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Special Branch.

5th August, 1969.

IRISH CIVIL RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN LONDON

1. There are in London two active organisations which are primarily concerned with the Irish civil rights issues - the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (N.I.C.R.A.) and the Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign in association with the People's Democracy (London branch).

NORTHERN IRELAND CIVIL RIGHTS ASSOCIATION

2. This was formed on 10.4.69 under the title, Ulster Civil Rights Supporters Association, and since May, 1969, it has assumed the name by which it is now known. Its declared object is, "campaigning for financial and moral support for the Northern Ireland civil rights movement".

3. The association has no headquarters, and is run from 27 Swanage Road, S.W.18, the home of the Secretary, Thomas McELLISTRIM, an active Republican of long-standing.

4. Meetings are held irregularly at the Irish Club, Eaton Square, S.W.1. The following comprise the Executive Committee:

Chairman	-	Sean McDERMOTT
Secretary	-	Thomas McELLISTRIM
Treasurer	-	Conor P. FINNEGAN
Co-treasurer	-	Mrs. Moira MARTIN
Organiser	-	Brendan MAGILL
Members	-	Patrick SULLIVAN Arthur McALINDEN

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5. Of the seven members of this Committee, only Mrs. MARTIN is not known to be or to have been a member of Clann na h'Eireann, the Irish Republican organisation in this country.
6. Current membership is not known precisely, but is estimated to be between 100 and 150, of whom no more than 50 are active. The organisers rely on public support at their meetings in order to achieve publicity.
7. Like the parent body in Northern Ireland, N.I.C.R.A. is relatively moderate in character, and confines its activities to public meetings, marches and occasional picketing.
8. Its best-supported public event was the meeting in Trafalgar Square on 22nd June, which was attended by an audience of 500. The main speaker was Bernadette DEVLIN; other speakers were the Irish M.Ps. John HUME and Ivan COOPER.
9. Another example of non-violent activity occurred on 17th July, when six members entered the Ulster Office, Berkeley Street, W.1 carrying posters protesting against conditions in Northern Ireland. One man chained himself to the furniture.
10. N.I.C.R.A. does not publish any literature, apart from leaflets advertising its meetings.
11. There is no regular subscription by members, and the organisers rely on collections at meetings. The Trafalgar Square meeting realised £160.

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PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACY

12. The London branch of the People's Democracy was formed on 19th April, 1969, at a public meeting held in Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1. A committee of six, formed out of an alliance between certain trotskyists and communists, but dominated by the former, was elected by the meeting. The structure of the committee was later changed to comprise twelve members, six of whom were to resign each month in favour of six others.

13. The London Branch reflects the views of the parent body in Northern Ireland; it advocates the abolition of discrimination between the two principal religions in the allocation of housing, jobs, etc. demands an end to gerrymandering, the repeal of the Special Powers Act, and the disbanding of the 'B' Specials.

14. Since April, a number of meetings have been held at the 'Grafton Arms' P.H. Prince of Wales Road, N.W.5. where attendance has varied between 20 and 30 persons.

15. Its publication, the 'Northern Informer', is issued monthly, latterly from Belfast. The editor is John GRAY.

IRISH CIVIL RIGHTS SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

16. This organisation soon after its inception in May, 1969, virtually absorbed the London P.D. and since then has organised regular meetings, as well as marches and poster parades. It has also picketed the Ulster Office on a number of occasions.

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17. Its active leaders are Gery LAWLESS, Tony O'DOWD (Treasurer), Frank CAMPBELL, Pat DENNY, and Janet WILCOCK (Secretary). Total membership is estimated to be between 200 and 250.

18. It is more enterprising and active than N.I.C.R.A. and has attracted support from such extreme groups as the Syndicalist Workers Federation, the International Marxist Group, International Socialists, Irish communists and the Britain-Vietnam Solidarity Front.

19. Their greatest asset is the willingness of Bernadette DEVLIN to speak at their meetings. She has spoken at a number of I.C.R.S.C. meetings in London where audiences have numbered between 200-600.

20. There are branches of I.C.R.S.C. in Hammersmith, Dagenham, and Willesden, and outside London at Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Coventry and Newcastle. Provincial support varies a good deal, but in Birmingham and Glasgow the organisation attracts fairly large audiences at its poster parades and marches. A conference of delegates from all branches is to take place on 13th or 14th September, 1969, to draw up a proper constitution.

21. Substantial trotskyist influence is evident in the leadership, and recent indications are that the anarchists are making a determined attempt to infiltrate the organisation. So far, LAWLESS and his fellow trotskyists have rebuffed all overtures from the anarchists.

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22. I.C.R.S.C. has no regular publication, but members regard the 'Northern Informer', published monthly by People's Democracy as an adequate substitute.

23. The organisation is financed by a weekly subscription of 1/- per member and by collections taken at meetings. At present there is believed to be a small credit balance.

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