

Minutes of a meeting of the London Regional Council, IBRG, held at The Irish Centre, Camden on 11th September, 1983.

Branches present:-	Paddington	Two delegates
	Lambeth	Two "
	Haringay	Two "
	Brent	One "
	Islington	Two "

1. Members were informed of a current grant application to the GLC, estimated at £50,000 for the setting up of a central office for the region. The office is to be staffed by three full-time officers.

Strong objections were raised to this action because:-

- a) The role of the LRC does not merit full-time staff.
- b) A central office would destroy the autonomy of individual branches and transfer decision making to a body out of touch with the requirements of branches.
- c) A central office would only further increase problems of co-ordination and distribution of information already being experienced.

2. Members were also informed of a meeting due to take place between the delegate for Brent and a computer consultant from the GLC, to discuss the applications of a computer in a central office. It was decided that the volume of work would not merit a computer.

3. The minutes of the previous NEC meeting were read out, with particular reference to the IBRG delegation to visit Dublin. Concern was expressed over the selection of the delegation, particularly the reserves, who appeared to have been selected at random and with no consultation of their branches. It was also felt that branches should have been consulted about the papers to be presented by the delegation as individual members may have had valuable contributions to make.

4. There was a discussion as to whether Claire Short M.P. should go on the delegation.

5. On the above matters, the minute secretary was instructed to write to the NEC expressing the views of the council, to ask for postponement of action on the grant application and to inform the NEC that these matters would be brought up at the NEC meeting on 15th October. It was also decided that individual branches should write to Jim King expressing their concern.

6. The Haringay delegate informed the council of the work done by a member of their branch on the question of travel costs to and from Ireland. The delegate for Islington described their work on the subject including a proposed meeting with Bord Failte. It was felt that there was an urgent need not to let the information available go to waste and that co-ordinated activity was necessary. It was decided that Haringay would circulate information through the branches and try to recruit members from all branches to form a travel monitoring group. It was decided to invite the Haringay member to join the Islington delegation to Bord Failte.

7. The delegate for Lambeth described the activities currently being pursued in Lambeth which included:-

- Retail discrimination, here a pyramid structure of complaint has been adopted, beginning with individuals complaining personally to shop staff, continuing with written complaints and culminating in the picketing of the premises.
- Media monitoring, involving a telephone chain system for registering complaints.

-Circulating lists of Irish prisoners and their birthdays, and encouraging members to send cards.

-Social events, including the pleasantly surprising results of sponsorship from Aer Lingus, B+I, and Bord Failte.

8. The delegate for Haringay expressed concern over the lack of information being passed on by the NEC sub-committee on Irish prisoners. It was decided to put a motion to the NEC for an active sub-committee on the subject, particularly as Lambeth branch informed the council of a member whose knowledge would be invaluable.

9. The delegate for Islington read a letter from the South London Irish Solidarity Committee, advertising a demonstration on Sat. 1st October and asking for IBRG sponsorship. Individual members expressed various opinions and it was agreed that the LRC should not take a decision but the matter should be discussed by branches.

Meeting closed at 5.30 p.m.

To Judy Peddle, NEC secretary,

From:- The LRC meeting held 11th September and attended by delegates from the following branches:- Paddington, Lambeth, Haringay, Brent and Islington.

12th September

Dear Judy,

At the above meeting, members were informed of a grant application to the GLC for the necessary funding to set up an LRC central office consisting of three full-time workers.

Extreme concern was expressed by all members present as it was felt that the role of the LRC did not merit the setting up of a full-time office. Such a move would only help destroy the autonomy of individual branches resulting in a transference of authority from the branches to a central body. The opinion that the authority for any LRC must come from the delegates of individual branches was firmly re-stated. Any central body could only further increase the problems of co-ordination which are already being experienced.

A discussion also took place on the minutes of the last NEC meeting, with reference to the delegation which is to visit Dublin soon. Members were concerned as to the method of selection of the delegation, in particular the reserves, who appear to have been selected at random and with no consultation of their branches. Will they be attending as individuals, members of the IBRG, or as delegates from their individual branches? The status of the delegates deserves clarification and for this branches should have been consulted.

It was also felt that individual members of branches may have had valuable contributions to make to the papers being presented by the delegation, and that, by not consulting with branches, the scope and effectiveness of these papers will be limited.

We intend to raise both these matters at the forthcoming NEC meeting on 15th October. In the meantime we would ask that moves be made to postpone action on the grant application until it has been discussed at the NEC meeting.

Signed on behalf of the council,

Brendan Jennings

Brendan Jennings
Temporary Minute Secretary

