

# BARRING OF AFRICANS: O'CONNOR 'DISTRESSED'

BY FERGAL KEANE

DON O'CONNOR of Limerick rock group Reform, this week expressed his distress at an incident which occurred last week at Limerick's Savoy concerning four black students from Nigeria.



Don O'Connor, musician's leader

Mr. Don O'Connor, president of the local branch of the Musicians' Federation, expressed distress at the barring of Africans.

# Nigeria envoy investigates Savoy affair

BY BILLY KELLY and FERGAL KEANE

OFFICIALS FROM the Nigerian Embassy visited Limerick at the weekend to carry out an investigation into the barring of black students from the Savoy bar in Bedford Row.

Councillor M. G. Bello and the student affairs officer at the embassy, Ms Marie O'Callaghan, travelled by car from Dublin and, on arriving at Jury's Hotel, Mr. Bello met the Mayor of Limerick, Cllr. Bobby Byrne. Also at the hotel were some of the students who were refused admission to the Savoy—as well as student representatives and members of the press.

### Owner

During the weekend stay Mr. Bello met with the owner of the Savoy, Mr. Tony O'Mara, and the manager, Mr. John McGeehan.

Following the meeting at the Savoy, Mr. Gabi Okey Oparah, president of the local branch of the Nigerian Students' Union, who was present, said the whole issue was discussed between the parties, and the management of the Savoy put their case.

He said the students asked for a public statement from the Savoy management and this was agreed to as a temporary measure. "This will not be prejudicial to whatever the Irish Government and the Nigerian Embassy decide to do," he explained.

Mr. Bello revealed that his embassy took this matter so seriously that they made an official complaint to the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Oparah said the Savoy gave an assurance that Nigerian students are free to go to the bar at any time. However, the student representative explained that what they were after was a measure which would repair the damaged image suffered by the

students from Nigeria, and other blacks in the city.

Mr. Bello told us that his mission was to hear both sides of the case. But, as an interim measure, he was just asking for access for the students to go anywhere they wished—including the Savoy. He also wanted the community to accept them.

"We are not asking too much," he commented. The Savoy management, he went on, were now accepting responsibility, and he hoped what happened would never happen again. He also hoped that the management of the Savoy would take appropriate action internally.

Mr. Bello is to report personally to the Nigerian Ambassador, Mr. Martin Adefobe, following his visit to Limerick.

He said the students had the right to move freely anywhere they wished and they should also be accepted by the community. "Otherwise there is no point in their being here," he stated.

"We have a right to see that our students are accepted in a cordial atmosphere while pursuing their legitimate studies," he added.

### Impression

The impression given to those present at the meeting with the Savoy management was that the promised statement would take the form of an apology for what happened.

Councillor Bello, along with the student representatives, Mr. Joseph Echetu and Mr. Gabi Oparah, said they were anxious to see the statement to see if it restored their good name.



Mr. Bello in Limerick. "Students have the right to move freely anywhere they wish." Picture: OWEN SOUTH.

**HOMELITE CHAINSAWS**  
**SPECIAL OFFER!**  
 Free Chain with every new Homelite purchased during November.  
 Guaranteed spare and after-sales service.  
 For demonstration phone MAIN DEALER  
**MICK LEAHY**  
 LIMERICK 43445 - KILMALLOCK 244.

**CORK DISCOUNT TRAVEL**  
 Cork Travel announce their arrival in the Limerick area with their complete range of Discount Air Fares: Airline Agents, Agents for Laker Airways, up to 40 per cent. Discount, New York from £85 one way, Bangkok only £370 round trip, Amsterdam £118 round trip, other Super Discounts. Also Coach to London £33 round trip. Telephone for quotation. We guarantee to be the cheapest.  
 Telephone LIMERICK 61967. (f24/5506-7)

**THE GREAT MICROWAVE OVEN SHOW HITS TOWN!**  
 Demonstrations! Discussions! Gifts!

- \* Microwave cooking demonstrated — chicken and cakes cooked in minutes!
- \* So easy to learn — it's push-button cooking — we'll show you how!
- \* And everything tastes so good — don't take our word — come and try it yourself!
- \* Easy cleaning, too — one wipe and it's clean!
- \* Cooking, reheating, defrosting — quickly and economically
- \* Plus super safety — probably the safest appliance in your kitchen — come and find out why.

SEE OUR OVENS IN ACTION! TALK TO OUR EXPERTS! TRY MICROWAVE OVEN-COOKED FOOD, FREE GLASS OF WINE!

TOSHIBA MICROWAVE OVEN ROAD SHOW AT...  
**ROYAL GEORGE HOTEL**  
 O'Connell Street, Limerick

**For £14,800, a new house**  
 BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

FOR 150 years the population of Ireland had been abandoning the rural areas and rushing to huge industrial cities in England and America. In more recent times the rush has been to cities and larger towns in Ireland.

After spending a number of years working among emigrants in Britain, Fr. Harry Bohan felt very strongly that every effort should be made to help people stay at home in their own rural environment. One of his priorities was to encourage emigrants to return. He believed that there was an alternative to the city settlement.

This "alternative" became a reality when he set up the Rural Housing Organisation. It has been tried and proven. Already over 600 families are living this other way because RHO had constructed this number of houses in 30 villages. Two hundred are under construction, and a further 250 are about to commence or planned in Counties, Clare, Limerick, Kerry, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway, Longford and Tipperary.

Current and planned RHO village developments include either dormer or two-storey dwellings. The floor area is approximately 1,050 sq. ft. and includes three bedrooms, sitting room, dining room, kitchen and bathroom. A solid fuel central heating system is installed. All homes are sold freehold. RHO's current net price, i.e., houses scheduled for completion by mid-1980 is £14,800 (inclusive of £1,000 State grant to first time buyers).

The story of RHO is essentially a story about people and particular emphasis is placed on people who have had to live in cities, either at home or abroad. Already 30 per cent of the families who occupy the houses have returned from abroad. During two recent trips to London over 40 families have made contact with Fr. Bohan and are now arranging to return. This

**4 BLACK STUDENTS BARRED AT SAVOY**  
 Limerick Leader exclusive  
 BY FERGAL KEANE

November 3rd last: the Limerick Leader breaks the story.

**STORM BREAKS**  
 BY BILLY KELLY

A SPECIAL meeting was arranged between representatives of the Savoy management and two jour-

the management... picture: OWEN SOUTH

Every effort by both journalists to discuss the issues reasonably brought hope... and after the manager said he had no more to say... surmises left.

Also in the Limerick Leader of November 3rd: a Savoy management reaction.

Apologise, Limerick Savoy urged  
 BY FERGAL KEANE

MR. GABI OKEY Oparah, president of the local branch of the Nigerian Students' Union, this week called on Limerick's Savoy management to apologise to black students who were refused admission to the premises.

"We are entitled to a public apology to be as effective as any other which has been requested," he said. "It is not the Savoy's business to decide if these people were suited to go anywhere. They have to accept that they are a part of the community."

The Savoy management, he said, should be held responsible for the incident. "The Savoy management have asked the Nigerian Embassy to investigate the affair."

"This week's management would not apologise to the students," he said. "The Savoy management would not apologise to the students."

The scene of the Savoy on October 20th, 1979. "You don't show blacks in here," the doorman is quoted as saying. "You don't show blacks in here," he answers. "I have my orders from the management."

Picture: OWEN SOUTH

On the "line" Oparah said he would not get half a penny more to investigate the situation. The Savoy's management are now working on inquiry into the Savoy affair.

From last week's Limerick Leader: Mr. Gabi Okey Oparah, Nigerian Students' Union leader, calls on the Savoy to apologise.

Apologise, Limerick Savoy urged

MR. GABI OKEY Oparah, president of the local branch of the Nigerian Students' Union, this week called on Limerick's Savoy management to apologise to black students who were refused admission to the premises.

"We are entitled to a public apology to be as effective as any other which has been requested," he said. "It is not the Savoy's business to decide if these people were suited to go anywhere. They have to accept that they are a part of the community."

The Savoy management, he said, should be held responsible for the incident. "The Savoy management have asked the Nigerian Embassy to investigate the affair."

"This week's management would not apologise to the students," he said. "The Savoy management would not apologise to the students."

The scene of the Savoy on October 20th, 1979. "You don't show blacks in here," the doorman is quoted as saying. "You don't show blacks in here," he answers. "I have my orders from the management."

Picture: OWEN SOUTH

On the "line" Oparah said he would not get half a penny more to investigate the situation. The Savoy's management are now working on inquiry into the Savoy affair.

From last week's Limerick Leader: Mr. Gabi Okey Oparah, Nigerian Students' Union leader, calls on the Savoy to apologise.