PAMPHLET ON 'LONDONS IRISH COMMUNITY — SOME GENERAL POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION.

1. First + foremost the pamphlet would need to be popular not only in written style but also in its overall layout + design. It would need to include many visuals such as pictures, graphics, cartoons etc — as these can often highlight particular points more vividly than even the most colourful narrative.

2. The overiding aim would be to promote a clearer understanding of 'The Irish experience' in London. Obviously the present situation would need to be put in its historical context, and that would need to be done in such a way as to demistify many misunderstandings which are often perpetuated on the subject of Ireland ~ ango-Irish history. The pamphlet should thus be geared not only to a potential London Irish readership but also to interested parties amongst the 'host' community and amongst Londons other ethnic minorities.

3. Production of the pamphlet should result from a continuing dialogue between the researcher and B.W.I.C as an organisation.

4. Wherever appropriate the pamphlet should highlight the many parallels which exist between the experience of the Irish in London (on the one hand) and that of other 'colonised' minorities in the city. Not to make crude analogies; but at the same time, not to ignore similarities which too often have been seen as mere coincidence or 'historical accidents'

While this would need more careful discussion I would suggest a format which is broadly chronological but could also include space for important themes to be covered in more detail. As the format should be popular which I would argue means the text should be broken up into smaller units as opposed to a long 'turgid' text. This I would argue, leaves us able to include "stories" within the overall narrative (eg one or two short biographies pinpointing the contribution of particular Irish men + women to the needs of Irish people + the overall quality of life in London).

5. The pamphlet would need to steer clear of viewing this history as a series of dates + events that unfurl almost on their own accord. We should look at those major factors which impinged on the life of Irish people in London, but also the ways in which Irish people, against considerable odds, have attempted to shape their own lives, and the lives of their children.

6. Unlike past studies of immigrant populations in Britain — material conditions of life and attitudes must be viewed as inextricably linked. Too often anti-Irish sentiment has been viewed as unconnected to the subordinate position of Irish people both in their own country and in Britain. Racism isn't just a problem of attitudes but reflects wider unequal

distributions of power in society at large.

7. While looking at Irish people on a London wide basis it would be useful to include Material of special relevance to Irish people and local study groups in particular area an in depth study of Irish people on a borough by borough basis would be beyond the scope of ~~this~~ this pamphlet, none-the-less a brief summary of Major sources/resources unearthed might help facilitate Further 'local' Irish studies, which are crucial If the Full extent of 'The Irish contribution' is ever to be understood. I'm suggesting That the pamphlet could be (A) a significant piece of research in its own right, but also (B) a catalyst for future research.

Brian Parsons

ROUGH OUTLINE FOR THE PAMPHLET

1. INTRODUCTION

BRIEF OUTLINE OF B.W.I.C AIMS & OBJECTIVES ETC WHY THE PAMPHLET HAS BEEN PRODUCED, WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE BY ITS PUBLICATION. WHY THE POSITION OF THE IRISH IN LONDON HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY IGNORED OR GIVEN SCANT RECOGNITION

2. WHY THE IRISH CAME HERE?

BRIEF OUTLINE OF IRISH SETTLEMENTS PRIOR TO THE VICTORIAN ERA. EMIGRATION IS RARELY A QUESTION OF 'FREE CHOICE' OR IN THE IRISH CONTEXT A RESPONSE TO SO CALLED "NATURAL" DISASTERS. WHY HAVE IRISH PEOPLE BEEN THE COUNTRYS LEADING EXPORT. THE DIRE AFFECTS OF BRITISH COLONIAL RULE IN IRELAND NEED TO BE CLEARLY + CONCISELY OUTLINED. It would also be logical to include at this stage a potted history of how anti-IRISH RACISM in general + particular stereotypes of the IRISH (eg as stupid, LAZY, WILD, NATURALLY violent etc) were already FIRMLY established prior to large scale IRISH immigration to Britain, RACISM IS NOT CREATED AS A RESPONSE TO IMMIGRATION - THAT MYTH HAS TO BE EXPLODED.

3. THE VICTORIAN ERA.

Why the IRISH 'CHOSE' LONDON. WHERE THEY SETTLED AND WHY? HOW THE EXPANSION OF INDUSTRY + ITS INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS, CANALS, RAILWAYS) AFFECTED THE GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF IRISH COMMUNITIES. THE ECONOMI

PLIGHT OF THE IMMIGRANT — THE SEARCH FOR
CHEAP ACCOMODATION. THE CULTURAL FACTORS
WHICH BROUGHT TOGETHER 'IRISH COMMUNITIES' AND
THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY + COUNTY TIES IN
IRELAND. THE POSITION OF IRISH MEN + WOMEN
ON THE LABOUR MARKET & outside of it. THE
ROLE OF THE IRISH IN THE INDUSTRIAL + GEOGRAPHIC
EXPANSION OF LONDON. How particular IRISH
COMMUNITIES GREW UP AROUND PARTICULAR TRADES.
THE DIRE social conditions of the IRISH in
London at this time — poverty, degradation,
disease — health + safety — the attitude of the
authorities (police, judiciary) & 'host' community to
IRISH. Parallels with todays anti-Black Racism.
IRISH / Blacks cause of poverty / disease / crime etc.
Use of official reports on public health reports
which draws attention to dire state of existence
for many IRISH in London (eg in the piggeries and
potteries). also the racist assumptions about the
IRISH found in Many such reports. eg:—

> 'The IRISH emigration into Britain is
> an example of a less civilised population
> spreading themselves, as a kind of substratum
> beneath a More civilised Community; and
> without excelling in any branch of
> ~~culture~~ Industry, obtaining possession of
> all the lowest departments of Manual
> Labour' (Report on the Irish poor published in 183?

attitude of various sections of 'host' population to the
IRISH (eg press, employers, fellow workers etc). The
~~response~~ of IRISH people to the ways they were

viewed/treated. Similarly the effect of anti-Irish racism in fracturing working class solidarity.

> 6 The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker ~~hates the Irish worker~~ as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish nation he feels himself a member of the ruling nation & so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrat & capitalists of his own country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same ~~xxxx~~. as that of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave states of the USA' (MARX).

AFFECTS OF NATIONALIST UPSURGE IN IRELAND ON IRISH IN LONDON
The forms of social/political/cultural organisation formed by London's Irish community in this period. The role & influence of the church and similarly the affects of anti-Catholicism on the Irish (Gordon Riots and after). The particular problems of Irish women – dual affects of Racism + Sexism.
The 'dream' of a return to Ireland and/or a passage to the New World and its affects on the self organisation of the Irish in London.

4. SMALL SECTION COVERING 1st WORLD WAR/CIVIL WAR/ PARTITION/2ND WORLD.

This would include a brief examination of the changing FACE of EMPLOYMENT, Housing in the interwar years – THE WAYS IN WHICH IRISH NEUTRALITY AFFECTED ATTITUDES of 'host' community towards. IRISH IMMIGRANTS.

THE IRISH IN LONDON TODAY

Covering the period since the 2nd World War.
Post war economic expansion — increase in state/gov't
intervention in social/economic planning. Expansion
of service industries, welfare state etc — need for
'cheap' labour force. (Irish + 'New Commonwealth')
changes in Irish settlements in London. Slum
clearances. The position of the Irish on the housing
market — "No Blacks No Irish Need apply". The
myth that Contemporary Irish suffer little or
no discrimination has to be exploded. There is
more than ample data to back this up.
Civil Rights & after. The return from Condescension
to overtly Hostile Stereotypes. The P.T.A. —
Surveillence — Crisis of identity etc.

> ⸢ Must have been about NINETEEN,
> WHEN I LANDED ON THE SHORE,
> WITH EYES AS BIG AS HEADLIGHTS...
> LIKE THE THOUSANDS AND THOUSANDS
> WHO CAME BEFORE,
> I WAS GONNA BE SOMETHING,
> SMILED AT THE MAN SCRUTINISING MY FACE
> AS I stepped down off the gangway.
> ... Living under suspicion,
> Putting up with the hatred and Fear
> in their eyes.
> ... In their eyes, we're nothing but a bunch
> of Murderers.⸥
>   Paul Brady 'Nothing But The
>   Same old story'

Many aspects of life examined in the 'Victorian era'
section would need to be considered once more.
we should ask (& answer) to what extent 1st/2nd

generation Irish are able to better themselves (what sociologists call upward social mobility). Can the Irish be safely subsumed within a 'white UK' classification? Comparisons with position of 'host' community & other ethnic minorities would be useful here. Also for those Irish who sought/achieved 'upward social mobility' - how this affected their Irish identity. The crisis of identity - invisibility + "assimilation". THE VARIOUS RESPONSES to the pressures/stereotypes from the 'host' community. Individually but also in terms of social/political/cultural organisation.

> 6 In the beginning the anti-Irish feeling bothered me a lot and I used to keep quiet on buses and things because of the shit you'd get if they heard an Irish accent. Now I'm more able to confront people. 9
>
> (MAIREAD. student/mother.)
> (SPARE RIB MAY 1980.)

The Hunger strikes in 1981 and the subsequent resurgence in nationalist feeling - affect on self organisation + combativity of Irish in London. Increase in secular organisation - decline of church's influence. Youth culture + 2nd generation Irish. Attitude of GLC. The Future.

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