

# 'Irish joke' books battle still on

A spokesman for W. H. Smith, the newsagency chain, has rejected a complaint made by Bernie Grant, the leader of Haringey Borough Council in north London, regarding the sale of anti-Irish books.

Bernie Grant wrote to W. H. Smith asking that it review its policy of stocking at branches throughout the country books which denigrate Irish people.

He said that members of the Irish community in Haringey are

"deeply offended" by such books as The Official Irish Joke Book and The Irish Kama Sutra being on sale in W. H. Smith shops. The managers of local W. H. Smith shops had been approached by members of the Irish community — but to no avail. Haringey Council had then been asked to take up the issue.

The council's ethnic minorities joint consultative committee considered the issue and condemned the production and distribution of racist literature, with specific reference to "so-called" joke books, posters and such which "belittle and ridicule Irish people and Irish culture".

"I have invited the management of W. H. Smith to meet me to discuss the matter and the council's policy on racial equality in general. I find it very disturbing that such material should be on sale in Haringey, which has a large Irish community", Cllr. Grant said.

But a spokesman for W. H. Smith has said that it does not believe in "acting as a censor".

## 'INSIDIOUS'

But Cllr. Grant intends to continue pressing the matter. He said: "Racism against the Irish is just as insidious and evil as against any other ethnic group. The fact that its usual form is so-called jokes means that a lot of people might not take it as seriously as they should. Haringey Council is totally opposed to racism in all its forms and we shall be doing what we can to ensure that the sale of this offensive material stops".

PICKET W.H.SMITH ON DECEMBER 14th 12 noon ONWARDS.

-- Following Bernie Grants' letter to W.H.Smiths, and the article in the Irish Post, Haringey I.B.R.G. are organizing a picket of W.H.Smiths at;

110 WOOD GREEN HIGH ROAD,  
LONDON N.22.

on December 14th at 12 noon onwards.

We would be grateful of your support in this action in any of the following ways.

1) By supporting and joining the picket line at the above address.

2) Disturbing trade at any branch of W.H.Smiths. Possible ploys would include gathering up a sizeable quantity of books including a couple of offensive Irish 'joke'

books, having them rung up at the cashiers and then refusing to purchase them, because of the RACIST content.

(The setting; a busy cash desk at W.H.Smiths on a Saturday afternoon, in the run up to Xmas)

CASHIER: 'That'll be one hundred and eleven pounds seventy-nine pence please'

CLIENT (TIMIDLY) 'Do you think that it would be possible to pay by cheque?'

CASHIER: 'OF COURSE you can sir/madame'

CLIENT: 'I'M afraid I don't seem to have my bankers card on me could you possibly accept my drivers license as proof of identity? Or if that's not possible could I have the books delivered and pay upon their arrival?'

CLIENT (By now there should be a sizeable queue of disgruntled people at the till) NO? OH WELL NEVER MIND, ON CLOSER SCRUTINY OF THESE ITEMS I FIND THAT I COULDN'T POSSIBLY BUY SUCH RACIST MATERIAL. I THOUGHT THESE IRISH 'JOKE' BOOKS WERE THE CELEBRATION OF THE REKNOWN IRISH WITS; SHAW? WILDE etc. not the product of some lame brained cheap laugh racist etc etc etc.'

3) Alternatively if at all possible, picket your own local Smiths on the 14th and organize to combat this insidious form of anti-Irish racism.

For  
Further Information  
or if you have any  
views or comments  
don't hesitate to contact  
the H.I.B.R.G office on  
348 3354 ext 3.  
OR WATCH FOR DETAILS  
IN THE IRISH POST Dec 14  
Also stocked by Smiths