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**Transcript**

Second London Irish women Conference

The second London Irish Women's conference took place

on Saturday 21st September 1985 in Caxton House,

Islington. Over 300 Irish Women attended, both 1st and

2nd generation, and of all ages and backgrounds. The

conference was opened by Dorothy Fergus of the London

Irish Women's Centre who talked about the

achievements that Irish women in London have

made in different areas. Other speakers were

Dr Maire O'Shea, who was arrested under the PTA

and has been charged under conspiracy laws. She

came to Britain 30 years ago and spoke of her life

and work here. Margaret O'Neill, a 2nd generation

Irish woman, was arrested under the PTA in

1981, held for 7 days and released without charge. She

spoke of the terrible effects this arrest had on her life.

The conference then broke up into

workshops on the Irish born Womens' experiences of

emigration and the experiences of 2nd generation women

being brought up in Britain. The afternoon session

consisted of 27 workshops on many different

subjects eg the National Question and strip searches;

the PTA; pensioners, Irish lesbians, homelessness, anti-

Irish racism. The conference finished with a plenary

session in which report backs were given from the

PTO

workshops and resolutions from the workshops were

voted on.

As usual, the National Question motion provoked debate

and eventually, after a lot of confusion, the original

motion that the conference recognise that the

struggles for national liberation and Women's liberation

are independent was carried.

Entertainment was provided

at lunchtime by Charabanc, a women’s theatre group

from Belfast and in the evening by Maria Tolly, a

singer, and the "Hairy Marys" an Irish women's

dancing group. Members of the audience sang Irish

songs and there was a ceilidh afterwards. The social

had a great atmosphere and I really enjoyed

myself -

Hopefully, we can have a lot more like it!

Obviously, at the conference, a

lot of subjects were discussed to try to cover all the

different things affecting our lives. However, if we

do have a third conference maybe we should

organise it around a major theme, eg. the war in

the 6 counties and how that affects our lives here

and how the struggle for national liberation in Ireland

and Irish women’s struggle for Women’s liberation

are intricately bound up with each other.

Overall, the whole day

And evening were very enjoyable and a lot of work

was put into organising it all. The Irish Women’s

PTO

Media group videod the conference and the social

and hope to have the tapes edited soon as a

permanent record of the work Irish women in

London have done and the achievements we have

made. A report of the conference will also be

published soon.