by a senior judicial figure. This was rejected by the Ludlow family.

In correspondence (attached) to government Minister Dermot Ahern, who is also a Louth TD, the League urge a rethink.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

30/04/01

The Minister for Social, Community & Family Affairs
Mr. Dermot Ahern TD
Office of the Minister
Store Street
Dublin 1
Ireland

30/04/01

Dear Minister,

We write with reference to the unresolved murder of Seamus Ludlow. The Celtic League have supported the call of the Ludlow family for an independent public enquiry into this matter and indeed we wrote to An Taoiseach, the Minister for Justice and the Secretary of State for N. Ireland on this issue recently (encl.).

The League understand that recently a demonstration to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the murder was held by family and friends and that prior to this you reiterated the governments unwillingness to establish such an enquiry. It was disappointing to hear this.

In January the Minister for Justice did seem to indicate, in correspondence to us (encl.), that a formula acceptable to the Ludlow family would be found. One of the most positive aspects of the British-Irish peace process is the willingness amongst all sections of the community to confront uncomfortable truths. I do not believe that the British Security Services, however much they might wish it, are immune from that process.

There have for many years been suspicions about the operation of clandestine military units and their utilisation of loyalist paramilitary groups. Indeed there is currently a furore in the media in the north of Ireland because of attempts by UTV to highlight the activities of such groups.

It is only a full independent enquiry, such as the Ludlow family are seeking, which can expose the truth. I do hope that the Irish government will reconsider its stance.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt

MANX CRIME FIGURES PLUMMET

Recorded crime on the Isle of Man has fallen to its lowest level for 10 years. A report from the Islands Chief Constable indicates overall crime rates down by over 18% but

what is particularly significant is that figures for more serious crimes show a even more dramatic decline with violent crime down 39% and burglary down by almost 23%.

Even allowing for any slight distortion in the collation methodology these are commendable figures. The police put the dramatic decreases down to a change in operational policing methods introduced since a new Chief Constable took office 18 months ago and it seems likely the results may well be scrutinised by other police services in the British Isles servicing essentially rural environments for useful pointers. There is no doubt that there has been an expansion of police resources in recent years and the success may also be a culmination of several factors.

There was a suggestion in one part of the Manx media that a previous policy of urging victims to report crime was not followed up last year. However, it seems barely credible that the police success is down to unrecorded crime in a society which has a generally positive police-public relationship.

It may well be the media are reacting to criticisms of them voiced when the new Chief Constable delivered his report and attacked 'horror stories' in the media for distorting peoples views on 'quality of life issues'.

The Islands senior policeman also took a side swipe at some - unnamed - political figures. He alluded to possible criticisms of a 32% fall in crime detection figures.

The Isle of Man faces a general election in the Autumn and it remains to be seen if law and order which is generally sharply in focus, as politicians compete for votes, will have its usual high profile.

Bernard Moffatt
Celtic League

30/04/01

Newslist Messages for May 2001

STRANGE GOINGS ON AT CRIGGION

Almost a year ago we directed a fairly straightforward enquiry to the Ministry of Defence following an incident at the VLF Criggion installation on the Welsh /English border.

The facility, operated on behalf of the MOD by British Telecom, was sealed off in May 2000 following what appears to have been either an accident or sabotage at the facility.

Criggion is a large multi-array Aerial complex which has a scarcely concealed role supporting communications with the British nuclear ballistic submarine fleet. It may also be involved in supporting the US ballistic missile submarine force.

Having unwittingly found itself in the news we thought it was a useful opportunity to make some pertinent queries about the potential health implications of the vast aerial array complex.

However, the MOD seem reluctant to talk about the base, its role or any harmful health spin-off from its operation. Two queries to the MOD Directorate of Safety, Environment and Fire Policy, eventually resulted in a reply saying that the matter had been passed to the Defence Logistics Organisation (DLO). That was three months ago and since then nothing has been heard.

For a body which has a specific role connected with communications the DLO seems strangely uncommunicative. So what did go on at Criggion?

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 02/05/01

CELTIC LANGUAGES - RIGHT TO SURVIVE

"Some of Ireland's most idyllic beauty spots may soon be off limits if local inhabitants get their way and stop outsiders from moving into Irish-speaking regions"

The above, rather emotive, introduction accompanied an article in last week's Irish edition of the Observer newspaper. The article outlined concerns in the Gaelic-speaking areas of Ireland that the influx of new residents who were not committed to learning the Irish language posed a long term threat to the survival of the Gaeltacht.

The article provided background and quotes from Gaeltacht residents which basically pointed out the pitfalls of unrestricted development for new residents with no commitment to the Gaelic language.

What is particularly interesting about the article however is not what it says but the manner in which the debate was structured.

There has, for example, been none of the emotive rhetoric and slanderous attacks which occurred when broadly similar concerns were aired in Wales by Plaid Cymru Councillor Simon Glyn two months ago.

Glyn was labelled a racist for remarks which the Celtic League correctly pointed out were simply a sensible analysis of the threat posed to the culture of a community which is subjected to untrammelled growth. Any sensible debate was further destabilised by the craven attitude of Plaid Cymru. In the face of unreasonable attacks from the Labour Party, which tried to equate a desire to protect a unique and culturally different community from destruction with racism, they failed to support Glyn.

The position surely is that those who deny the right of the Celtic people to protect the last areas in which Gaelic, Welsh or Breton is spoken as the native language are the real racists!

Bernard Moffatt

OFFSHORE FINANCIAL EXPOSURES HALTED

An Internet site which threatened to expose the seamier side of Manx off-shore business has had to remove its net page.

An Isle of Man Internet site has been removed for the second time this year following action by its service provider.

The Manxman site which acts as a host site for several nationalist and cultural groups has had its own site pages removed following action today. It is not clear if the server acted unilaterally or if they had their hand forced.

The site had been carrying a series of articles which exposed the operation of financial service providers on the Island. It was providing a series of links to articles, on the Internet, critical of Manx companies' activities. These related to money laundering and the arms trade, amongst others. It was also carrying articles critical of several prominent Manx government figures.

Earlier this year the site was removed following criticisms by the Isle of Man's data protection regulator. There is no apparent link between the two moves.

However, the Celtic League regard the censorship situation on the Isle of Man as critical. It certainly appears that anyone who wishes to speak out against the seamier side of the Islands financial services business is subjected to harassment. There also appears to be a pattern emerging which is aimed at denying organisations and individuals media outlets.

The Celtic League will be writing to Manx Chief Minister, Donald Gelling MHK, asking what steps he intends to take to protect freedom of speech on the Isle of Man.

Before its removal, Manxman was threatening to publish links to several hundred sites which they said exposed a side of the Isle of Man's business which the government wish to conceal.

Later this week Manx nationalists, whose sites are currently still functioning, will meet to ensure that the truth which Manxman wished to expose is aired.

Links: <http://www.manxman.co.im/>

Bernard Moffatt

GUARANTEE RIGHT OF EXPRESSION CALL

The Isle of Man should guarantee International Covenants on Freedom of Expression the Celtic League has told Manx Chief Minister Donald Gelling.

The League have written to the Manx government following problems encountered by an Internet news and comment service which has had its operations disrupted on a number of occasions.

The 'Black Pages' carried, until yesterday, by the Manxman site were publishing a series of links to articles critical of financial services and offshore businesses on the Isle of Man. They were threatening to publish further revelations when at the behest of a third party apparently aggrieved by references to them on the site the pages had the "plug pulled on them" by the Service provider.

The Manx government have been asked to ensure that Freedom of Expression guarantees in the United Nations Covenant on Civil and political rights are protected.

The League say that a failure to ensure this will make the Manx government complicit by default in restrictions on freedom of expression.

The Black Pages are back on:

<http://www.manxman.com>

The original site containing the Manxman pages and links to various Nationalist and Cultural groups can still be accessed at:

<http://www.manxman.co.im>

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 04/05/01

(Text of letter to Chief Minister below)

Mr. Donald Gelling MHK
Chief Minister of the Isle of Man Government
Buildings Douglas Isle of Man

04/05/01

Dear Sir,

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees, under Article 19, the right of Freedom of Expression.

Recent events on the Isle of Man, which have seen not only criticisms of the

established media by public figures but also the removal on several occasions of an Internet news service provider, call into question the protections in law required to safeguard the expression rights inherent in Article 19.

I am well aware of restrictions under para. 3 a & b of Article 19 which allow for restrictive safeguards. However it is patently obvious that the situation in this respect on the Island go far beyond any reasonable restriction.

The latest incident of curtailment of free expression occurred when an Internet service provider removed an Internet news site at the request of a third party. This would seem to indicate that there is a climate of fear in which the suggestion that service provision might lead to litigation allows a news and comment service to be curtailed.

In an earlier disruption to the same news and comment service a failure to comply with anachronistic regulatory standards was sufficient to de-stabilise its operations for a brief period.

The two incidents, though unrelated, show what a fragile basis in this Island the democratic tenet of freedom of expression is based on.

It will not have escaped public attention that the news and comment service which has been subjected to these disruptions has been critical of both political (Government) figures and also the Islands financial services sector.

A failure by the government to ensure freedom of expression and the security of operations by news and comment services will lay the Manx government open to charges of complicity by default.

Yours sincerely,

J B Moffatt Secretary General Celtic League

ECHR - STATE-SANCTIONED MURDER EXPOSED

The real scandal of the Loughall killings and others recently highlighted by the European Court judgement is that the British government, media and public still appear to want to hide behind the subterfuge that there was no 'shoot to kill' policy practised.

Despite the fact that the campaigning relatives won their case and were awarded a total of more than £150,000 compensation an unholy trinity of Unionist spokesmen, the British government and the media commenced nit-picking in the forlorn hope that the damage could be mitigated.

In truth however all that the ECHR judgement, courageously pursued by the relatives, established was what was already known: that is that the policy of so called counter-insurgency in N. Ireland included the authority for the security services to commit

murder.

The strategy of murder gangs pre-dates the events in N. Ireland. It can be traced back to The United Kingdoms counter-insurgency operations in places as disparate as Malaya, Kenya, Aden and Cyprus. The strategy was formulated, papers were written about it and it was put into practice.

No analysis nor slick quote from Sinn Fein could sum the situation up as eloquently as one of the relatives who said the judgement identified the United Kingdom for what it was, "a terrorist State".

The British government have sanctioned terror, which has included murder by police and security services, for almost half a century throughout the world.

They are rightly indicted and we can only hope that efforts to have a full independent international enquiry into the murder machine of the British State will be successful.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 05/05/01

ULSTER DETENTION CENTRES STILL SUSPECT

The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has issued a scarcely veiled critique of ongoing abuse of detainees in N. Ireland's interrogation centres.

The CPT previously were successful in closing the infamous Castlereagh centre in which ill-treatment and abuse of detainees was part of the routine for two decades from 1970.

Old habits, it seems, die hard and the CPT, in recently published documentation which includes a report and response from the British government, express a concern that "no more force than is reasonably necessary should be used." by security forces when detaining suspects at these centres.

An arrest and subsequent detention of a number of men from South Armagh at the Gough barracks centre is catalogued. This particular incident, in 1997, was one highlighted by the Celtic League. We protested at the time to The British Government, CPT, United Nations Special Rapporteur, The Irish government and the United States Embassy.

It is clear that the concerns we highlighted were well founded. It remains to be seen if the British government will make the security services clean up their act.

The reduction in detentions brought about by the peace process has lowered the number of complaints. However, it is clear that the CPT still has misgivings about the situation in N. Ireland despite the diplomatic terms in which its latest report is

couched.

Given the grim record of detentions it is little short of scandalous that we enter the twenty-first century in N. Ireland with the reality of institutionalised violence against detainees over the last decade still unresolved.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

05/05/01

LABOUR DEFECTIONS BOOST PLAID

15,000 Welsh pensioners reduced to poverty under Labour. Gap between rich and poor increased claims disaffected former Labour stalwart.

As the Labour Party get set to announce the election another prominent figure in the Wales Labour Party has defected to Plaid Cymru.

Garfield Smith, who was an unsuccessful candidate for the South Pembrokeshire seat in 1992, has said that he will back Plaid Cymru in the forthcoming election. The move follows another defection in the Pembrokeshire area by Vaughan Barrah, last month.

Announcing his decision Garfield Smith told the Welsh media that Labour had "deserted its basic principles and is all about self-interest and manipulation with spin taking precedence over substance". He said that since Labour came to power 15,000 more Welsh pensioners had slipped into poverty.

The move is likely to give a useful fillip to Plaid Cymru anxious to get the message over in traditional Labour areas that it is the Party that now speaks to working people and has a more radical agenda than Labour.

The news also comes as opinion polls in Scotland show dissatisfaction amongst traditional Labour voters, many of whom will switch to the SNP.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 07/05/01

LAUNDERING, CORRUPTION AND ARMS TRADE LINKS EXPOSED

More Internet Links which publicise a litany of corruption involving financial fraud, money laundering, arms trafficking, diamond smuggling, operation of mercenaries and

the disposal of toxic waste in the ThirdWorld have been exposed by the Manx based Internet news service, "TheManxman Black Pages".

<http://www.manxman.com>

The links identify companies that have traded using the Isle of Man over the past decade and "Manxman Black Pages" have promised to keep up the exposures.

Last week the news service had to move sites following complaints about the content of its pages. This was the latest of a series of disruptions that it had experienced.

Meanwhile, members of the Manx Nationalist Party (Mec Vannin) and the Celtic League met at the weekend and agreed a series of steps to compliment the Manxman campaign.

Mec Vannin are to press the Manx government for action by the Isle of Man FSC to investigate the sites identified. They will also ask why it seems that a small group of individuals trawling the Internet can find detail of the links exposed and the Islands financial regulator apparently has no knowledge of them.

Meanwhile, the Celtic League is to press for specific enquiries into the plethora of situations identified in hearings at tribunals and in the High Court in Ireland. These have established links by criminals, businessmen and politicians with Manx offshore financial service providers.

The two nationalist groups are also to consider publication of the Manxman revelations in a special edition of the Manx Free-sheet 'Yn Pabyr Seyr' so that the information is more widely disseminated.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 07/05/01

US COMEDY - LINK TO LAUNDERING

The Soprano's is a TV series currently airing in the United States by major satellite and cable operator HBO (HOME BOX OFFICE). It goes out in the primetime evening slot at 9:00pm on Sunday evenings.

It follows the fortunes of an untypical family man, Tony Soprano, and his attempts to balance his mobster life with his family commitments. It is comedy and by all accounts its pretty funny, entertaining stuff.

Occasionally, as with all mobsters, the question of banking (or laundering) comes up and as part of the fun the Isle of Man gets a mention. Apparently, in a recent episode Tony Soprano needed to launder \$200,000 and he told his 'Russian Mafia' chum "you know the routine, take the money to the bank in the Isle of Man it will be back in 4

days"

In a previous recent episode Tony Soprano was shipping stolen U.S. luxury cars to the Russian Mafia and he was concerned about getting paid in cash. His Russian counterpart said don't worry, "we have an account opened in an Isle of Man bank and we can wire you funds".

It's fiction. It's funny but bear in mind this is a series going out to millions of American homes. Is it really the image of the Isle of Man that the Manx wish to see portrayed?

It would be easy to blame the programme makers but given the numerous links exposing dodgy FS goings on, not to mention some high profile US court proceedings, can they be accused of misrepresenting matters?

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 07/05/01

ASYLUM SEEKERS RIGHTS ABUSED

The Celtic League have written to the United Kingdom Home Secretary and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) following the handcuffing of a number of asylum seekers remanded in Cardiff Prison.

The twenty asylum seekers were being taken for medical screening and apparently were handcuffed for their visit to facilities at University Hospital, Cardiff.

The United Kingdom government has previously been criticised by the CPT for the use of restraints on prisoners, most recently in a report in Jan. 2000 following an incident at the Isle of Man Prison. The UK has also been specifically criticised for handcuffing those awaiting medical treatment.

The Celtic League have also questioned the policy of the United Kingdom in remanding asylum seekers, who have committed no criminal offence to Prison. Both imprisonment and the use of restraints in the manner identified constitute a breach of Human Rights legislation. Those detained should not be treated in a manner which is inhuman or degrading.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 01/05/01

Mr. Jack Straw MP United Kingdom Home Secretary Home Office 50 Queens Anne's Gate London SW1H 9AT

Dear Home Secretary,

I write to express our concern that a number of persons held at Cardiff Prison whilst asylum applications are processed were handcuffed when being taken for medical screening.

You will be aware that the routine handcuffing of prisoners held in UK prisons has been condemned previously by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT).

Indeed the practice was identified critically as recently as 13 January 2000 in the report by the CPT following a visit to the United Kingdom and Isle of Man (SECTION 11 - Isle of Man - para. 107)

The situation in relation to the Cardiff incident, which I understand involved twenty people, is further exacerbated by the fact that those involved are not convicted of any criminal offence but simply being held in jail because of the flawed policy on immigration and asylum currently in place. The handcuffing of asylum seekers in such circumstances certainly constitutes degrading treatment. However, the policy of your government in remanding asylum seekers to prison possibly in itself amounts to inhuman or degrading treatment.

I trust that the Home Office will take steps to ensure that there is no repetition of this situation.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

07/05/01

cc. Secretary European Committee Prevention of Torture (CPT)

The Secretary European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Council of Europe F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex FRANCE

Dear Sir,

I draw your attention to the attached protest sent to the United Kingdom Home Secretary.

I trust the Committee will investigate the situation as a matter of urgency. I am aware that the Committee has previously expressed reservations to the United Kingdom government about the handcuffing of prisoners.

This latest instance would seem to indicate that despite previous criticisms there is no clear guidance from the United Kingdom Home Office to the Prison Authorities as to when the use of such restraints are justified.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

07/05/01

HELICOPTER COMPLAINTS SHOULD BE ADDRESSED

The Celtic League have written to the British Army in N. Ireland suggesting that it should take seriously concerns expressed about its Air Corps operations in S. Armagh.

According to a report from the Independent Assessor of Military Complaints the number of official protests has risen by 20% with the overwhelming majority of these being from the S. Armagh area. Local community groups say that the real level of concern is much higher but that people have no faith in the complaints system.

The League have pointed out that similar concerns articulated in Britain and involving a much smaller 'event' level have resulted in serious research to address the issue. The League have asked the GOC what research if any has been carried on in N. Ireland. We have also asked Irish Foreign Minister, Brian Cowen TD, to enquire if different standards are applied by the MOD to complaints in Britain as opposed to N. Ireland.

Despite the jaundiced view portrayed by the British media of the South Armagh community it surely has a right to have its concerns properly addressed.

A failure to reduce the helicopter over-flights and carry out effective research into the health implications will certainly call into question the validity of independently assessment of military complaints.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 07/05/01

The General Officer Commanding British Army N. Ireland Headquarters N. Ireland
BFPO 825

Dear Sir,

I refer to the recent report of the Independent Assessor of Military Complaints which confirmed a high incidence of concern about Armed Forces helicopter activity in N. Ireland. I understand that 80% of the complaints received came from the South Armagh area.

Five years ago the Ministry of Defence carried out research to identify potential health implications caused by noise pollution from military air operations in Gt. Britain. Although that study proved inconclusive there is a considerable weight of scientific data which extrapolates a link between low flying (and the noise pollution inherent in same) with health problems, both physical and psychological.

The sample area utilised for the English research has an 'event' level which is minuscule compared to the frequency of operations in N. Ireland and S. Armagh in particular.

Can I ask what, if any, epidemiological studies have been carried out into the potential health effects of exposure to noise pollution cause by Service helicopters in N. Ireland and S. Armagh in particular.

I am sure you will agree with me that the people of that area have a right to have the concerns which they articulate via the Assessor of Military Complaints annually taken seriously.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

07/05/01

cc. Mr. J MacDonald - Independent Assessor of Military Complaints

The Minister for Foreign Affairs Brian Cowen TD Department of Foreign Affairs
Dublin 2 Ireland.

Dear Minister,

I refer you to the attached correspondence to the British Army Commander, Northern Ireland.

One would have hoped that the N. Ireland peace process would have led to a scaling down in military operations in the north of Ireland. However, in relation to the British Army Air Corps and royal air Force this does not appear to be the case.

The report of the Independent Assessor of Military Complaints shows an increase of 20% complaints received about air activity. The true level of concern is, according to community groups such as the South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee, much higher.

I trust the Irish government - via the inter-governmental conference- will continue to press for normalisation of the situation so that these air operations can be completely eliminated. However, in the meantime I believe that the community in this area have a right to have their concerns taken seriously.

I would contrast the attitude of the MOD to the increasing level of complaint in N. Ireland, and S. Armagh in particular, with their attitude to complaints in Britain. Genuine concerns articulated by rural communities in Britain over the past decade resulted in serious research into the overall implication on physical and psychological health posed by low level air operations by military aircraft. As far as I am aware, despite consistently high levels of complaint in N. Ireland, no comparable research has yet been undertaken.

Could you ask your British opposite number why this inconsistency has arisen and if they are prepared to rectify the situation? Should any potential long term health implication be established will they consider appropriate individual and community compensation?

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt 07/05/01

MELT-DOWN SCARE SUB LIMPS HOME

Almost unnoticed, amid the UK election hype, a British nuclear submarine has left Gibraltar following an extended stay - since May last year- for repairs to its reactor cooling system.

HMS Tireless departed for the UK with assurances by the MOD that the vessel was fit for sea. Tireless and her sister ships of the Trafalgar class are now approaching twenty years old. The lead vessel, HMS Trafalgar, was launched in 1979 with Tireless following two years later. Following the identification of defective welds on the Tireless all the class were taken out of service for checks. Six of the twelve vessels exhibited similar problems. The incident on Tireless, which some believe could have led to a reactor melt-down and fire similar to that experienced on Soviet vessels, highlighted defects in 50% of the Trafalgar class.

After checks and repairs the vessels were returned to Service. They will now be joined by the Tireless and their patrols will take them through the waters around our coasts. The vessels frequently traverse the Irish sea on transit between bases and maintenance yards in Scotland, the North-West and the South of England. Exercise areas dot the Irish sea with favourite locations for 'nuclear frolics' being the areas south west of the Isle of Man, off Co. Louth and two locations off N. Ireland.

The potential for a marine ecological disaster is obvious. This nuclear junk is well past its sell-by date. The very fact that the reactor cooling system is cracking up confirms this. The reactors used on the vessels are of a design type imported from the United States which that country no longer uses.

It is quite clear that the British government and the MOD continue to operate these floating time-bombs because they have no adequate safe replacement for them. In the meantime coastal communities are put at risk.

In December 2000 the MOD, in response to Celtic League concerns about the situation with Trafalgar class submarines, said: "I can assure you we have a safety record second to none...The safety of the general public and our own personnel is of paramount importance...No submarines will be allowed to return to sea unless we and our safety experts are completely satisfied that it is safe".

We don't believe them!

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

09/05/01

UN WILL CONSIDER CHILD PLACEMENT CONCERN

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of The Child (UNCRC) has responded to concerns expressed by the Celtic League that in some instances children, some of them very young, taken into care in the Isle of Man are transferred to the United Kingdom.

The League had suggested that by effecting transfers of children to the England because of child protection concerns based on domestic circumstances there was a possible breach of the spirit of the Convention.

The Manx DHSS rejected the concern although a spokesperson did concede that:

"I have to admit there is a cultural issue; we are removing them from their culture and background".

In the response from the UNCRC Secretary, Paulo David, he says:

"I wish to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated 21 April 2001 addressed to the Chairperson of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

The contents of your letter will be brought to the attention of the Committee on the Rights of the Child at its next session scheduled to take place in May-June 2001 at Geneva. The information you provided will be particularly of interest to the Committee in the framework of its consideration of the Isle of Man's second periodic report".

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 09/05/01

DOES NATO 'PROTECT' THE ENVIRONMENT?

NATO has been protecting the peace of Europe for over forty years. During that time it has made extensive use of exercise facilities in its member States.

An area extensively used by NATO, and the United States Air Force in particular, was the Jurby sea bombing range off the north west of the Isle of Man. In use by the USAF

for all this period the seabed is now littered with a deadly mix of exploded bomb debris and unexploded ordnance.

Recently, the United Kingdom who ran the range on behalf of NATO and their US clients, again refused requests by the Isle of Man government to clean up the mess.

The Celtic League have written to NATO asking what, if any, policy it has on safeguarding the environment of those States it is in business to protect.

Jurby is simply an immediate difficulty for the Manx people of a larger problem that bedevils communities in remote rural areas, many of which are home to people ethnically distinct from the host countries which granted NATO usage.

These host countries (such as the United Kingdom) were grateful for the cooperation of the peoples whose land and coastline they trashed in the name of safeguarding democracy and the free world. Now it appears that both they and NATO are unwilling to accept their responsibilities to make good the environmental damage caused.

Or are they? We will have to see what Lord Robertson has to say!

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 09/05/01

Correspondence to NATO below:

Lord Robertson
Secretary General North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
B-1110
Brussels Belgium

Dear Secretary General,

One of the side effects of the collapse of the Warsaw Pact was the realisation of the environmental damage caused during the Cold War in many of the Eastern Bloc countries. Some considerable publicity was given to this situation at the time by the media.

However, less transparent are the environmental side-effects caused by the NATO nations during the same period and indeed the policy which exists to address the same.

For example from the early 1950s the NATO countries were given extensive use of sea bombing ranges around various parts of the Celtic areas of the United Kingdom. Ostensibly under the control of the RAF or British Army their usage was heavily sourced to NATO countries not just at joint exercise periods but on a regular basis. A classic case is that of the Jurby sea bombing range off the NW of the Isle of Man. This was used extensively by the USAF and other NATO air forces for over thirty years. Many hundreds of sorties were flown in some weeks at the height of its usage by the USAF in the 1970-80s. The area of the (now disused range) is heavily polluted posing a danger for the local community and fishermen who make their living from the sea ground. Pleas from the Manx government to the United Kingdom to clean up NATO's mess go unheeded.

I feel sure that the range off the Isle of Man is just one of a large number from N. Norway to Turkey polluted by NATO. In addition to munitions pollution there is of course also the site pollution at bases and installations now disused and additional radiological pollution around installations used to house nuclear weapons or nuclear submarines.

I would welcome from your office some outline of NATO's policy on safeguarding the environment of those countries whose security it protects. I would also welcome a copy of any

research that NATO has carried out, with host governments, to identify the problems its exercises and operations over several decades have left.

Can I ask what steps you are taking to address these problems? I trust that NATO does have a thorough and coherent policy towards environmental protection.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt 09/05/01

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MINISTER EVASIVE ON LUDLOW QUERY

Dermot Ahern T.D., Irish Social Affairs Minister has sidestepped a query from the Celtic League about the controversy surrounding the murder of Co. Louth forestry worker, Seamus Ludlow.

Mr. Ludlow was murdered on the 2nd of May 1976. It is believed that his killers were a loyalist murder gang and there is also a suspicion of complicity by the British security forces.

Recently, following a demonstration to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the murder Mr. Ahern reiterated the government's unwillingness to accede to the families request for an independent public enquiry. The League had written challenging this inertia and urging a rethink. However, in a reply from the Ministers Office, his Private Secretary Aongus Horgan says that "As this matter is proper to the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Minister has passed your letter to his colleague, John O'Donoghue T.D., Minister for Justice.

The Celtic League have a great deal of respect for Mr. Ahern particularly in relation to assistance and cooperation he has shown in the past. However, to intervene with public comment which coincided with relatives attempts to highlight the inertia over the Ludlow slaying and then sidestep the issue indicates questionable judgement in this matter.

It is high time that all government Ministers from the Taoiseach down adopted a more positive stance in relation to uncovering the truth about British military involvement in

the murder of Irish citizens peacefully going about their business.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

15/05/01

PRISON 'HELL-HOLE' ON FINANCE ISLAND

The hot sunshine brought welcome relief last week to the public of the Isle of Man after a particularly wet and dismal winter. Many will hope that the return to cooler damp weather is only a temporary relapse and that summery conditions will return.

One group who will not however be relishing the thought of a long hot summer are the inmates of Victoria Road prison on the Isle of Man (or indeed those required to work in the prison).

The Victorian Prison, which was condemned by a European Rights body four years ago, is a squalid depressing place at the best of times. In hot weather, such as that we experienced last week, it becomes intolerable. The prison cells are small and overcrowded and the presence for most of the time in the cell corner of a receptacle containing urine and faeces exacerbates the insanitary nature of the institution.

The Manx government promised four years ago that they would develop a new prison facility and close this outdated hell-hole. Four years on the situation remains unchanged. If anything the natural deterioration of an already unsuitable building means matters are worse.

The Isle of Man, with its offshore finance business and its tax regime attractive to the wealthy, is buoyant and prosperous. The coffers of its Treasury have never been better filled. Given the obvious prosperity that it should choose to treat offenders in this way is little short of a national scandal and indeed it is a disgrace that such a situation is tolerated in Europe in the twenty-first century . Every person committed to the Prison probably has an arguable case to sue the Manx government and if some wish to do so libertarian organisations should give them every assistance.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 15/05/01

Below: Urgent fax message to the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

The Secretary European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) Council of Europe F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex FRANCE

Dear Sir,

The Committee (CPT) inspected conditions at the Isle of Man Prison (Victoria Road) in September 1997. At the time the Committee were critical of those conditions but accepted that the Manx government intended to improve the situation. I refer to your Report - CPT/Inf(2000) 1 (Pages 50-51). Paragraph 101 sets out the assurances given to you by the Manx authorities in respect of development of a new prison. Despite various planning moves little practical improvement has been achieved.

The prison is still in its original squalid and intolerable state despite the best efforts of those who administer and maintain it. The conditions within the prison, particularly as we move into yet another summer in which inmates will virtually spend the whole day in cells, most with no sanitary facilities other than a bucket, are a disgrace to a civilised society.

Paragraph 102 of your report says "The CPT fully endorses the broad policy objectives referred to in paragraph 101. If they are met, the Isle of Man will enter the 21st Century with a Prison Service worthy of the name."

I would advise you that six months into the twenty-first century those objectives have not been met and nor are they likely to be achieved in the foreseeable future.

It is intolerable that the United Kingdom and Isle of Man governments are able to allow this situation to continue. It is inexcusable that the CPT, being aware of the situation, are not applying pressure to the British authorities to address the issue.

We urge you to take urgent steps to impress upon the relevant authorities the need to address and remedy this situation.

Despite the best efforts of staff who have to cope in these conditions the physical and psychological well being of prisoners must be at risk through being detained in this unacceptable environment.

Yours sincerely

J B Moffatt

15/05/01

TWO NEW MANX LANGUAGE NET SITES

The Manx Language preschool group, Moojer Veggey, has established an Internet site at:

<http://moojerveggy.iomonline.co.im/>

You can get more information about the activities and expanded programme of the group, first established in 1996, by linking to this site.

Celtic League Secretaries who produce newsletters for branch members could usefully mention the new site in their next circular. League Secs. and Celtic Language activists could also circulate on their e-mail contact lists

Phil Kelly who has an established site at <http://homepages.enterprise.net/kelly/> also has new Manx pages on Isle of Man On Line at:

<http://manx.iomonline.co.im/>

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 15/05/01

EVEN WHEN IT'S WRONG IT'S RIGHT!

Manx Data Protection law, sharply in focus recently, is not obsolete claims the Islands Data Protection Registrar. However, she goes on to admit that the legislation, now a decade and a half old, "needs to be updated and strengthened because there are problems with it".

This statement has a similar ring to the recent rebuttal by the Social Services Division of the Isle of Man DHSS of concerns about possible breaches by the Island of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Celtic League had suggested that transferring children in care off the Island potentially breached the convention. There is no breach said the DHSS before going on to admit that "there is a cultural issue; we are removing them (the children) from their culture and background".

It seems that the new rule for government Departments and quangos is: even when you know it's wrong - say it's right!

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 16/05/01

MORE ELECTROMAGNETIC RADIATION FOR BASES?

Tetra the controversial radio communications system that has sparked health concerns in Britain amongst those who will have to use it is likely to be installed by MI5 in South Armagh and other border areas.

Reports say that the British Intelligence Service is anxious to introduce the system.

The Service is already heavily committed to the veritable Frankenstein's laboratory of microwave emitting installations that the British have installed in hilltop bases throughout the border areas of Ulster. Tetra is a digital trunked radio standard which allows flexibility to facilitate both mobile phone and walkie-talkie calls from handsets for secure combined voice and data communications.

MI5 will use the public safety radio communications service (PSRCS), known as Airwave, which is managed by BT Quadrant. It will also be involved in the security panel supervising system users. The communications electronics security group (CESG) part of GCHQ will supervise the technical evaluation of the security of the Airwave network when it goes live.

Tetra recently completed trials with the Police in Lancashire but the results are still under wraps.

However, independent experts on the biological effects of electromagnetic radiation have accused the government of using the police as guinea pigs for potentially dangerous trialing in the absence of detailed research into potential health risks. One expert says that Tetra had the potential to become the "next asbestos". He goes on "It is beyond belief that anyone could be contemplating the rollout of a system like Tetra because of the dangers of pulsed frequencies".

While there has been considerable concern, including a TV documentary, about system users little thought to date has been paid to those who may have transmitters for the system sited next to their homes and schools.

The MOD have always been coy about the health implications posed by their systems. Two years ago they rejected a suggestion by the Celtic League that they allow the UK's own National radiological Protection Board to vet electromagnetic radiation emissions around bases in border areas of N. Ireland.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 16/05/01

DONE NOTHING WRONG? PROVE IT!

The United Kingdom Home Secretary has rejected concerns expressed by the Celtic League about the proscription of so many groups under the new Terrorism Act 2000.

We had echoed concerns voiced by Islamic organisations in the UK that the inclusion of a number of groups from that community appeared to have no rationale and might even be racially motivated. We suggested that this gave us "cause to suspect that the inclusion of so many Islamic groups, who have carried out no abuse of UK law, could be the harbinger of oppression of the Muslim community similar, to that which the Irish community in Britain suffered following the introduction of the Prevention of Terrorism legislation".

However, the Home Office say that the "Home Secretary is entirely satisfied that these organisations meet the criteria for proscription in Section 3 of the Act". The letter goes on to outline what steps organisations which feel they are wrongly included can take to achieve "deproscription".

This legislation is an ominous development in that it places the onus on those who have done nothing unlawful to prove their innocence. The Celtic League will continue to campaign against this draconian legislation in the same way that we contested its predecessor.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 16/05/01

DEMOCRATIC AGENDA BENEFITS SMALL NATIONS

Three apparently unrelated events this week across Europe have a collective significance for National movements struggling to achieve self-determination for their people.

In the Basque country, despite an unprecedented media campaign in support of Spanish centrist parties, the moderate Basque National Party (BNP) increased its share of the vote. In France the opening constitutional moves were made which should lead to greater autonomy for Corsica. In Italy the Northern League, which had in the past supported autonomy, saw its vote collapse.

The significance of the Northern League's loss is the fact that the organisation has moderated its views on autonomy and had therefore disillusioned supporters who split to move pro-active independence movements. This emphasises markedly the need for National movements to maintain consistent policies or risk defeat.

Clearly the devolution achieved without turmoil in the British Isles is now spreading to other areas and perhaps the most significant development is that in respect of Corsica. This move, despite any political spin that the French press and media put on it, must stimulate calls from other areas including Brittany for self-determination.

The Corsican development, whilst achieved against a backdrop of twenty-five years of violence, is obviously stimulated by a desire in France and Corsica for peaceful resolution of the autonomy issue. In the Basque country also the support for the moderate Basque National Party at the expense of more radical independence parties is a clear signal that the Basques want a peaceful resolution of the violence. However, it is also a clear signal to the Spanish government that such a resolution will be on Basque and not Spanish terms.

Another spin-off from these developments is the stimulation which will undoubtedly accrue to both the Basque and Corsican languages and culture.

The road to National self determination is still likely to be a long one for all the minorities bound within the old Nation States of Europe. Recent developments show that real and meaningful change can be achieved democratically. It remains to be seen if the more reactionary elements in Madrid and Paris will continue to accept these positive changes. Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League 16/05/01

CORNISH LANGUAGE EXCLUSION WILL BE SCRUTINISED

The Council of Europe has agreed to consider concerns expressed by the Celtic League over the failure of the United Kingdom to include the Cornish language when it ratified the European Charter for Minority languages.

The Celtic League had said that the position of the British government in respect of the Cornish language and the treaty was "totally unacceptable".

In a reply from the Directorate of Co-operation for Local and Regional Democracy the Director Phillip Blair says:

"The Secretary General has asked me to acknowledge receipt of your letter, dated 8 April 2001, concerning the fact that the Cornish language has not been recognised in the United Kingdom's instrument of ratification of the European charter for regional and Minority Languages.

As you may know, the Charter has its own monitoring mechanism, consisting of an independent Committee of Experts. This Committee is responsible for monitoring the application of the Charter in each Party to the treaty and reporting to the Council of Ministers.

The initial periodical report of the United Kingdom will be due on 1 July 2002. At that time the Committee of Experts will initiate its monitoring procedure for the United Kingdom. As the Committee also receives and examines comments or information submitted by organisations legally established within a State Party, I will make sure that your letter is brought to its attention".

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General, Celtic League 17/05/01

McCREEVEY DODGES OFFSHORE MONIES ISSUE

The Irish Finance Minister would love the Isle of Man with its sandy. Just the place to

bury your head as he did in the Irish Parliament(Dail) this week.

The Irish government has said it is not reasonable to assume that £4bn held in branches of Irish banks in the Isle of Man is due solely to tax evasion by Irish residents. The Finance Minister, Charlie McCreevey, was answering a question in the Dail from Jim Mitchell T.D. Mitchell, a member of the Dail public accounts committee, has previously called for prison sentences for "white collar" criminals and he is unlikely to be assuaged by the Finance Ministers comments.

In March the Celtic League wrote to Jim Mitchell expressing our concern about the situation. More recently the Leagues Manx branch, at its Annual meeting, considered the frequent references to Isle of Man based accounts held by Irish nationals in the context of alleged money laundering, related to drug crime and tax evasion. The League believes there should be an independent enquiry into the situation.

The Irish Finance Minister said there were legitimate reasons for many people having bank accounts abroad. This may be so. However, it is also the case that it has been demonstrated that some of those accounts are either suspect or criminal and this is the issue in contention, not bona fide transactions.

Meanwhile the Manx government says that it has now got its act together on regulation. However, the Celtic League first raised concerns over a decade ago and similar assurances were given at that time. The Manx government should therefore not complain if their present conviction about regulatory probity is greeted with scepticism.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

19/05/01

BUREAU SUPPORT FOR STATUS OF CORNISH

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

BUREAU SUPPORT FOR STATUS OF CORNISH

The European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages (EBLUL) is to step up pressure on the British government to include the Cornish language as part of its ratification of the Charter for Regional and Minority Languages

At its meeting in Bolzano on 4/5 May the Council of the EBLUL agreed the following motion:

"a) welcomes the recent announcement by the UK Government to ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority languages;

b) notes the absence of any reference in the Charter to the Cornish language, pending a consultation exercise being undertaken within the Government Departments; and

c) urges the UK Government to undertake a speedy conclusion on the current consultation process and to indicate the expected time scale for according the Cornish language status within the Charter."

The motion will be submitted to the British Government - DETR and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers.

The EBLUL action follows action already taken by the Celtic League which has urged the Council of Europe to ensure that Cornish is given the same status under the treaty (See CORNISH LANGUAGE EXCLUSION WILL BE SCRUTINISED - Celtic News 17/5/01).

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

19/05/01

Date: Sat May 19, 2001 1:27pm

Subject: NUCLEAR FIRE SHOULD PROMPT RETHINK

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

NUCLEAR FIRE SHOULD PROMPT RETHINK

The fire at Dungeness A nuclear power station, on Saturday 19 May, is a further indication of the dangers inherent in the continued operation of these obsolete plants.

The initial press information has contained the usual assurances that no danger was posed to the reactor and that this was successfully closed down. However, a fire of this type in a turbine close to the reactors of the station has got to be cause for concern.

Dungeness A is one of a number of stations operated by BNFL. They are of the old Magnox type. In the case of Dungeness the station was commissioned in 1965. Indeed this plant is six years older than the similar twin reactor Magnox plant at Wylfa on Anglesey which has been closed for over a year with reactor faults.

A number of these Magnox stations are scheduled for closure and Dungeness shutdown was mooted for 2006. By that time the station will have 'celebrated' its 40th anniversary. This is twice the original design life of the station.

A continuing catalogue of incidents and safety shortcomings surrounding BNFL

operations at nuclear sites around Britain calls into question the veracity of the company's management regime.

The Dungeness fire hopefully will lead to that station being de-commissioned immediately. It should also prompt a serious rethink about the wisdom of restarting operations at BNFL's other clapped-out nuclear installation on Anglesey which poses a threat to Irish Sea communities.

Bernard Moffatt

Celtic League

19/05/01

Date: Wed May 23, 2001 4:54pm

Subject: 'PLACE IN THE SUN' FOR MYSTERY ULSTER CASH

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

'PLACE IN THE SUN' FOR MYSTERY ULSTER CASH

Several hundred thousand pounds, deposited in a bank in the Isle of Man by an Irish couple and suspected of being the proceeds of crime, has been returned to its owner for want of proof.

A Manx court was told that efforts by the Irish police to establish the source of the funds, which originated in Ulster, had drawn a blank. The Manx Judge said "it has proven difficult to establish if the funds are the proceeds of crime".

The issue came before the Manx High Court on several occasions, each time being adjourned as Garda investigations were said to be ongoing. The Garda it was reported had been investigating possible money laundering of the proceeds of drug trafficking. Eventually the bank holding the account, Alliance and Leicester International Ltd., itself brought the matter to Court, "for guidance". The bank was reported to be in fear of being sued for holding the funds.

Deemster (Manx High Court Judge), William Cain, in his judgement said that "there is no conclusive evidence that the funds in the joint account are the proceeds of crime, although the Garda clearly have some suspicion".

He made an order directing the Bank to comply with the account holders request to transfer the money, £280,000 to an account in Malaga.

Meanwhile, in an unrelated case before the same Deemster, two Irish banking Inspectors seeking access to accounts held by Irish Nationals with the National Irish Bank were sent packing after Deemster Willian Cain labelled their enquiry a "fishing expedition".

The two Inspectors, Mr. Justice John Blayney and Tom Grace, had been appointed by the Irish High Court to investigate and report into the affairs of the Bank.

The Republic of Ireland based NIB has a branch in Douglas, centre of the Isle of Man finance sector, and the application to the Manx High Court sought detail of accounts, transactions and addresses of account holders. The Deemster dismissed the application citing previous legal precedent.

Earlier this week the Celtic League referred to the scope of accounts held by Irish Nationals in Manx offshore accounts and the frequency with which court cases and tribunal proceedings in Ireland mentioned the Isle of Man. We suggested it was high time there was as an investigation into the overall situation.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

Date: Wed May 23, 2001 4:54pm

Subject: ADVOCATE CASE UPDATE FOR LAWYERS WATCHDOG

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

ADVOCATE CASE UPDATE FOR LAWYERS WATCHDOG

Isle of Man civil liberties body, the Manx Council for Civil Liberty, has written to Param Cumaraswamy, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, alerting him to the latest developments in a case brought against Manx Lawyer Terence McDonald. The MCCL had previously supplied detail and background on charges made against Mr. McDonald.

A court action brought by the police against Mr. McDonald was adjourned recently sine die pending the hearing by the Isle of Man High Court of an action brought on his behalf which seeks (amongst other points) "a declaration" that former Chief Constable Robin Oake and the present postholder Mike Culverhouse "acted beyond their powers".

A copy of the petition lodged on behalf of Mr. McDonald (and others) with the Isle of

Man high Court has been forwarded to the SpecialRapporteur.

Terry McDonald has been to the fore in promoting Civil Liberties issueson the Isle of Man over the past decade. He highlighted defeciencessover the treatment of young offenders and was prominent in a campaignto expose conditions in the Islands prison.

Mr Kumaraswamy has been urged to continue to monitor his case.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

23/05/01

Date: Mon May 28, 2001 3:54pm

Subject: FINANCIAL SKULDUGGERY - OH SHUT UP!

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

FINANCIAL SKULDUGGERY - OH SHUT UP!

Further revelations which allege links between Manx financial institutionsand corruption in the former Soviet Union have surfaced on the Internet.

Internet News carried a report on 21 May which reads:

"Gazprom Assets A Family Affair

by Florian Hassel

Special to the Moscow Times

Over the last decade, Gazprom executives past and present have transferredto their relatives assets potentially worth billions of dollars ina series of murky deals, documents reviewed by The Moscow Times show".

The article goes on to reveal a tortuous chain of financial dealingsglobally, including links to, amongst others, both Ireland and theIsle of Man.

We understand that a report surfaced briefly on this story in thelocal media but thereafter there has been no comment from either thegovernment or the financial services regulator, the FSC.

The veracity of this and other stories circulating on the Internetshould be established if the Manx governments claim to be runninga clean operation here is to have any

credence.

When the Manxman Internet site started to expose links to such stories it was subjected to all manner of pressures to end its operation. As a consequence the Manxman Exposés have stopped but this does not mean that the material on the Net which alludes to financial skulduggery in the Isle of Man has disappeared. Far from it! The position would seem to be that each month brings new allegations. So what is the government's policy (Isle of Man Plc.) in relation to these damaging stories? It would seem to be the case that they should be quietly ignored and those locally who expose them should be quietly smeared, pressured or otherwise induced to shut-up!

Secretary General

Celtic League

28/05/01

Date: Mon May 28, 2001 3:54pm

Subject: TORTURE OF BASQUE PRISONERS MUST END

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

TORTURE OF BASQUE PRISONERS MUST END

In a dramatic development ten days ago the Basque University in Vitoria called out its students to protest at the alleged torture of one of their former students by the Spanish security forces.

Leire Gallastegi was arrested in February and she alleges that she was beaten, threatened and tortured in the most disgusting manner. According to a letter smuggled from her prison by supporters she was threatened with electrodes and physical assault with a broom handle. In addition her parents' arrest was threatened if she did not cooperate. One can only speculate at the psychological make-up of the individuals who perpetrated this abuse and indeed allowed the conditions in which it was taking place.

For many years Basque nationalists have reported that the systematic abuse and torture of detainees, suspected of belonging to ETA, has been widespread. It had been hoped that a concentration of local and international opposition to this mistreatment of prisoners had brought about improvements. What the treatment of Ms. Gallastegi proves is that little has changed in the mind-set of those who staff the prisons and interrogation centres for the Spanish State.

The stand by the University will provide a useful focus for those outside the Basque country who are ignorant of the treatment being meted out by a so-called European

democracy to those held in custody.

It should also act as a catalyst for European governments to press the government of Jose Maria Aznar to implement recommendations by the United Nations Special rapporteur on torture to create the conditions in which these sort of abuses cannot take place. Access to immediate legal support by detainees, the video taping of interrogations and the video surveillance of cell block areas would all go some considerable way to ending these abuses. Aznar's government should act now - unless that is it condones the torture!

Secretary General

Celtic League

28/05/01

(See attached)

The Ambassador of Spain

Embassy of Spain

24 Belgrave Square

London SW1X 8QA

Dear Sir,

I write with reference to the protest recently made by Officials and Students of the Basque University in Vitoria about the treatment of a former student of the University, Ms. Leire Gallastegi.

I understand that Ms Gallestegi alleges mistreatment and torture whilst in custody. The specific allegations are quite horrendous.

I understand that specific recommendations have been made in the past by the United Nations special rapporteur on torture which would ensure a prison regime in which the treatment of detainees would be monitored and allegations of abuse could therefore be sustained or disproved.

Can I ask if the Spanish government allow detainees immediate unaccompanied access to lawyers or doctors of their choice? Could I further enquire if the video-taping of interviews and detention areas is undertaken and if tapes are made available to the detainee?

If the answer to the above questions is no, do the Spanish authorities plan to introduce these measures, which would both prevent the ill treatment of detainees and eliminate any propensity to false accusation.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

28/01/01

Sir Nigel Rodley

United Nations Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the
Question of Torture

OHCHR

8-14 Avenue de la Paix

1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Dear Sir Nigel,

I draw your attention to the concerns (attached) lodged by the Celtic League recently with the Spanish Authorities about the alleged mistreatment of a women prisoner.

Could your Office further prevail upon the Spanish Authorities to introduce prudent safeguards, as outlined in our letter, such as access to legal and medical advice and the video-taping of interrogation rooms and detention areas.

Straightforward measures such as this would prevent ill treatment of detained persons and also protect the police and prison authorities against unfair allegations.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

28/01/01

Date: Mon May 28, 2001 3:54pm

Subject: JAPANESE MOX DECISION - A BLOW TO BNFL

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

JAPANESE MOX DECISION - A BLOW TO BNFL

Although British Nuclear Fuels Ltd. are playing it down, the decision by a small community in Japan to reject plans to import the companies Mox fuel is significant.

Villagers of Kariwa voted by 54% against plans by the Tokyo Electric plant to use Mox fuel in its Kashiwazaki-Karaiwa plant. Although the vote is not legally binding the Company is thought likely to heed the concerns of the villagers in an area where public support is seen as crucial to any introduction of the new fuel.

The decision is likely to give a useful fillip to campaigns in other areas of Japan where Power Generation companies wish to switch to Mox fuelled generation.

Another significant factor in the new situation is that the Kariwa area is heavily dependant economically on the adjacent nuclear power plant. It is clear that the local community, and many in Japan generally, are still inherently suspicious of BNFL following the safety scandal after the falsification of data in 1999. The Japanese nuclear industry know that it has to bring public opinion with it in any dealings with BNFL.

Meanwhile, this latest economic 'kick in the teeth' for BNFL can only be good news for opponents of the troubled plants operations close to home.

BNFL spokesman used to pontificate about the companies International safety credentials. However, these days it is clear that communities globally are waking up to the reality of the Companies appalling safety record and its global environmental threat.

Bernard Moffatt

Secretary General

Celtic League

28/05/01

Date: Mon May 28, 2001 3:54pm

Subject: BRETON PRISONERS RIGHTS ABUSED

CELTIC LEAGUE PRESS INFORMATION

BRETON PRISONERS RIGHTS ABUSED

Concern is growing for the well being of one of the Breton prisoners, Alain Sole, currently jailed in Fresnes. Alain Sole is one of a number of detainees who have been protesting about prison conditions. In his case the absence of correct medical support has also been an issue.

Sole suffers from chronic diabetes, It appears that following a serious bout of illness he was denied follow-up medical treatment. Conditions became so bad that in March he made an attempt to take his own life.

The Celtic League have written to the French government and to the European body which monitors the treatment of prisoners (the CPT) calling for the release of those Breton prisoners, such as Alain, who were not getting suitable medical treatment. We have also campaigned for the detainees to be moved from Prisons around Paris to Brittany which would facilitate visits and support by their families.

So far the French authorities have refused to respond positively to expressions of concern from external bodies such as the Celtic league and Breton prisoners support groups. They have also exhibited a mean spirited attitude. For example in an astonishing display of narrow-mindedness Easter cards sent by a member of the Manx branch of the Celtic League, Mairead Kerwin, to a number of prisoners were returned

France has a considerable number of political detainees, including those imprisoned for supporting the National liberation struggles in Brittany, the Basque country and Corsica. The French seem to believe that by adopting a hard line on the prisoners issue the wave of protests will collapse. The authorities are playing a dangerous game with the lives of prisoners like Alain Solé!

Secretary General

Celtic League

28/05/01

(Attached)

Geneviève Mayer

Deputy Executive Secretary

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture

& Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

France

Dear Ms. Mayer,

I refer to our correspondence concerning the situation of Breton prisoners and in particular Mr. Alain Solé.

I would advise that our information is that the circumstances of this detainee are not improved and I would ask if the Committee has yet raised this issue with French Authorities?

Yours sincerely,

Bernard Moffatt

28/01/01