

527612

PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION

Dublin Address: 90 George's Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin Telephone: 8424654, 2556442

Chief Patron
President Mary Robinson

Honorary President
Dr. John DeCourcey Ireland

Republic of Ireland
Regional Executive Committee
Chairperson
Chris Hudson
Secretary
Michael Rice
Co-Ordinator
Seán O Cionnaith
Treasurer
Isabella Evangelisti

Executive Council
Republic of Ireland
Chris Hudson
Michael Rice (Sec.)
Joan Brady
Northern Ireland
Ronald Baird
Seamus Lynch
Sam McAughbry (Chair)
England/Wales
Eddie Walsh
Scotland
Vince Mills

Dublin Address
90 George's Avenue
Blackrock
Co Dublin
Phone: 8424654, 2556442

Belfast Address
Peace Train Organisation
224 Lisburn Road
Belfast BT9 6GE
Phone: 05-0232-660194

18 August 1995

Mr Walter Kirwan
Secretary General
Forum for Peace and Reconciliation
Dublin Castle
Dublin 2

RE: SUBMISSION TO FORUM

Dear Mr Kirwan

Please find enclosed the submission to the Forum from the Peace Train Organisation.

The delay in getting this to you can be explained by the diversity of views in our Organisation. We believe our submission expresses opinions that may not be in agreement with those in the Forum but are genuine fears and views that are part of the tapestry that makes up Northern Ireland and the Republic.

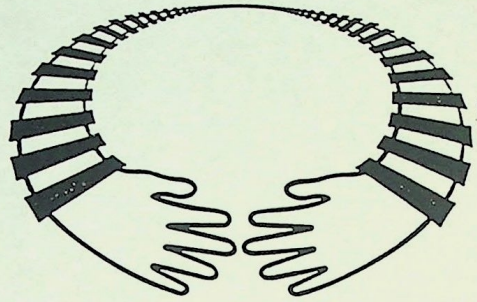
We wish to express the view that the Peace Train and other groups should be invited to make an oral submission to the Forum. Should such an invitation be issued, we would intend to present the views of the Unionist and Loyalist communities in Northern Ireland. We believe this would be more important than expressing views from our Committee members who come from what is commonly known as the Nationalist Tradition both in the Republic and Northern Ireland.

If you wish to discuss the above further, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Hudson
CHAIRPERSON

PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION

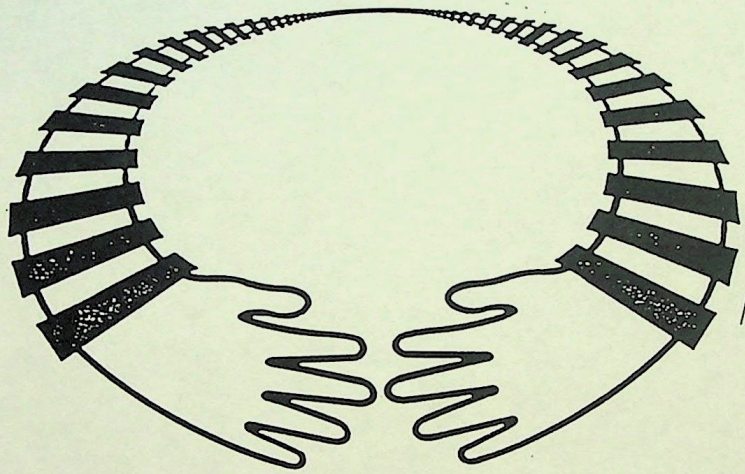


KEEP THE PEACE

**SUBMISSION TO FORUM FOR
PEACE AND RECONCILIATION**

INDEX

- 1 INTRODUCTION**
- 2 PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION NORTHERN IRELAND**
- 3 PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION REPUBLIC OF IRELAND**
- 4 SUBMISSION TO FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION**
- 5 AN PEACE TRAIN AGUS CULTUR**
- 6 THE SEA AND NORTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION**



THE PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION

INTRODUCTION

The Peace Train Organisation does not hold a political opinion of its own. Its main task has been to oppose violence as a means of political change in Ireland. In doing that, it draws its support from all political persuasion except Sinn Fein and other groups that would have supported Sinn Fein.

As you can see from the Committee in Dublin and the Committee in Belfast, it has a broad spectrum of political and non-political support. However, because this submission is being made to the Peace and Reconciliation Forum, we have attempted to try and put across a view coming strongly from the Unionist tradition. Our explanation for doing this is that many of the people sitting at the Forum are indeed patrons and, in some cases, committee members of the Peace Train Organisation so in presenting a case of generic nationalist position would be a little bit like us talking to ourselves.

KEEP THE PEACE

Our title is Keep the Peace and we urge everybody engaged in dialogue not to use threats of a return to violence to push further their own political agenda. The present peace that is holding in Northern Ireland is not the property of the paramilitaries nor the politicians but belongs to all those Irish people who invested time and energy in helping to bring this peace about. It belongs in particular to those who were involved in Peace Organisations, Community Organisations and the thousands who took part in rallies organised by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. It is the duty of everybody at present to keep the peace so as to make both Ceasefires permanent. The Peace Train Organisation will be inviting other peace groups and friends to campaign around that slogan "Keep the Peace". In the next few months, we will be organising public meetings, seminars and finally a Peace Train on 14 October all under the slogan of "Keep the Peace".

We have begun this campaign by organising a Press Conference in Dublin for the Families of the Disappeared. We call upon the paramilitaries to identify the unmarked graves of these bodies so that they can be returned to their loved ones.

In the past, as well as running Peace Trains between Dublin and Belfast, the Organisation ran a youth train from Belfast to Derry and a train to London from Hollyhead with representatives of all political, religious and other social representation.

We organised the massive response of condolences after the Warrington bombing and also condolences after the Loughinisland bombing. We also participated in a religious service with the people in Loughinisland at which our Southern Chairperson addressed the congregation during their Mass. The Peace Train was involved and supported New Consensus in the annual picket of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis calling for an end to violence. Over the years, we have participated in the pickets outside Sinn Fein Headquarters and supported the picket of the UDA calling for an end to violence.

The Peace Train Organisation manifested opposition to violence by paramilitary organisations as a means to political change and also called upon the security forces north and south to always act within the law when carrying out their duties. The Peace Train Organisation supported its Southern Chairperson, Chris Hudson, in his discussions with Loyalist paramilitaries for approximately 16 - 18 months prior to the calling of their Ceasefire on 13 October.

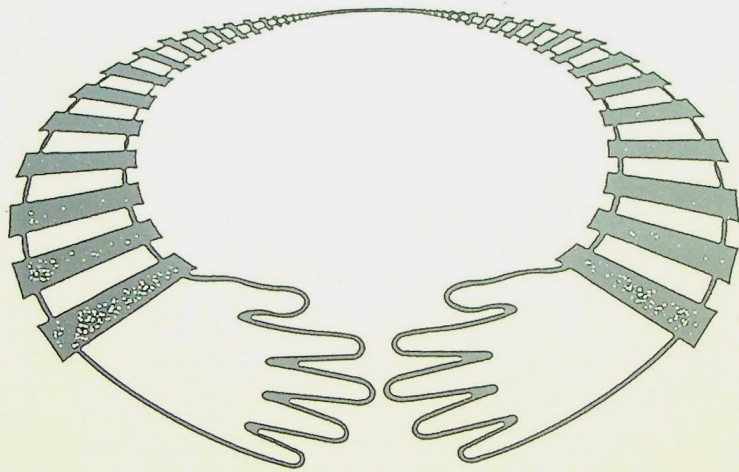
We wish also to pay tribute to the other people who were involved in discussions with both Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries in order to assist them to come to their decisions to call Ceasefires.

LONDON AND GLASGOW

The Organisation also has supporters in London and Glasgow where they have equally carried out various activities. Our London Organisation helped organise the Peace Train to London and has been involved in the new dialogue campaign there. We have been supported by such people as Harry Barnes, Kate Howie, Peter Bottomley and many others. In Glasgow, our Organisation arranged public meetings, petitions and vigils for peace and invited guests to address TUC fringe meetings and other public meetings in Glasgow.

In our submission, we include a piece written by John De Courcey Ireland who is an expert on matters dealing with the Sea. John's piece outlines his view of working together with regard to the Sea which can be used as a concept for co-operation in many other areas. We also include the list of Committee Members both in Belfast and Dublin.





PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Regional Executive Committee is as follows:

Chairperson	Sam McAughtry, Journalist & Author
Vice Chairperson	Michael McGimpsey, Cllr Ulster Unionist Party
Hon Secretary	Eric Harvey, Retired Trade Union activist (MSF)
Administrator	Eileen Bell, Cllr Alliance Party
Office Secretary	June McClung
Other Members	Rupert & Carol Laird, Irish Assoc Members Seamus Lynch, Democratic Left (Northern Leader) Dr Chris McGimpsey, Ulster Unionist Cllr Tom French, Workers Party (Northern Leader)

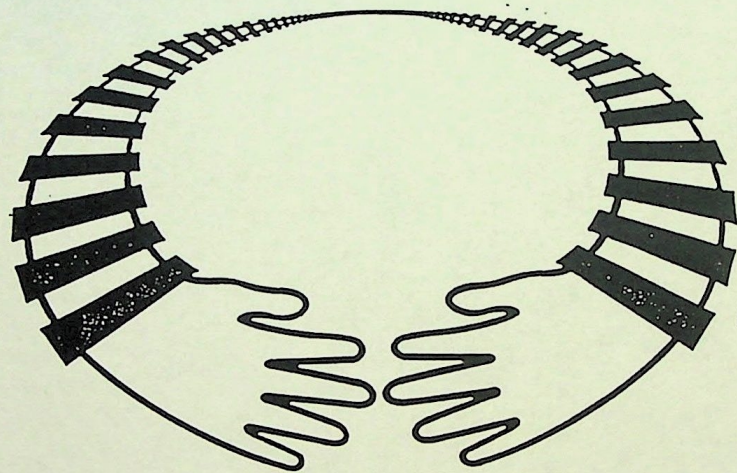
Our membership and supporters lists contain a wide range of people: from the academic world - Dr Liam Kennedy; the Arts - Edna and Michael Longley (poets); politicians from all bodies (except Sinn Fein); journalists - Chris Ryder; and Church leaders from the four main churches to ordinary people who have used our organisation as a platform against violence and for the right to travel safely.

We are the only peace organisation in the North who has representatives from the political world on its committee or amongst our founder members. We work throughout Northern Ireland and have held seminars on issues like "Confronting Violence" and policing as well as with other peace groups on various projects such as Candlelight Vigils and Victim Support conferences. We have also helped to set up the Organisation FAIT and have participated in some of their activities.

We also had a meeting with Michael Ancram in his capacity as Minister for Political Development wherein our Chairman, along with the Southern Committee Chairman, Chris Hudson and the Rev Roy Magee informed the Minister of the concerns of ordinary Protestant people.

This meeting took place at the beginning of August 1994 just before the Nationalist Ceasefire and at a time when the Loyalists, sensing that this might be announced, were very apprehensive of the consequences, especially in constitutional terms.

All in all the PTO in the North has worked closely with its sister body in the South since its birth in 1989 to highlight the abuse of civil liberties and rights by paramilitaries and the disgust with the violence perpetrated by all men of violence.



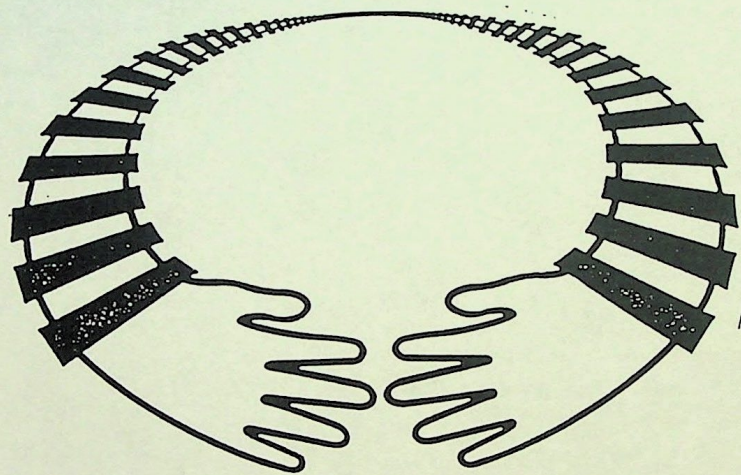
PEACE TRAIN ORGANISATION REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

The Republic of Ireland Regional Executive Committee is as follows:

Chairperson	Christopher Hudson, Trade Union Official
Vice Chairperson	Tom Carew, Trade Union Official
Hon Secretary	Rhonda Donaghey, Trade Union Activist
Treasurer	Isabella Evangelisti
Co-ordinator	Sean O'Cionnaith
Other Members	Proinsias de Rossa TD, Minister for Social Welfare Eamon Gilmore, Minister at the Marine Derek McDowell TD Austin Currie TD Terry Saunders Fiachra O'Céillachair Audrey Brady Agnes Duignam Denis Clohissy Ruth Walsh Fergus Whelan

The Honorary President of the Peace Train Organisation in the Republic of Ireland is Dr John De Courcey Ireland, well known historian on maritime affairs and President of CND.

Amongst the patrons are the following: David Begg, General Secretary, Communications Workers' Union; Terry Delany, Assistant General Secretary, Communications Workers' Union; Peter Cassells, General Secretary, Irish Congress of Trade Unions; Fr Austin Flannery; Fintan O'Toole; Tomas McGoilla; Mary Bannotti MEP; Senator Mary Henry; Senator David Norris; and many others.



SUBMISSION TO FORUM FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

1 COMMUNICATIONS

When the initial response of the Peace Train took place, it was purely as an act of protest against the continued bombing of the Dublin - Belfast line. However, because of the public and media response, it was felt by those who were involved in the organisation of the initial Peace Train to develop it into a more cohesive peace movement. Our slogan was and is "Keep the Lines Open". We meant by this slogan to keep the lines open between Dublin and Belfast. However, at one of our Peace Train events, the then Fianna Fail TD, Jim Tunney, said that this should not only mean the railway lines but the lines of communication between people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. He made this statement in the presence of MPs, Churchpersons and Trade Union leaders from Northern Ireland who had travelled on the Peace Train to take part in a Peace Train to London.

We like to believe that the Peace Train has lived up to that slogan and by its continuous events and communication between politicians and people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland have managed to keep the lines open. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Governments that have now agreed to invest in the Dublin Belfast line in order to provide a continuous track and high speed train between the 2 major cities on this island.

Also, one of the issues that we did campaign around was the electricity link between North and South and we were equally delighted to see the commitment to restoring this link.

There are many other areas of communication that can be developed between North and South without being a threat to anybody's constitutional position.

It would be wrong not to mention one of the most important aspects of communication which is the electronic media. It has often concerned us that the national network in the Republic, RTE, has throughout the conflict in Northern Ireland appeared to have a certain perspective of that conflict. This is not to take from the excellent reporting by the professional journalists and reporters in RTE but to express a concern that Irish Unionism appears never to be treated as an equal to Irish Nationalism in reporting. Generally, the premises of the reporting is that Irish Nationalism is the starting point from which everything else is measured.

We would point to the fact that BBC Northern Ireland and indeed UTV have been attacked by both sides in Northern Ireland and in particular by members of the Unionists community because both of those networks have taken a neutral position in order to give objective reporting on the conflict. We would recommend that the RTE authority try to redeem this imbalance portraying Irish Unionism as an essential and equal political/ideological belief on this island.

2 ATONEMENT

Whilst everybody welcomed the Ceasefires called by both the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries, there still remains within both communities, amongst people who have lost loved ones or who have been injured themselves, a great anger.

People who have suffered because of the recent conflict in Northern Ireland are still bewildered as to what it was all about and how they can deal with their grieving. We believe that it is important that both British and Irish Governments and all other parties involved in resolving the conflict in Northern Ireland seriously acknowledge the need for atonement. However, it must be recognised that atonement, apologies or forgiveness could take years. Only now are the people involved in World War Two dealing with apologies and forgiveness.

How this would be manifested is something that needs to be examined and teased out, possibly a day of national atonement. Those of us who were involved closely in the aftermath of the Warrington bombing can realise how the response from the Republic of Ireland, in particular, to the people of Warrington was a great comfort to them.

The Peace Train Organisation organised the collection of over 200,000 signatures in condolence books throughout the Republic. These were taken to Warrington and presented to the people at a special service in a Church in Warrington town. We know from the response of the Lord Mayor at the time, and many other people in the town, that it helped enormously in dealing with their grieving and loss. We also know that the rallies organised throughout Ireland at that time were a great comfort to the people of Warrington.

These acts of solidarity helped the people in Warrington come to terms with their loss and also know that the greater majority of Irish people no way condoned this terrorist attack. Surely, it is not beyond the remit of both the British and Irish Governments to look closely at carrying out or supporting such manifestations of atonement.

Until such time as people atone for the acts of violence that they carried out against others can there be truly a resolution to this conflict. Maybe it will take years in order to bring people to this stage of atonement but having said that, there is absolutely no reason for not putting into progress the mechanism for providing same.

For example, the Peace Train would recommend that the British Government would make atonement for the killing of 13 people on Bloody Sunday in Derry; that Loyalist paramilitaries would make atonement for the bombings that butchered people in Dublin; that the IRA make atonement for the killing of people in Enniskillen and Teebane. It is worth mentioning at this stage that some years ago the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Reg Empy, attended and spoke at a ceremony at the memorial to those who died in the Dublin bombing. Mr Reg Empy at that time spoke about his revulsion at the continued campaign of both sets of paramilitaries and as a Unionist disassociated himself from those who carried out the dastardly bombings in Dublin. It should be noted that the southern media totally ignored that particular event.

3 SECURITY AND PEACE

It is proper to pay tribute to all those who helped bring the situation to both Ceasefires. It is wise and truthful to recognise the courage of those within the paramilitary groups who within their own context and their own intellectual decisions brought the paramilitary organisations towards the Ceasefires that are now in existence.

This maybe difficult for many people to accept but it must go on record that there were people who were members of both paramilitary groupings who had come to the conclusion that violence was not the way forward.

However, they stayed within those organisations in order to bring them to the Ceasefires.

Also, it would be remiss not to mention those members of the security forces who for the last 25 years have kept the line between anarchy and democracy in the island of Ireland.

Of course, we can state that when members of the security forces operated outside the law they should have been punished. Indeed, in some cases they were but there is some concern expressed that many of those who carried out illegal acts were not brought to justice. We believe that people are not seeking revenge against these members of the security forces now but they are looking and seeking recognition that their loved ones were killed or injured in suspicious circumstances.

However, we would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the security forces in Northern Ireland and in particular to the men and women of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. We would like to state here that in all the Peace Train events we held which involved going into Northern Ireland we were treated with the greatest of courtesy by the members of the RUC and indeed these people put their lives literally on the line to guarantee our safety.

We note that whilst many politicians are paying tribute to the courage of those who brought the paramilitaries to a Ceasefire that as yet there seems to be a great silence in recognising the courage of members of the RUC in defending democracy on this island.

We would also like to point out that it should not be forgotten that members of the Gardai and the Irish Army lost their lives in defending our democratic institutions from subversion alongside their colleagues in the RUC. It should never be forgotten that the original aim of the Irish Republic Army which became the Provisional Irish Republic Army was the overthrow of both states against the wishes of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people. We would like it to go on record that democracy on this island owes its existence to the thin green line and blue line of the RUC and the Gardai, we thank them for that. We would recommend that the Dublin Government should at some stage make a pronouncement recognising that reality.

4 **CULTURE**

Someone once said that every time he heard the word culture used he moved for his revolver. Unfortunately, in Northern Ireland the revolvers were picked up and, more often than not, fired at a human target. Whilst in general Irish Culture has evolved to become more inclusive rather than exclusive, it still has a strong generic Nationalist Catholic flavour or at least what is portrayed as Irish Culture. As a metaphor the Orange usually plays second fiddle to the Green.

We believe that culture is not solely the property of Nationalists and Unionists on this island and, indeed, many people would not express an allegiance to either of those definitions. We also believe that culture is not a static thing and in many cases changes and embraces various other aspects including external influences such as modern music. Culture should not be perceived to be part of some quasi-political ideology to be enforced on other people.

This has been somewhat apparent in the use of the Irish language in particular by Nationalists in Northern Ireland. Indeed, it is not uncommon to hear some Nationalists talk about our language as if it was exclusively their property and could not in any way belong to Irish Unionists.

Sinn Fein has appeared at times to use the language as a means to divide not unite. Speaking Irish to those who do not understand it is offensive. Also in the Republic, English and Irish should be equal not as with the present position - Irish as the first official language.

GAA Ban on RUC

One of the main concerns is the continuing ban by the GAA of members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary and British Army joining and playing Gaelic Association games. This ban continues under Section 21 of the Constitution of the GAA. We believe there should be more political concern expressed regarding the issue.

It is our belief that the British and Irish Governments should make it a criteria for any organisation to be grant aided that they do not use a discriminatory ban against any person on grounds of sex, race, creed or indeed occupation.

5 CATHOLIC NATIONAL ETHOS

Whilst St Patrick's Day, 17 March is celebrated universally by Irish people throughout the world, it generally only reflects a Catholic ethos. The Parade in New York which is often attended by Members of the Irish Parliament excludes all other religious except Roman Catholic as the Grand Marshall.

Also, on that particular parade, offensive slogans are carried which are not acceptable in the present climate of peace and reconciliation. Again, southern politicians are in a strong position to express their regret at the format of the St Patrick's Day parade in New York.

6 BEATINGS AND EXPULSIONS

The Peace Train along with its sister organisation Families Against Intimidation and Terror (FAIT) have continued to denounce the ongoing beatings carried out by Loyalist and Republican paramilitaries.

We appreciate the statements made by political spokespersons for parties close to the paramilitaries but we believe that this is not enough. We also recognise that Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries are not responsible for all the beatings that are taking place in Northern Ireland and indeed many of these are being carried out by rogue elements. However, we are emphatic that these beatings must end forthwith. Whilst we accept that the Ceasefires are permanent they are not whole in all their parts if the beatings continue. It is our contention that these beatings continue to take place as a mechanism of enforcing and controlling certain communities.

We also believe that those families and persons who remain expelled to Britain and other areas should be allowed to return home forthwith. We believe that FAIT has documented the various people concerned and both Governments should insist in all talks with Sinn Fein and the smaller Loyalist Political Parties that these people be allowed return to their homes immediately.

The decommissioning of arms is an important factor and we welcome Dick Spring's statement that Sinn Fein/IRA should make some gesture in order to progress the peace process by beginning even on an incremental scale the decommissioning of weapons.

Of course, it is logical and obvious to everybody that only those who possess the explosives and other weaponry as to whether they have all been handed in, but we reiterate the remarks of Seamus Mallen MP that the peace does not belong to the paramilitaries but belongs to the people of Northern Ireland and Ireland. They have no right to hold on to this weaponry nor have they a mandate from the Irish people.

We believe that the 4 items that all peace groups should campaign around now are:

- 1 The beatings must end. It is now important not for political spokespersons but for Republican and Loyalist paramilitary spokespersons to announce now that the beatings are over and that there will be no more quasi policing by paramilitary organisations.
- 2 That those families and persons expelled from Northern Ireland by paramilitary organisations should now be allowed to return home. It is somewhat hypocritical to listen to people particularly those from the Republican paramilitary organisation complaining about the PTA in Britain and expulsions from Britain to Northern Ireland yet they still continue with expulsions of people from Northern Ireland.
- 3 The remains of their loved ones to be returned to the Families of the Disappeared.

4 The immediate beginning of the decommissioning of weapons by the Republican and Loyalist paramilitaries - this to be helped by a process to be put in place in order to gain people's trust to decommission. In this we would advise that no UN or US military personnel should be used in the decommissioning. We would recommend that members of the British army and the Irish army should be used. We would point out that in South Africa the South African army was used despite its previous history because the South African people felt that the UN or other external forces would not be able to carry out this obligation.

7 CONCLUSION

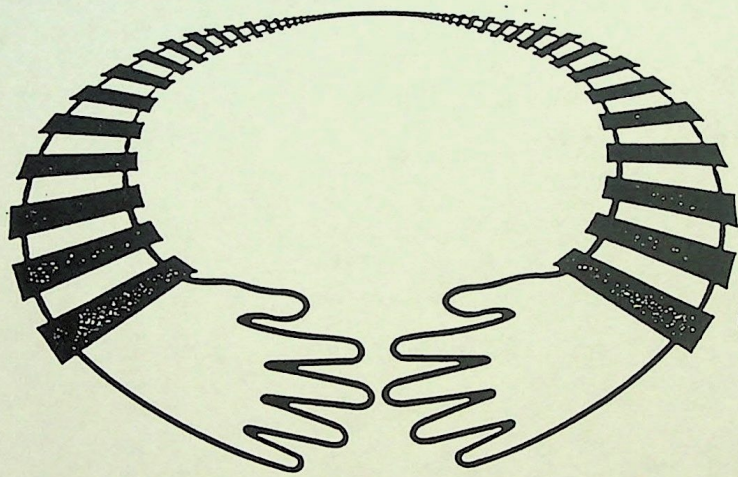
The Peace Train Organisation wishes the Forum for Peace and Reconciliation well in its deliberations. We believe it has a role to play in helping people to understand the differences that exist both in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We would state, however, that possibly conciliation would have been more prudent than reconciliation.

Reconciliation sometimes can appear to those who feel most vulnerable that they are to be reconciled to the other person's point of view. However, conciliation is to bring people of opposing points of view to a position where they can at least tolerate each other and work together for the benefit of all.

We would also like to state that on occasions and in particular politicians from the South have talked about nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. This is a recipe for standing still and doing nothing.

We would point out that in South Africa things began to move because people recognised the reality to agree on those things that they could agree on and shelve those things they could not agree on. We believe the same should apply in Northern Ireland. To that extent, it would be prudent for the Irish Government to encourage the British Government with the establishing of a democratic assembly in Northern Ireland.

There are many things you can say in a written submission but there are many more things that you can say across the table to other people of different persuasion. We would like the opportunity to bring our colleagues from Northern Ireland who have been involved in the Peace Train and especially those who come from the Unionist tradition to allow them present their alternative views. We would hope that the Forum will concede us that opportunity.



AN PEACE TRAIN AGUS CULTUR

Tá suim ag eagraíocht an 'Peacetrain' i gcúrsaí cultuartha. Tuigimid an tabhacht a bhaineann leis an gcultúr ins an soichí, agus cuirimid an dá taobh den teorann pholaitiúil san áireamh dar le seo. Feictear dúinn go bhfuil níos mó ná traidisiún amháin agus níos mó ná cultúr amháin san oileán seo. Tuigimid go gcaithfear meas ar gach cultúr a chothú. Is maith an rud é go bhfuil an suim sna h-ealaín agus cultúr anois.

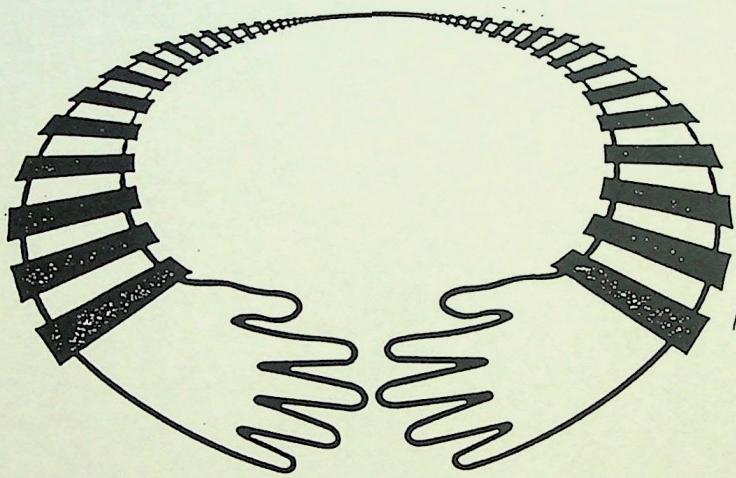
Is oth leis an Peacetrain nuair a úsáidtear cúrsaí cultuartha le h-aghaidh aidhmeanna pholaitiúil. Táimid den dtuaraim go bhfuil cás na Gaeilge taréis fulaingt de bhárr an teanga 'bheith usáidthe í gcoimhlintí pholaitiúil mar úirlis. Ar dhá thaobh den teorainn, measaimid go bhfuil tacaíocht áirthe cailte don Ghaeilge mar gheall ar an mhódh a chuireadh an teanga i luí ar dhaoine éagsúla. Caithfear tosú ar an éogóir sin a cheartú, tá an seans againn anois chun cur leis an obair sin.

Is ceart go mbeadh foghlam na Gaeilge oscailte do cách. Níor cheart go mbeadh imní ar aon duine, pé an Éireannach iad ar chor ar bith, i dtaobh an Ghaeilge. Tá sé mar chuid de saibhreas cultuartha na h-oileán. Ní cheart go bhféachfaí ar Ghaeilge mar rud atá i seilbh traidisiún na náisiúnaithe agus poblachtánachas amháin. Ar an dul céanna, ní bheadh sé fairailta féachaint ar Bhéarla mar rud atá i seilbh traidisiún na h-aondachtóireachta ná dílseachas amháin. Níl sé sláintiúil go mbeadh coimhlint nó comórtas idir Gaeilge agus Béarla, ba cheart go mbeadh cothromaíocht réasúnta ann.

Luaitear an Ghaeilge i gcomhthéais aitheantas na h-Éireannach go minic. Ní gá, in ár dtuaraim, go mbeadh an Ghaeilge ag duine chun go mbeidís mar Éireannaigh. Níl teanga amháin níos uaisle ná an ceann eile. Tá Béarla agus Gaeilge usáidthe ag muintir na h-Éireann chun ár gcultúr agus ár litriocht a dhéanamh níos saibhre.

Teanga beo ísea an Ghaeilge agus ba cheart cabhair agus a aitheantas oiriúnach a thahairt dó. Maireann an cultúr a bhaineann leis freisin. Tá níos mó cultúr ar an oilean ná an cultúr a bhaineann leis an Ghaeilge. Cad faoi cultúr an lucht siúl mar shampla? Caithfidimid uile oibriú le cheile ar son maitheas an chultúr go ginearálta agus ionas nach féidir le coimhlint pholaitiúil daoine a dheighilt ar an gceist.

Fiachra O Céilleachair



THE SEA AND NORTH-SOUTH CO-OPERATION

Whatever differences may separate people living in Ireland they are all inhabitants of the same island surrounded by the same seas.

The sea itself takes no note of the lines of longitude and latitude that men have drawn across it nor of the political and economic concepts thought up by men such as "territorial waters" or "national economic zones". The winds, tides and currents, seabirds, the fish in the sea, and pollutants let into the sea by man completely ignore the artificial boundaries that men have imposed upon the sea. Sea covers 71% of our globe, and is consequently a matter of vast importance to life on it. Our planet differs from all other planets in our solar system because life exists on it, and life exists on it because of the seas upon its surface.

In modern times the amount of sea on the globe and the influence of sea on life have gradually compelled reluctant national governments to co-operate in an over-growing variety of ways about the sea to enable modern society to function at all. There is close co-operation between meteorologists across the world watching the seas and bit by bit improving the forecasting of weather. There are numerous internationally agreed rules for safety of navigation at sea. There are standard rules for signalling at sea and there is close co-operation of sea-rescue services of every country situated in the same sea area. Charts of the seabed are freely exchanged across the globe.

If the circumstances of modern life have forced governments across the globe however unwillingly to co-operate about the sea for their own safety and profit, how much more should the peoples of politically divided Ireland seek in the sea the numerous ways of joint co-operation in researching and profitably exploiting it which could bring divided communities together and enrich both as a single entity.

Problems affecting fishermen in Northern Ireland (with their reputation as one of Europe's most economically effective fishing communities) and those in the Republic who have made astonishing strides in the past 32 years have already had to call for co-operation from the fishermen themselves well ahead of politicians or academics. Seeing that the fishermen of both areas face similar problems is it not obvious that both need to create and have legitimised machinery for joint political action for the promotion of their industry and joint research so as to extend their knowledge and improve techniques. Such co-operation could broaden into exchange of opinions on ways of organising the industry and of ensuring the continuous welfare of those concerned in it.

The sea around Ireland can provide not only fish, of the habits and whereabouts of which never can enough be known, but it also contains minerals under and upon its bed of value to industry. It is the source of winds that can be harnessed for their energy. It creates waves whose power can create energy, and scientists of Queen's University Belfast are acknowledged to be to the fore in studying that phenomenon and the sea of Ireland's west coast is acknowledged to be excellent for such studies. It is still not certain whether tidal power could successfully and economically be exploited in areas around Ireland and joint research, followed by joint action if justified, is surely urgently called for to widen and deepen knowledge of the potential for energy production, whether by wind, wave or tides of the sea around this island.

There are only two marine research vessels owned in this island, one in each political entity. Surely their research programmes should be co-ordinated and their discoveries pooled, whether concerned with fisheries, the geology of the seabed, the effect of currents or any other phenomenon. Two small research vessels are not enough. Early in this century marine research at sea was relatively better provided in Ireland than it is now. One new research ship at least is urgently needed. The potential users should be summoned to work out the best characteristics of such a new ship and it should be built in Ireland.

Everything should be done to pool between the North and the Republic the resources of this ship - and boat - building industries in the two parts of the country which have a long tradition of success behind them and which with those involved working together and backed up by diplomacy abroad could make an impression greater than at present in the world market for ships and for pleasure craft of many lands. Whereas competition between ports in various parts of Ireland is legitimate and stimulating it can also become uneconomic and co-operation between ports across the country is called for.

The amount of the seaborne trade of each of the two Irish areas carried in ships registered in Ireland and manned by Irish areas is pitifully inadequate. The consequences are a huge drain of money out of this island into the pockets very largely of shipowners employing under qualified and under paid crews in ships not up to European standards, and the scarcity of employment in Irish ships for the still considerable number of young Irish men and women who would like a career at sea and often have to either give up the sea or take work under a foreign, sometimes a "convenience" flag.

The lighting of the coast of this island and the system of life-saving at sea are both controlled by organisations that ignore the political division of the island, the Commissionery of Irish lights and the Royal National Lifeboat Installation. Commendable common sense has made these vital services all-Ireland services. in so many other spheres the same type of common-sense could reap similar benefits, marine research, the fishing industry, ship and boat building, encouragement of the creation of local or regional merchant shipping concerns (like Arklow Shipping today the Headline, Kelly's and similar concerns in the recent past in Belfast) part co-ordination, co-operation between maritime museums, maritime historians, leisure users of the sea, already tentative, but which would produce quicker and greater results if legitimised.