

THE NATIONAL ASSOC. FOR IRISH FREEDOM

U.S. Representative of the NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSN.

OCTOBER, 1974

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ELECTION '74 & THE IRISH

From the 1840's to the 1890's the United States saw its largest single arrival of Irish immigrants. Fleeing the "Great Hunger" the Irish found themselves at the bottom of the economic and social ladder; NO IRISH NEED APPLY signs were commonplace in Boston, and the jobs open in New York and most of the East Coast were strictly as laborers.

However, during this same period and well into the twentieth century, the Irish, united by their oppression here and able to identify with the oppression of their people in Ireland, became a political force to be reckoned with. During the First World War, Irish-American opinion was being taken into account by the leading political figures in Great Britain (including the Prime Minister, Lloyd George) who feared that Irish-American reaction to the Easter Rebellion, 1916, in Dublin, and the subsequent execution of its leadership might be enough to keep the United States out of the War. Thus, the halting of any further executions was a direct result of concerted Irish opinion in the United States.

After the War, the Irish and Irish-Americans looked to the Peace Conference at Versailles with great hope. After all, Woodrow Wilson (whose family was of Irish background) was known as the *Champion of Small Nations* and both the House of Representatives and the Senate had expressed their sympathy with the cause of Ireland's claim to a hearing before the Conference.

On March 4, 1919, the House of Representatives by a vote of 261 to 41 had passed the following resolution, sponsored by T. Gallagher of Illinois:

"That it is the earnest hope of the Congress of the United States of America that the Peace Conference now sitting at Paris and passing upon the rights of the various people will favorably consider the claims of Ireland to self-determination".

On June 16, 1919, the U.S. Senate, with only one dissenting voice, passed the following resolution:

"That the Senate of the United States earnestly requests the American Peace Commission at Versailles to endeavor to secure for Eamon DeValera, Arthur Griffith, and George Noble Count Plunkett, a hearing before the Peace Conference in order that they may present the case of Ireland. And further, the Senate of the United States expresses its sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of their own choice".

With these resolutions, plus Wilson's oft-stated belief in the rights of the small nations: ". . . First that every people have a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live. . . Second, that the small states of the world have a right to enjoy the same respect for their sovereignty and for their territorial integrity that great and powerful nations expect and insist upon," (Woodrow Wilson, address to the League to Enforce Peace, May 27, 1916), the Irish had good reason for optimism. It turned out to be ill-founded. Wilson, bowing to the pressure, not of his own electorate as expressed by the Congress, but to the Government of Great Britain, allowed Britain to veto Ireland's claim to a hearing.

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Despite this flagrant subordination by the U.S. President of the expressed will of the people of the United States to the will of a foreign government, we can still hear Woodrow Wilson lauded as the *CHAMPION OF THE RIGHTS OF SMALL NATIONS* by another "Irish" politician, Senator Edward M. Kennedy, as recently as the 1972 Democratic Convention.

The sell-out began then in 1919 and it has continued through every Administration and Congress since. The American Government professes neutrality but practices support of the British policy in Northern Ireland to the tune of billions of dollars. The American Government has been the main prop of British society. The United States has lent Britain in excess of \$5.104 billion and given \$4.493 billion in outright grants. In the period 1948 - 1968, the United States lent Britain \$799.1 million and granted \$1,034.5 billion for military purposes.

Since 1968 and the outbreak of the current strife in Northern Ireland, there have been Republican Administrations and Democratic Congresses, but no change in this policy of support. There have been resolutions introduced with great fanfare and publicity. Indeed, more work would appear to have been done in getting them to the press, than in getting them passed. Also, with the opportunism of the true politician, we have seen since 1968 the proliferation of "American Irish Committee for the Election of!" The National Association for Irish Freedom questions what these Committees stand for. We have yet to see one of the Committees make a demand on an Irish-American politician to do something more than issue pious statements of fidelity to a "United Ireland". On what basis can they ask an Irish-American to vote for any politician - especially one of Irish descent? - - - Because he was the first Congressman to go to Northern Ireland? Because he has attended banquets of various Irish organizations? Because his mother comes from Ireland? Or, because he's an Irish Catholic? **WHAT CONCRETE ACTION HAS ANY AMERICAN POLITICIAN TAKEN TO BREAK THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT OF BRITISH POLICY?** There is a very simple answer: **NONE.**

The Administraion-backed bill granting most-favored nation status to the Soviet Union will now be passed - - after months of debate on the Jackson-Vanik amendment forced the governments to work out an agreement easing the emigration policies of the Soviet Union regarding Soviet Jews. This amendment had been discussed at length in all the major newspapers, TV station editorials, political columns, etc. Where is the similar amendment on any financial aid bill to Great Britain?

The Senate passed a bill eliminating aid to Turkey after December 10, if that Government did not demonstrate a genuine attempt to negotiate a peace settlement in Cyprus. Where is the bill cutting off American aid, especially of a military nature, until Great Britain demonstrates its genuine interest in obtaining peace with justice in Northern Ireland?

There is a great uproar when it is disclosed that the CIA has been "destabilizing" the Governemnt in Chile. Why isn't there any similar concern over the fact that the British Army, according to the Washington, D.C. STAR NEWS, admits to CIA involvement in Northern Ireland?

Instead, we find "Irish" politicians, including Senator Kennedy and Congressman Carey, lining up behind the amendment regarding Soviet Jewry and merely lending their names to ineffectual resolutions on Northern Ireland.

The Irish Community must demand substance, not merely style, from its politicians - - legislation, not merely resolutions. Until that time, we will continue to see every politician with a shamrock in his lapel on St. Patrick's Day and a resolution in his pocket for the rest of the year, while the people of Northern Ireland are still interned without charge or trial, subject to continued British Army harassment, and denied their just demands for civil rights.

IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE TO LEARN THE FACTS ABOUT NORTHERN IRELAND AND AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT AS WELL, SEND US YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND WE WILL SEND YOU THE MONTHLY NAIF FACT SHEET. WE WOULD APPRECIATE A DONATION TO COVER THE COST OF PRINTING AND POSTAGE.

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