

Members of Delegation: Jim King, Kathleen Wright, Judy Redde, Pat Delaney, Jim Curran + Maire O'Shea.



# IBRG

## IRISH IN BRITAIN REPRESENTATION GROUP

MATTERS RAISED AT MEETING BETWEEN MR NOEL DORR, AMBASSADOR, AND IBRG DELEGATION ON THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 1984

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### 1 WELFARE

Three main areas for concern for the Irish in Britain: i) housing; ii) employment; iii) Irish senior citizens.

#### IBRG Proposals:

Funding for research into areas of concern;

The setting up of Irish consulates in major British cities;

Harmonisation of different pension schemes so that Irish senior citizens don't lose out on currency fluctuations;

Ironing out of difficulties caused by some solicitors in Ireland;

Cheap fares on Irish carriers for senior citizens travelling between these islands (IBRG to approach B + I and, particularly, Aer Lingus on this);

Irish tourist advertising aimed more at the Irish community here (IBRG to approach Bord Fáilte);

Cheap one-year Irish passports to be extended to all age groups, and the price of passports not to rise for the foreseeable future.

### 2 YOUTH AND EDUCATION

The Ambassador agreed to check if the Irish in Britain are entitled to EEC funds for books, resources, setting up of schools and centres.

The IBRG would continue leverage on local authorities etc to provide same.

### 3 RACISM

The Embassy was requested to watch for anti-Irish discrimination.

The Ambassador felt that pressure from the Irish community here against the sale of anti-Irish literature, anti-Irish jokes etc was more effective than pressure from the Embassy, which might do more harm than good on account of the publicity generated.

However, increased liaison between the IBRG and the Embassy Press Officers was agreed; the IBRG should report any offensive item to the latter.

### 4 'NORTHERN IRELAND' AND RELATED ISSUES

PTA: The IBRG requested that the Embassy (which already works closely behind the scenes) should liaise with the police at British ports so that the Embassy knew whenever an Irish citizen was arrested, could keep itself informed of developments and ensure also that the arrested person had access to a solicitor.

The Ambassador was requested to ask the Dublin government to put pressure on the British government to grant repatriation to Irish prisoners. He was also requested to watch closely any new British legislation in the Six Counties.

The IBRG delegation also made the point that all Irish people should monitor the persistent attempts to end Irish neutrality, and speak out on this.

It was hoped that the dialogue between the IBRG and the Ambassador, which had now been opened, would be maintained and would begin to bear fruit shortly.

5. Appealsi. Bunscoil Ghaelach, Belfast.

This ~~is~~ is a school teaching through the medium of Irish. It receives no government aid, and costs £1,600 per week to run. (Lambeth Branch has a fact sheet). Can your branch help?

ii. Remand Prisoners in Crumlin Prison, Belfast.

There is a strong possibility that the innocent men on remand for months on the uncorroborated evidence of supergrass will go on hunger strike soon. The need for support is URGENT. Please contact Gerry Gallagher for the facts to help you to get local support from churches, trade unions, etc.

iii. The Birmingham Six.

Various bodies interested in working for a fresh trial will be holding a meeting at Birmingham City Hall on Sunday March 11th at 1.00 p.m. They make a strong appeal for anyone who was visited by the police or harrassed in any way either just before or in the months after the Birmingham bombing to go to the meeting, or to contact Box 50, 136, Kingsland High Street, London E8, or any member of our Prisoners Support Committee. They are also interested in hearing from anyone who suffered harassment before the P.T.A. in 1974.

iv. Can your branch form a sub-committee to help the work of the Prisoners Sub-Committee?

v. The N.E.C. is still looking for fund raising ideas.

6. The European Elections.

The N.E.C. strongly recommends all branches to ascertain the views of <sup>candidates</sup> in the European Elections. Perhaps branches could arrange meetings with local candidates or perhaps they prefer to have written replies to questions. In any case the N.E.C. asks that branches ask questions which are based on I.B.R.G. policy as contained in our policy statement.

7. A.G.M. 24/25 March, Manchester,

The national secretary will soon be writing to branches with detailed arrangements. Some branches are wondering why the A.G.M. is to last two days. The reason is that the first day will be taken up in deciding on a new constitution, as the one under which we have been active so far is proving weak in some area and ambiguous in others. Several branches have submitted draft constitutions, and these need to be considered in detail and in an unhurried atmosphere so that I.B.R.G. emerges stronger and more effective in pursuing its aims.

Questions have been asked about the venue also. Some London branches appear to have been misinformed or to have misunderstood. The first A.G.M. was in Birmingham and the second in Nottingham, and the N.I. Conference was in London. We have branches as far north as Glasgow, Newcastle and Middlesborough, but this the first national assembly to be held in the north. This was the point put at the N.E.C. in Cardiff where the relative claims of London and Manchester were considered, and Manchester was the choice of the majority of those present. Accommodation will be offered to those needing it.