

CONFIDENTIAL

cc: Mr Bloomfield

Mr D A Hill
SILNORTHERN IRELAND : ALLEGATIONS BY AMERICAN IRISH CONGRESS

1. The Department of Economic Development passed me a copy of a letter from Howard Beattie of the British Information Services to Peter Faulkner of the FCO. The letter was dated 14 March 1986 and enclosed a copy of a letter from the American Irish Congress to Senator Riford.
2. Most of the letter is about security matters and I understand Claire Marson is handling the input on this aspect. However, the letter alludes to one subject with which I have had some dealings recently. That is the Conway Street Mill. DED has suggested that I might wish to make comment on the reference to the Mill.
3. All that I would wish to say is that it is quite true that the former Secretary of State wrote to the Conway Street Mill indicating that no government assistance would be forthcoming for refurbishing the Mill premises. The government also indicated that public financial assistance would not be made available to any small businesses wishing to establish themselves in the Mill.
4. The government's stance in relation to the Conway Street Mill is in pursuance of Mr Hurd's policy statement of 27 June 1985 in the House of Commons. For ease of reference I have attached a copy of that statement.
5. Conway Street Mill has not been the only community group affected by the government's policy. A number of other groups has been denied public financial assistance and this has given rise to a number of letters of complaint to Ministers. We have been given firm legal advice by the Solicitors Department that in response to any such complaints Ministers should be advised to say nothing more than to state that nothing further can be added to the reasons already advanced for the withdrawal or refusal of assistance. It is important not to get into any detailed response to these complaints or to agree to any meeting about them.
6. I hope these comments are of some value. The important thing is that we must not be drawn into correspondence about community groups that might be used in legal action against the Secretary of State.



TREVOR PEARSON

2 April 1986

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British Information Services
845 Third Avenue New York NY 10022

Cables Britinform New York Telephone (Code 212) 752-8400

Miss Davidson

1464W 1-186

*Copy to MR MAYNE
MR MUSGRAVE (IDB)
MR NESBITT*

Q 1873

Peter Faulkner Esq
Information Dept
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
London SW1

Your reference

Our reference

Date 14 March 1986

Alan Pat.

NORTHERN IRELAND: ALLEGATIONS BY AMERICAN IRISH CONGRESS

HMCN New York recently wrote to all members of the New York State Assembly and Senate apprising them of the Government's views on the MacBride Principles. It is evident from a number of replies that a lobbying group has made specific allegations in relation to the Antrim Crystal factory, the Whiterock Industrial Estate, and the Conway Street Mill.

2 The detail of the allegations are as outlined in the enclosed letter from the American Irish Congress, which a Senator (who has not appended his name to the MacBride Resolution) was good enough to send us. The Senator has written to both HMA and Sir Francis Kennedy asking for their comments, and I would be grateful if you could urgently furnish me with the facts in order that replies may be sent.

3 Perhaps you could also copy the response to Nigel Sheinwald in Washington.

Tom Loh.
Howard Beattie
Howard Beattie

cc: D Dewberry Esq, RID, FCO
D A Hill Esq, NIO(L)
R Wilson Esq, DED, Belfast
N Sheinwald Esq, Washington

*Spoke to R Allen +
asked her to photocopy to
b. Senior to coordinate
DSD/IDB/LEDEL info + inform
b. Harman
20/3/86*

AMERICAN IRISH CONGRESS

North Main Street
P.O. Box 55 Peterson Place
Lynbrook, New York 11563
607-593-6022

Dave Henshaw
Chairman

Member Of
Irish American Unity Conference

February 24th, 1986

Senator L. S. Riford, Jr.
944 Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the membership of the American Irish Congress, I want to express to you our regrets that you have not become a co-sponsor of the Northern Ireland Investment Bill #S7296, which will prohibit further increased investment of New York State's pension funds into those American subsidiaries doing business in 'Northern' Ireland which do not comply with the MacBride Principles.

As you know, this legislation is strongly supported by Dr. Sean MacBride of Dublin, Ireland, Nobel Peace Laureate and author of the MacBride Principles, as well as by Reverend Desmond Wilson of Ballymurphy, West Belfast, humanitarian and community social worker. Each of these esteemed gentlemen is of the opinion that the Northern Ireland Investment Bill will bring about immediate and positive change in the economic situation of the minority nationalist Catholics of 'Northern' Ireland. All Irish American organizations, of course, have already given their full support to this legislation.

In addition, nineteen of your Republican colleagues as well as all twenty-six Democratic Senators have shown their support by signing on as co-sponsors of this bill. Governor Mario Cuomo has also assured us of his support. Your refusal to co-sponsor this legislation and your silence to the Irish American community concerning your reasons for not co-sponsoring indicate to us that you are against us in our efforts to relieve the sufferings of Catholics in 'Northern' Ireland.

During a recent visit to New York by Father Des Wilson to lobby for the Northern Ireland Investment Bill, he spoke extensively of Britain's policy of 'de-industrialization' in the Catholic areas of 'Northern' Ireland. Father cited three examples of this policy in which he was personally involved, which I would like to outline herein for you :

1. The Antrim Crystal Factory - was a project begun by local people in an attempt to reverse their educational limits and economic status. The factory employed 140

JAMES L. SEWARD

North Main Street
P.O. Box 43
MILFORD, N. Y. 13807

February 24th, 1986

people from the West Belfast area, but was closed
by the British Army.

2. The Whiterock Industrial Estate - local people bought the land and created four factories thereon with minimal assistance from the British government. As they began to grow and improve their operation, British Army troops arrived announcing that the workers had two weeks to clear out. At gunpoint, the Catholic workers were forced out of the industrial complex which they themselves had built, and the complex was then promptly converted into an Army barracks. The soldiers housed within these barracks have continually harassed the local people for years by constant and continuing dawn house raids, traffic stops and street arrests. Many of these local people were shot on their streets by plastic bullets as well as by traditional live rounds by the soldiers housed within the former industrial complex. This Army barracks is still in existence today on the Whiterock Road in Ballymurphy, West Belfast.
3. The Conway Street Mill - local people were able to get a twenty-year rent-free lease to a derelict, slum-type building, formerly an old mill, for the purposes of expanding education and the creation of jobs. They formed a limited company with any profits made being reinvested into the company. They received good assessments from the various government agencies involved, which should have entitled them to government grants for renovation and general renewal operations. However, former Secretary of State Douglas Hurd recently wrote in a letter to the Conway Street Mill that no government loans would be forthcoming. In order to remain operating, therefore, the Mill depends on charitable contributions from the poor people of the area. The British government further advised business people not to relocate at the Mill, and further threatened those who were stubbornly considering such relocation that no government grants would be available to them if they persisted in settling in at this complex.

Father Wilson emphasized that although the Conway Street Mill is presently still in operation, if they continue to operate, British troops will eventually arrive and again take over the building for their own purposes, again forcing the local people into orchestrated unemployment. He also stressed that the above three examples are merely three of many numerous similar undertakings throughout the Catholic areas of 'Northern' Ireland which were destroyed by the British Army. These particular companies are mentioned only because of Father's knowledge of and personal involvement in them.

JAMES L. SEWARD

North Main Street
P.O. Box 43
MILFORD, N. Y. 13807

607-286-9283

February 24th, 1986

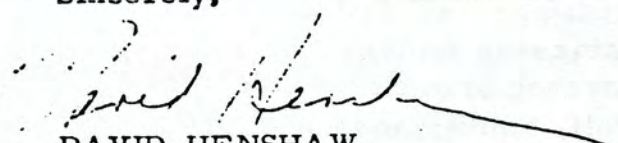
As you can see from the above, the British government has no intention of permitting its nationalist population to gain even the smallest measure of economic leverage. Britain's policy of 'de-industrialization' of minority initiative, moreover, is merely the latest round of historical, ongoing, and persistent denial of employment to Catholics in 'Northern' Ireland. New York City Comptroller Harrison Goldin has documented this very well in his latest report on seven American subsidiaries in which the City of New York has invested its pension monies.

While there is nothing that we here in America can do to change the situations mentioned above, there is much we can do with reference to how our pension funds and tax dollars are spent in 'Northern' Ireland. We can insist that our money not be spent for the subsidization of discrimination against Catholics in the British held six counties of Ireland.

Our request to you, therefore, is for reconsideration of your decision not to co-sponsor the Northern Ireland Investment Bill. If after reconsideration, you still feel that you cannot become a co-sponsor of this bill, would you be able to vote for it on the floor of the Senate?

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and we await your thoughts and comments.

Sincerely,


DAVID HENSHAW
Chairman
American Irish Congress

DH/kmh

CC: Senator John Flynn
Assemblyman John Dearie