

Irish nationalist says unity at hand

By Brooks Dareff
Of the Emerald

Ireland will be united within 30 years, predicts Irish nationalist Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey.

Speaking at the EMU Ballroom Wednesday night, Devlin-McAliskey said that unification of the six northern provinces with the Republic of Ireland will be achieved by "the most peaceful means available and by any means necessary."

Intimating that the Catholic minority were prepared to fight fire with fire, she said "the eleventh commandment is thou shalt not win."

The elimination of British control in Northern Ireland is inevitable, she said, because the escalating cycle of oppression and resistance, which is the pattern of political activity in Northern Ireland, serves to strengthen both the numbers and the commitment of the oppressed.

She said this cycle of oppression also operates in El Salvador, Poland, Chile and Grenada. The British, she said, try to obscure identification of the Irish with other oppressed peoples by offering religion, rather than the subjugation of an entire people, as the root of the problem.

She offered a warning to the United States, in their "globe galloping" — take heed of the example of former world power Britain.

In the U.S. invasion of Grenada Devlin-McAliskey said she sees a re-enactment of the British occupation of Northern Ireland in the late 1960's — an occupation which continues to this day.

In her talks both in the Ballroom and to reporters in the Forum Room earlier Wednesday, Devlin-McAliskey traced the escalation of oppression in Northern Ireland, and with it, the deterioration of "every concept of law."

The court system established in the 1970's, which she said is political in everything but name, abolished juries, the right to remain silent, the prosecution's burden of proof, and the right of the defense to know and cross-examine all of the accusers.

The government, she said, offers financial compensation and relocation to South Africa to anyone offering to participate in what the British call, "the phenomenon of the converted terrorist."

"We call it the phenomenon of the perjury trials."

Devlin-McAliskey said Britain created new laws to criminalize "the struggle."

Crimes like murder and rape are tried in a separate court, and are considered normal crimes, lesser than "crimes against the state."

For those she identifies as political prisoners, the



Photo by Brian Erb

Bernadette Devlin-McAliskey vowed the unification of Ireland would be achieved within 30 years.

average time of internment without trial is 18 months.

Most people receive 25-30 year sentences, and 33 percent receive life sentences.

Devlin-McAliskey said people outside of Ireland, especially in the United States, misunderstand Ireland "as some peculiar mystical quirk in the Celtic twilight."

Instead, she said, their cause connects them to all oppressed people.

The Irish have a link with blacks, she said, because they too were sold into slavery and sent to all corners of the globe — Tasmania, Australia "as far away as they could send us" — and to the American Indian, because their language, music and economy were taken away from them.

The current struggle in Northern Ireland was inspired by the civil rights movement in the United States, she said.

"When Martin Luther King spoke of his dream, we were not a bunch of white people who were liberal, we were a bunch of people who dreamed the same dream he spoke of."

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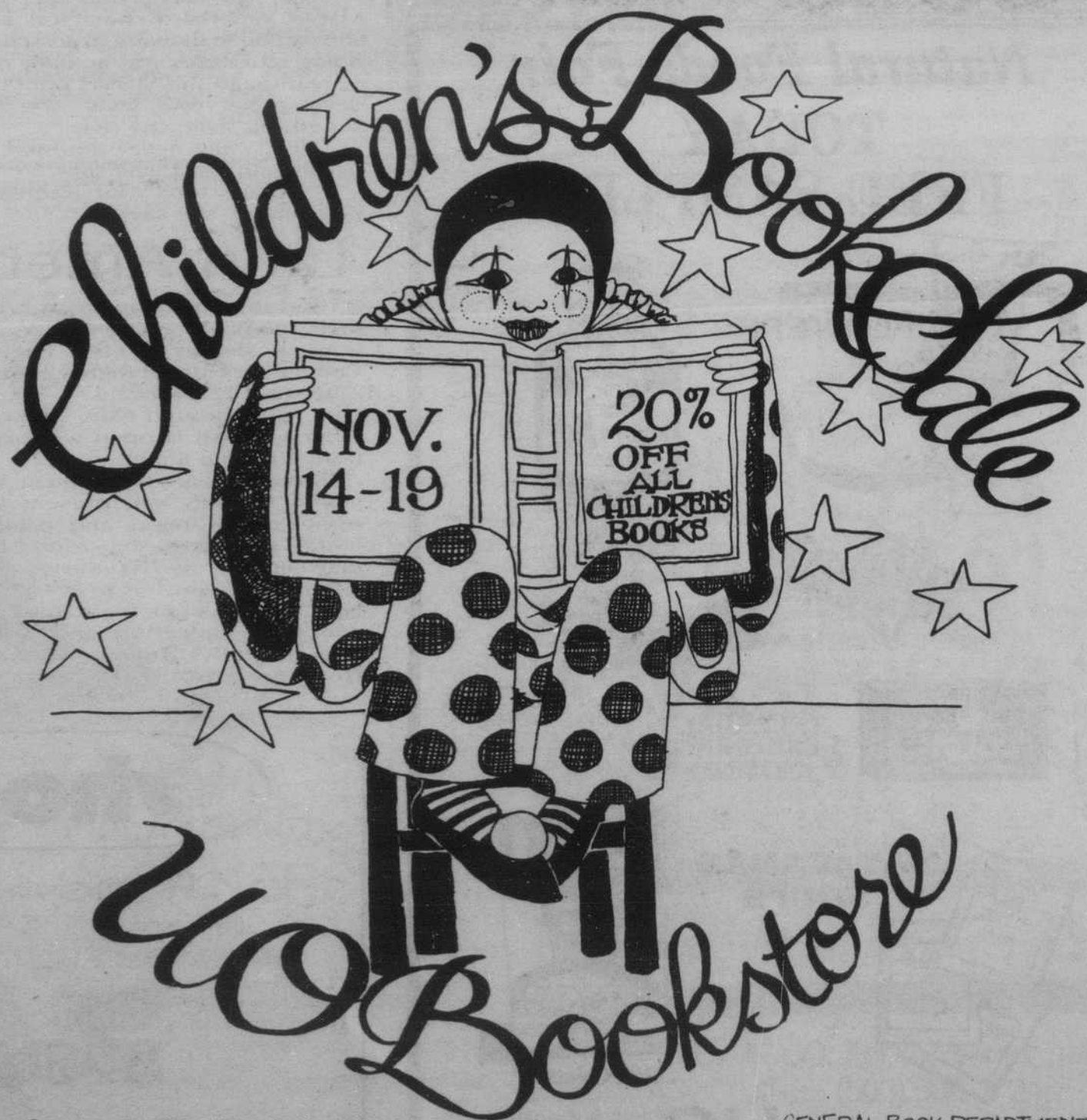
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