

Cover page

(NOTED)
8.3.76

No. 477

File No.

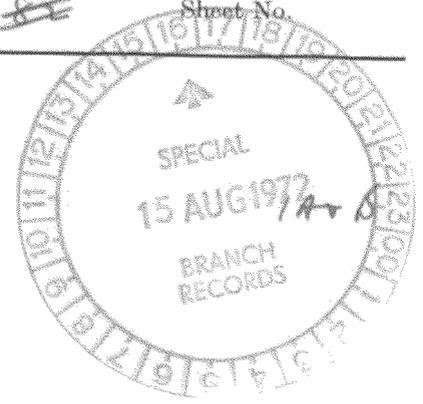
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335

72

208
~~SE~~

Minute Sheet No.



SB. report & appendix
to be seen
by the Opo. to see psc.

2

TN0036

Dr.

TN0036

3

4

[Redacted]

Dr.

[Redacted]

5

✓ (P2)
3) Room 892 to see
PA

to see

SB
28.7.72

Jamies
Chy. Lys.

2.

ACC

You may wish to read the attached report on the general meeting of Sinn Fein (London), the group which supports the Provisional IRA. You will see that there are distinct signs of dissension among the leadership, which fortunately for us makes the organisation to a degree less effective than it might otherwise be.

SB
31.7.72

DAC
[Signature]

[Handwritten initials]

3
See, thank you

[Handwritten initials]
AC

32

(NOTED) METROPOLITAN POLICE
8.3.76

7

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

INDEXED
Date 5.2.73 Initials [redacted]

26 day of July 1972.

8

SUBJECT.....

Sinn Fein

Provisionals

(London)

Reference to Papers

335/72/82

1. The following information has been received from a reliable source:-

2. "A general meeting of Sinn Fein Provisionals (London) was held at the Irish Centre, Murray Street, Camden Town, NW1, on Sunday 23 July 1972. The meeting, which lasted from 3.30 pm to 5 pm, was attended by some 100 members. It had been intended originally that [redacted] Privacy would preside at a National Conference to formulate policy for the Republican Movement in this country. However, Dublin had decided that such a conference would be inopportune and had instructed that it should be postponed indefinitely. Despite this, Brendan MAGILL, National Organiser, felt that some form of meeting was necessary so that rank and file members could express their views (of late they have been highly critical of the Comhairle Ceanntair). Consequently, although the meeting was not a National Conference, members are understood to have come from Luton, Huddersfield, Manchester and Birmingham.

3. The meeting was chaired by [redacted] Privacy Chairman of the London Comhairle Ceanntair, who firstly introduced the speakers - Brendan MAGILL, [redacted] Privacy (Oxford) and [redacted] Privacy [redacted] Privacy said that due to the 'event in Belfast' (a reference to the bomb outrage of Friday 21.7.72) Sinn Fein had come under attack from all sides. He exhorted members to stand firm.

4. MAGILL stated that Sinn Fein now had between 500 and 600 members in England. There were cumainn in Bletchley, Oxford, Leeds, Huddersfield, Luton, five cumainn in London and three cumainn in Birmingham. London and Birmingham had their own District Committees (Comhairle Ceanntair). According to MAGILL, Sinn Fein Headquarters in Dublin felt that although the Comhairle Ceanntair system worked well in Ireland the 'Dail Ceanntair' should be used here. He did not enlarge on this.

5. After this MAGILL urged that members should settle their petty differences which were creating discord within the Movement. Nevertheless he invited those with complaints to air them at the meeting. He ended by appealing for unity and solidarity.

S 6323

6. [Privacy] began by expressing sorrow for the relatives of those killed in Belfast during the Friday bomb attacks and called for prayers for the deceased. As to the perpetrators, he thought that perhaps some young men acting independently had exceeded their orders or that the bombs had gone off too soon. In any event fifty years of Stormont mis-rule was the real cause and the Republican Movement made no apology for the incident as innocent people were killed in every war. The Catholics in Northern Ireland had suffered too long. By this time [Privacy] comments were being received with great applause. He reminded those present of 'Bloody Sunday', attacked the Wideman Report and said Whitelaw should not be trusted. [Privacy] too came in for criticism. The British had no interest in a political settlement and the war in Ulster would have to be waged until the Provisional IRA emerged victorious.

7. [Privacy] then attacked Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, the political parties in the Irish Republic. Their leadership was composed of 'a middle-class elite'. The Church (RC) was in need of reform and the Dublin Government was corrupt, but he added that these could be taken care of after the British Government, the real enemy, had been defeated. Many Provisional Republicans whom he had met were rather apologetic because they did not use the political jargon of the left. He exhorted the meeting to beware of the Marxists and their jargon. The Official IRA had alienated themselves from the people of Ireland who mistrusted the political jargon of the Official IRA. He pointed out that the Provisionals were being attacked more viciously and more frequently in Official IRA publications, than they were by the British Press.

8. The next speaker [Privacy] said that the bomb attacks in Belfast had not been carried out by frustrated young men acting independently of the Provisional leadership, neither did the bombs go off prematurely. The British Army had been given one hour notice. After half an hour when it had become apparent that the Army was taking no action to warn the public the Provisional IRA had 'phoned the Press, who had contacted the Army who admitted that they had received bomb warnings, but felt they were a hoax. The Army then began to move persons out of the danger areas - but it had been too late, so that eleven innocent persons had been needlessly killed. Since then of course the Army had taken full advantage of the public outcry to attack the "no-go" areas.

9. [Privacy] next stated that certain persons in Sinn Fein in London thought he was a Communist. He assured the meeting that he was not a Communist, nor was he a Marxist or a Leninist. He was a Republican. He then announced that the South London Cumann had organised a picket of the Irish Embassy to commence at 10 am on Monday 24 July 1972. The picket would be held during 'working hours' 10am - 6 pm until the Dublin Government agreed to give prisoners who had been convicted of 'political offences' political status, with special privileges. (Tele-

phone Message No. O.2983/72 refers).

10. Privacy then invited questions from the floor as a result of which Privacy and Derek HIGHSTEAD attacked the Comhairle Ceanntair in general and Privacy in particular for failing to give leadership to the Movement in London. Privacy also attacked the Comhairle Ceanntair and Privacy criticised the fact there had been no meeting of the Comhairle Ceanntair for the past three weeks.

11. Privacy became very annoyed at the hostility being displayed towards him and the Comhairle Ceanntair. He offered to resign his chairmanship, but his offer was refused by MAGILL, who pointed out that the members levelling most of the criticism, did not appreciate Privacy work behind the scenes. The true enemy was the British Government. Internal squabbles in the Movement, and particularly unconstructive criticism was harmful.

12. Privacy urged Cumainn to organise their own demonstrations, without reference to the Comhairle Ceanntair. By this time it was 5 pm and Privacy declared the meeting closed as the hall was required for Mass.

13. The general consensus of members after the meeting was that nothing had been resolved, and that the meeting in itself had been ample proof, that the present leadership was inadequate. The next elections for the Comhairle Ceanntair should take place in three months time and if the present mood prevails many of the present officers of the Comhairle Ceanntair, particularly Privacy will not be re-elected. However, there does not appear to be anyone of ability in London capable of improving matters.

14. The following persons were amongst those present:-

Privacy

Brendan MAGILL ✓

Privacy

Derek HIGHSTEAD ✓

Privacy

Privacy

15. Special Branch references to persons and organisations mentioned in this report are given in the attached Appendix.

9

HN294

Detective Inspector

Submitted:

10

HN294

Chief Inspector

J. J. ...
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

A P P E N D I X

Appendix to Special Branch report of 26 July 1972 concerning a general meeting of Sinn Fein Provisionals (London) held on 23.7.72.

Privacy

Derek HIGHSTEAD ✓

RF. 335/60/645

Privacy

Brendan MAGILL ✓

RF. 335/55/114

Privacy

Privacy