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SPECIAL BRANCH

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31 day of July 1972

Special Report

SUBJECT Sinn Fein (Provisionals) London

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

Reference to Papers 335/72/82

1. A meeting of the "Comhairle Ceanntair" (District Committee) of the Sinn Fein (Provisionals) London took place on Friday, 28 July 1972 between 8.30 pm and 10.45 pm at 99 Belgrave Road, SW1. Fifteen persons were present.

2. At the commencement of the meeting Privacy announced his resignation as chairman of the "Comhairle Ceanntair". This came as no surprise to the meeting as rumours of Privacy's intention to resign had been rife for the past week in Sinn Fein circles. He said that his reason for resigning was his belief that he had lost the confidence and support of many influential members of the movement in London. He would continue to do his utmost to further the aims of Sinn Fein and would maintain his membership of the South London cumann. Members of the C.C. attempted to persuade him to change his mind and to continue as chairman until the Annual General Meeting, to be held in three months time. However, Privacy was adamant and handed over the chairmanship of the meeting to the vice-chairman, Privacy. He then withdrew after wishing the C.C. good fortune in its future activities.

3. Privacy announced that Privacy had resigned as Press Officer. Furthermore, as the Secretary Privacy had returned to Ireland, this position was vacant.

4. Sean LYNCH proposed that Privacy should be chairman, and this was unanimously agreed. Privacy was elected vice-chairman and Privacy a delegate from the "Roger Casement" cumann, Kilburn, was elected Secretary. Privacy was nominated by Privacy as a delegate from the South London cumann, for the position of "Press Officer". He too was elected unanimously.

5. Privacy then explained that Brendan MAGILL had agreed to act as both the London and National Organiser until the AGM. MAGILL had refused nomination for the chairmanship. (Earlier in the week rumours had circulated that Derek HIGHSTEAD had agreed that his name should go forward as a candidate for chairman of the C.C. but as the Kilburn delegates did not

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nominate him, it would seem these rumours had been incorrect, or that he had changed his mind. It is now known that a meeting of [REDACTED] Privacy HIGHSTEAD and [REDACTED] Privacy had been held in South London during the week, and that the meeting had lasted until 4 am. No doubt that meeting took decisions regarding the vacant positions on the C.C.).

6. [REDACTED] Privacy then gave a "pep-talk". He appealed for unity in the movement. There had been too much "back-biting" in the past. There had been unwarranted criticism of the "leadership" which had resulted in the resignation of [REDACTED] Privacy. Many members of the movement were "dead wood"; inactive members would not be tolerated. In the past the C.C. had, in his opinion, wasted much time, answering stupid complaints made against itself. Nevertheless constructive criticism was often necessary, and he would always listen to it. He then said that during the past few months a malicious rumour had been circulated that a certain person "had been taking out information on what had been discussed at Comhairle Ceantair meetings" and that he, [REDACTED] Privacy, was that person. If any person had evidence that a member of Sinn Fein was not acting in the best interests of the movement, and made such a complaint to a member of the C.C. they should be advised to put the complaint in writing, and to catalogue the evidence (not rumours) substantiating that complaint. If the "evidence" listed "was not 100%" then, he as Chairman, would mark the complaint "as read" and then consign it to the waste-paper basket.

7. The Treasurer, [REDACTED] Privacy then gave a financial report. Total cash in hand was £488, which had been subscribed as follows:-

West London	£240
South London	90
North London	40
Kilburn	118

The delegate from West London said he had been instructed by his cumann to propose that this money should be divided as follows:- 50% to the IRA, 25% to "An Cumann Cabhrach", 25% to Sinn Fein. This was agreed to and [REDACTED] Privacy added that some disquiet had been expressed by members as receipts had not been forthcoming from Dublin recently. The matter was being dealt with and receipts would arrive in London during the next two weeks. Rumours about the misappropriation of funds could destroy the movement, and should be "scotched" at branch level.

8. [REDACTED] Privacy a delegate from Kilburn proposed "that the C.C. should get in touch with Sinn Fein HQ in Dublin to get the people of Dublin onto the streets to demonstrate in solidarity with the people fighting in the North". This too was carried.

9. **Privacy** proposed also that "the Comhairle Ceanntair should organise a march in London to demonstrate solidarity with the people fighting in the North". This proposal was discussed at some length and the following points were agreed upon. The demonstration would take place on Sunday, 20 August 1972. The assembly point would be Speakers' Corner, Hyde Park and persons should assemble at 2.30 pm for a march to Downing Street which would leave Hyde Park at 7.30 pm. The speakers would be Father McHUGH, Sean CARSON, Terry DUNNE and Sean McDERMOTT. Brendan MAGILL would contact cumainn outside London and ask for support. After further discussion it was agreed the AIL should be invited to support the march. **Privacy** then made a bitter attack on the "Officials". He said that at a recent meeting of Clann na h'Eireann in London a paper had been read out which had purported to be the speech which **Privacy** should have made to the assembly if he had not been prevented from attending by the British Government. That paper had been a "wicked vicious attack" on the Provisionals, with particular reference to "Bloody Friday". As a result Clann na h'Eireann would not be permitted to carry banners, collect money or distribute leaflets on the demonstration. The Secretary **Privacy** was instructed to write to **Privacy**, Secretary of the AIL inviting the support of the AIL and its constituent organisations, with the exception of Clann na h'Eireann. The Press Officer, **Privacy**, was instructed to arrange for leaflets and posters publicising the demonstration to be printed and distributed.

10. Whilst **Privac** was referring to the meeting of Clann na h'Eireann which had taken place on Sunday, 23 July 1972 in London, which **Privacy** should have attended, he praised the efforts made by Gery LAWLESS and Bob PURDIE to defend the Provisionals. Many people did not like LAWLESS, but he **Privacy** found that LAWLESS, despite his extreme left-wing views, was very sympathetic to the Provisionals, and should be looked upon as an ally.

11. **Privacy**, a delegate from South London, proposed that any British (non-Irish) members of Sinn Fein, and any non-Irish supporters Sinn Fein might have, should stage a picket (poster parade) of an Army Recruiting Centre, or some such establishment. Posters requesting the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland should be displayed. Suggested slogans were:- "Bring our boys home", "124 of our boys dead and for what!", "Will your son be No. 125?".

12. It was agreed that such a picket should take place, and that after consultation with Brendan MAGILL, a date and venue would be arranged. **Privacy** would notify cumainn having any non-Irish members (west and North London) of when and where they should assemble. **Privac** said he would consult with Gery LAWLESS about the picket as LAWLESS might well supply some non-Irish persons to take part. **Privacy** was instructed to draw-up a suitable leaflet for distribution by the picket. It was expected that



if the picket did take place it would probably do so on Thursday, 3rd or Friday, 4th August 1972, commencing at 6.30 pm.

13. **Privacy** stated that the West London Cumann had made tentative arrangements concerning a "sit-in" at the Irish Embassy, to protest at the Irish (Dublin) Government's refusal to treat prisoners convicted of "political offences" as "political prisoners". However, he had read in Friday's (28 July) issue of the "Irish Press" a report which stated that the Dublin Government had capitulated, and had now agreed that they would recognise that there was a special category of prisoner who would be classified as "political prisoners". This move by the Dublin Government obviated the need for the "sit-in".

14. The following persons are known to have attended the meeting:-

- Privacy**
- Sean LYNCH
- Privacy**
- Privacy**

15. Special Branch references are given in the attached appendix.

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Detective Inspector

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Submitted

Chief Inspector

J. J. [Signature]
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT



APPENDIX

to Special Branch report dated 31 July 1972
regarding a meeting of the Comhairle Ceanntair
London Sinn Fein (Provisionals) held on 28.7.72

Privacy

Derek HIGHSTEAD ✓ RF 335/60/645

Privacy

Gery LAWLESS RF 335/57/430

Sean LYNCH ✓ RF 405/71/808

Privacy

Bob FURDIE RF 405/67/82

A I L 400/72/100

Clann na h'Eireann 335/72/82

An Cumann Cabhrach 400/62/11