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Gerard Casey's American Allies

by Mags Glennon

The plush surroundings of Dublin’s Davenport Hotel, and the Cashel Palace
Hotel in Tipperary, will play host to an unusual international gathering
from May 21st to 28th.

The Rockford Institute, a US far right think-tank, is holding it’s ‘Third
International Convivium’ in Ireland and the headline speaker is none other
than Dr. Gerard Casey, UCD philosophy lecturer, arch Euro-sceptic and serial
election candidate for ‘family values’ causes.

The Rockford Institute, founded in 1976 and based in Illinois, describes
itself as "the authentic voice of the American Heartland". The Institute
defines itself as ‘paleo-conservative’, which it describes as "the
expression of rootedness: a sense of place and of history, a sense of self
derived from forebears, kin and culture." It deplores multiculturalism,
immigration, the weakening of ‘Christian institutions’ and the "distraction
of the general population by sports, sex, the internet and the booming
economy." It opposes American interventions abroad, such as the Iraqi and
Kosovan wars and is strongly pro-Serb. US far right Presidential contender
Pat Buchanan is a long time supporter of Rockford and the Institute has
international links with the anti-immigration Northern League in Italy and
Haider’s Freedom Party in Austria.

Joining Casey at the redneck shindig will be Rockford Institute big-wigs Dr.
Thomas Fleming, President of the Institute and editor of ‘Chronicles’; Dr.
George McCartney, a Professor of English at St. John's University, New York;
and Scott P. Richert, the executive editor of ‘Chronicles’.

The public perception of the modern Southern confederate is of tattooed
trailer park ‘white trash’ with confederate bumper stickers and gun racks on
his pick up. A registration fee of $3,795 indicates that the Dublin event is
not aimed at such riff-raff. The US visitors take pride in listing their
academic qualifications and cultivate a scholary image to promote their
intellectual racism.

The best known and most controversial speaker is Dr. J. Michael Hill,
President of the League of the South. He believes that the American people
should "Tell the courts to go to Hell, take back their Second Amendment
right to arm themselves and organise well regulated Militias state by
state." Hill has a long term interest in Ireland and has penned volumes on
Celtic Warfare and Ulster history in the 16th century. The League of the
South classifies Southern people as ‘Anglo-Celts’ rather than ‘Anglo-Saxons’
and runs a ‘Hedge School Seminar program’ which it claims is based on the
Irish Hedge Schools during the Penal Law period.

The LOS, founded in 1994, It is a ‘neo-confederate’ body which hearkens back
to the good old days of Southern secession, when the ‘Stars and Bars’
confederate flag flew over Dixie. It is one of the key groups in the rise of
‘neo-confederate’ ideas in the Southern states. The other is the ‘Council of
Conservative Citizens’. The League has gained prominence and support in
recent years with its campaign to keep the Confederate flag flying over
State government buildings. The LOS denies that it is racist and presents a
plausible veneer of a respectable cultural and historical organisation led
by academics. However it opposes non-white immigration, integrated schools
and interracial marriage. The League and it’s allied groups also promote the
‘academic racist’ theories of differing racial IQ scores being responsible
for poverty, illegitimacy and crime rates. Hill also defends slavery,
stating "No apologies for slavery should be made. Christians who owned
slaves in the South were on firm scriptural ground".

Nothing in Gerard Casey’s past political history - former leader of the
Christian Solidarity Party; chairperson of the Christian Centrist Party;
spokesperson for ‘Parents Against Stay Safe’; committee member of the Youth
Defence run No Divorce Campaign; spokesperson for the Public Policy
Institute of Ireland (a body "based on the natural law and Christian
principles'") - offers any immediate explanation for the interest his new
American friends would have in his views. Indeed in an interview with the
Cork Examiner in 1996 Casey denied that that the CSP was financially aided
by right-wing religious groupings in the US.

Indeed in the shadowy world of Irish fringe right groups only one, the
Ulster Independence Movement, openly supports the Confederate cause. The
UIM, and it’s magazine and website ‘Ulster Nation’, are run by Belfast based
David Kerr, a former National Front activist in the 1980s. Kerr’s group is
affiliated to the US based ‘American Council of Conservative Citizens’,
which he addressed in 1997, during a US visit when he also paid homage at
the grave of Civil War Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Kerr describes
the CCC as resisting "the liberal-leftist war against America’s culture,
heritage, and civil liberties". Kerr’s website sells key rings with combined
Ulster and Confederate flag designs and includes links to the ‘League of the
South’ and ‘Southern Traditionalist’ sites. He has also announced that he is
running in West Belfast in the upcoming British general election.