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The Irishman Newspaper

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Consulate General of Ireland
681 Market Street Suite 615
San Francisco
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CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND

MAR 21 1984

SAN FRANCISCO

Dear Thelma:

Tom has recounted to me that during his recent conversation with you that your referred to The Irishman as "a prove newspaper." This disturbed me greatly as in fact, the newspaper does not follow an I.R.A. line and remains what it has been from the beginning, an independent monthly publication capable of commenting on any aspect of the Irish situation it cares to.

Certainly, if you consider that we have interviewed James Prior, Harold McCusker, Rev. Martin Smyth, Garret FitzGerald, Charles Haughey, Ambassadors Sullivan and Donlon, U.S. Ambassador Robert Kane, Edward Kennedy, to name a few, the provo label must surely be unglued. Not one of these individuals felt that they were misrepresented and many in fact, were very complimentary. As a professional journalist I am acutely concerned that no misrepresentation of a persons position be made. The British Consulate for instance, continue to make all their speakers accessible to me, most lately Oliver Napier, a fact which I think admirable demonstrates the objectivity of The Irishman..

IX Infact, if you can point out to me from any past issue of The Irishman any statement that can be construed as support for the I.R.A., I would be extremely gratified.

The basic stance of The Irishman has always been to follow a strong nationalist non-violent line, to suggest otherwise is divisive. Per haps you are aware that just two issues ago The Irish Northern Aid newsletter took issue with The Irishman over its editorial on the London Bombings. Perhaps you are unaware that the lable 'free state' newspaper' is a liberally applied to The Irishman by those on your opposite side whom I must deal with too.

It has become evident to me that the Irish diplomatic effort in the United States takes very poorly to criticism of any kind. I believe this is unfortunate, as we live in a free

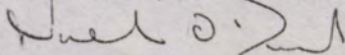
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society where the conduct of the affairs of a government should be open to the fullest and fairest possible scrutiny. The embassy in my opinion confuses fair comment with accusation far too much of the time. I believe the response of closing off speakers is exactly the wrong one in the American context. There is a great and wide debate about Irish Americans and the Dublin government's role in the U.S. The Irishman is happy to give rein and expression to it. However, if spokesmen are denied us from one side then the entire issue suffers from lack of explication. Certainly tagging The Irishman with a 'provo' label is not destined to improve my perception of your position. Nor are the numerous verbal forays against me personally (as reported by several reliable sources) by the present Ambassador. I have at all times kept personalities out of the issue. To me it remains a matter of policy pure and simple.

Finally, I do not seek overly close relationships with the consulate. As an independent publication we must of necessity keep our distance from all the concerned parties in Irish America. However, I see nothing whatsoever wrong with cordial interchange, which is why your comments to Tom disturbed me greatly. Put simply they are not true, and only lead to further bad feelings on my part.

Sincerely,



Niall O'Dowd
THE IRISHMAN NEWSPAPER
Editor

P.S. To briefly refer to your letter of March 9. In fairness, at no time in my recollection was I asked about my sources of information on the Irish question. Therefore, I do not believe the Irish government media service came under discussion, either directly or indirectly. As you point out in your letter I have previously praised it in The Irishman and I do value it very highly.

*Highly
selective
memory!*