

# Cover Sheet

1

Noted 4/3/73

METROPOLITAN POLICE

15A

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

INDEXED 2

Date 12.12.72 Initials [redacted]

16th day of October 1972

SUBJECT

Anti-Internment  
League National  
Conference

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

2. "On Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 October 1972 at the Polytechnic of North London, the ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE (AIL) National Conference was held.

3. The conference began on the Saturday at 2 pm and continued until 6 pm and was attended by some 90 persons. On the Sunday, the conference was due to commence at 10 am. However, through a general lack of organisation, the session did not begin until 11.30 am and finished at 6 pm. It was attended by only some 60 persons.

4. The proceedings on the first day were chaired by Privacy of the South London AIL and the audience comprised about 40 delegates and 50 observers from various AIL branches and affiliated organisations. Privacy in opening, welcomed all those present and outlined the form the proceedings would take. Motions on present and future strategies within the AIL would be discussed on the Saturday, whereas organisational matters would be dealt with on the Sunday. Speakers introducing motions would be limited to 10 minutes only; speeches from the floor would be 5 minutes.

5. Privacy next read out, without comment, the list of motions to the assembly. He was interrupted only by cries from the rear of the hall to speak up. Once he had finished Bob PURDIE, as one of the two Central London AIL delegates, proposed his branch's resolution (copy attached). He said that it was essential not to dissipate the momentum of the movement. Not only must they strive to encourage political awareness within the AIL but they must be prepared to go out and conduct a full political educational programme amongst the Trade Unions and the working classes. By this means they would be able to build a mass revolutionary vanguard and make a clear and definite intervention in the Irish struggle. The building of the revolutionary vanguard would be the only way to help the working class of Ireland in their bloody struggle against British Imperialism. For that reason a mass demonstration had been called for 12 November. This would mark the turning point of Irish political activities in this country. If all united together then there would be a resultant

Reference to Papers  
400/72/187

S8764

upsurge in the Irish political field and a flow of new comrades into the organisation. (A subsequent vote accepted the Central London AIL resolution).

6. PURDIE sat down to polite applause and Privacy called for the next speaker, but there appeared no great enthusiasm. Eventually Privacy rose to his feet. He explained that he would have preferred to have spoken later in opposition to the resolution to be submitted by the Wolfe Tone branch of Clann na h'Eireann (copy attached). Privacy claimed that he was against any change in the name of the organisation. Internment was still in force in Ireland and would be for some time. If internment did end then the name of the movement could be changed, but at present people knew what AIL meant and what it stood for. The two names which had been proposed in the resolution: Campaign Against Repressive Laws (CARL) and Front Against Coercive Tribunals (FACT) meant nothing and failed to convey any meaning or any illustration of the situation in Ireland. It was apparent that the Wolfe Tone branch were more concerned with finding a mnemonic title, than involving themselves in any true political revolutionary work.

7. Following Privacy one of the delegates from Sinn Fein spoke of the virtues of the Republican Movement. He claimed that the social revolution which was taking place in the North of Ireland was being spearheaded and being won by the Irish working class in their struggle against British Imperialism. The British working class had no say and had shown no interest in the struggles on the streets of Derry and it was plain to see that only the Irish workers could achieve salvation for the Irish people. He emphasised that the role of the British working class was to adopt a supportive position and not to attempt to influence the inevitable course of the struggle of their Irish comrades. He expressed unequivocal support for the Republican Movement and said they alone would carry the fight to its logical conclusion. (The Clann na h'Eireann resolution was later rejected).

8. Privacy stand on the Republican Movement was reiterated by Privacy a fellow-member of the Sinn Fein. Without any provocation this highly volatile young man made a bitter attack on anyone who even hinted at thinking unfavourably of the IRA Provisionals. He continued in the same vein and defended the bombings. He made it quite clear that he considered the bombings to be part of a well thought out strategy to rid Ireland of the tentacles of capitalism. The charge that they were indiscriminate was the cry of the uninformed and politically naive. In a final gesture of emotion he boasted that the IRA would, if necessary, bomb their way to the conference table and on to victory.

9. The conference briefly came to life when Chris HARMAN, a long standing and authoritative member of the International Socialists spoke on the IS policies on Ireland. He began by saying that IS unconditionally supported the "atrocities" committed by the Provisionals in the six counties, and then had to try to extricate himself from the results of his gaffe, but without success.

10. Privacy spoke in defence of HARMAN and claimed that what he had said had been an atrocious slip of the tongue and that IS did in fact unconditionally support the IRA in their struggle for freedom. It was obvious that he was attempting to reassert the correct IS line at the conference.

11. The last speaker of the day was Gery LAWLESS, who, being such a well known personality, received rather more attention than the other speakers. However his speech turned out to be no more than a varied repetition of the speech that LAWLESS makes at all Irish political gatherings. He dealt briefly with the history of the present struggle in Ireland and went on to decry the British Army's attempts at curbing the activities of the IRA. No conventional state controlled army could ever win a victory in guerrilla warfare and by the very nature of the fact that the guerrillas denied the army that victory it became a victory for the freedom fighters. The British Army, with promises to its 'lackey politicians' that the situation would soon be under control, was still begging for more time to deal with the ever increasing activities of the IRA. It was up to all political militants in this country to support the IRA fully and work towards achieving eventual victory in Ireland.

12. After LAWLESS no other speakers were forthcoming and the conference was adjourned until Sunday. It was announced that a social evening had been arranged in the Metropolitan Public House, Farringdon Road, EC1. This social transpired to be a dismal affair with people sitting around in the bar discussing Ireland and marxist theories and bemoaning the general lack of enthusiasm at the conference.

13. Sunday turned out to be a bigger disappointment than the previous day's proceedings had been. Although it had been intended that the conference should reconvene at 10.30 am sharp, the fact the meeting was not called to order until 11.30 am was some indication of the casualness which pervaded the conference. Surprisingly, LAWLESS played a very restrained role over the weekend and gave the impression that the mechanics of the movement, for the time being at least, were of paramount importance to him. He seemed very concerned with the formation of the new committee and a new organiser. He appeared to go out of his way to calm any attempt to upset matters, and with a few well chosen words here and there stilled any tongues critical of affiliated organisations. It was as if the IMG were not only bent on controlling the organisation, but intent on maintaining it intact.

14. The day's events consisted primarily of organisational matters and by the finish nothing had really changed, organisationally at least. The business of electing a treasurer for the movement was dealt with quickly, with Privacy being returned unopposed. There were only two contenders for the position of National Organiser, brought about by Privacy resignation. Bob PURDIE had no trouble in being elected against

**Privacy** a person whom very few people knew, and who was not present on Sunday.

15. The main business of the day was the election of the National Committee. There were 12 members to be chosen and 17 nominations. The elections went smoothly and the members of the new committee are listed below. It was perhaps surprising that LAWLESS managed to get only 19 votes, especially as he was one of the returning officers.

16. Members elected to the Central Committee:

**Privacy**

**Privacy**  
Gery LAWLESS  
**Privacy**

17. After the elections, **Privacy** brought the conference to a close and added that just because he had resigned as National Organiser, comrades should not go away with the idea that he would play a less active part in the future. He said he now felt free to express his own views on the struggle - a freedom he had not hitherto been permitted due to his position.

18. At the end of the conference, it was apparent that most persons who had attended were very disappointed with the results. Their expectations of long and varied debates, and deep political discussions fell resoundingly flat. The main point to arise from the weekend was the emergence of the IMG in the guise of LAWLESS and PURDIE as the new leaders of the ANTI-INTERMENT LEAGUE, a move which had of course been anticipated.

19. Special Branch references of persons who attended the conference together with details of the organisation they belonged to or represented, where known, are given at Appendix 'A'. Documents are shown at Appendix 'B'.

3	HN298
4	HN338
5	HN301

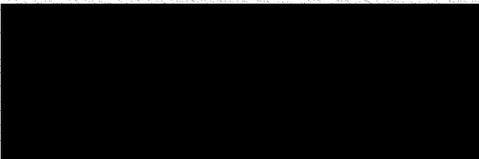
**6** **HN294**

Submitted:

**Chief Inspector**

*J. Curran*  
**CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT**





Privacy

Chris HARMAN  
(International Socialists)

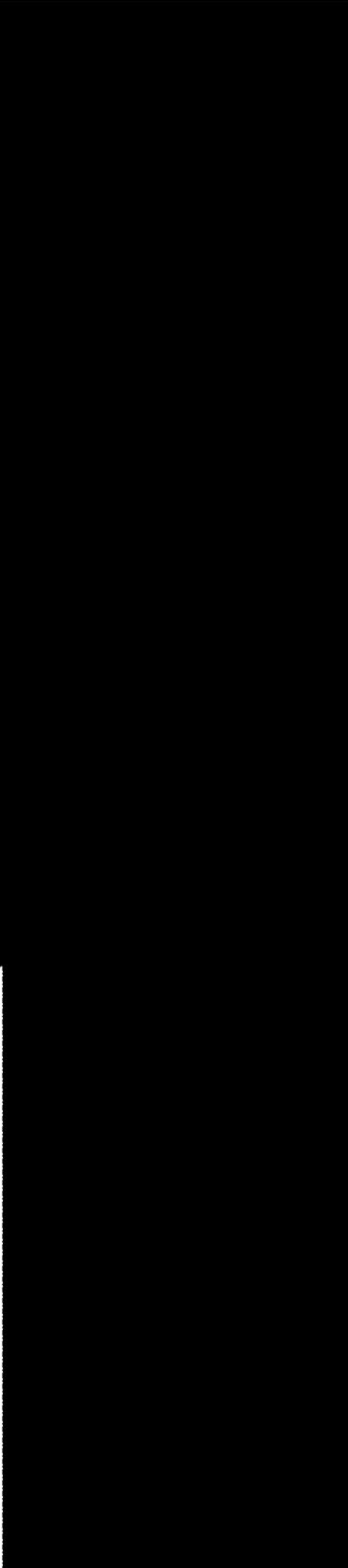
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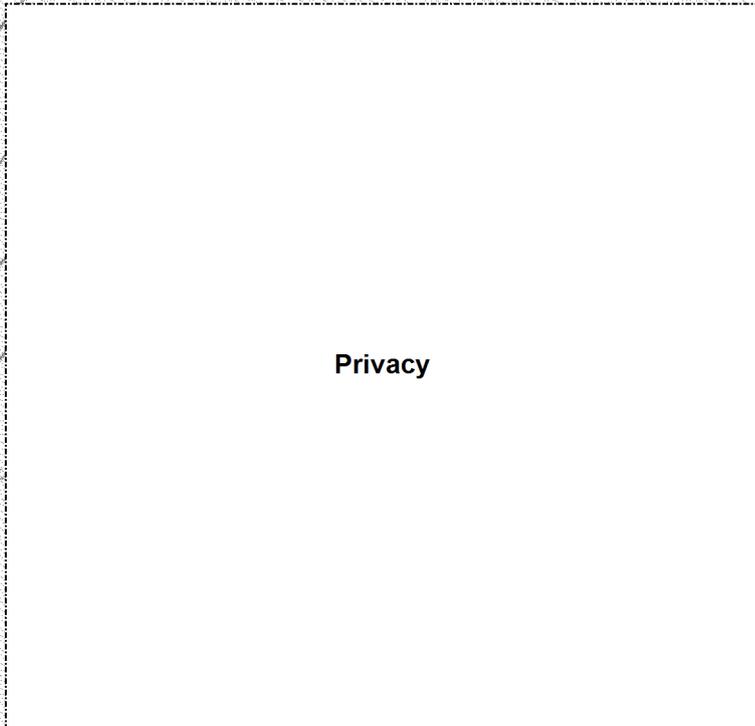
Privacy

Gerry LAWLESS  
(International Marxist Group)  
(Central London AIL)

RF 335/57/430A

Privacy



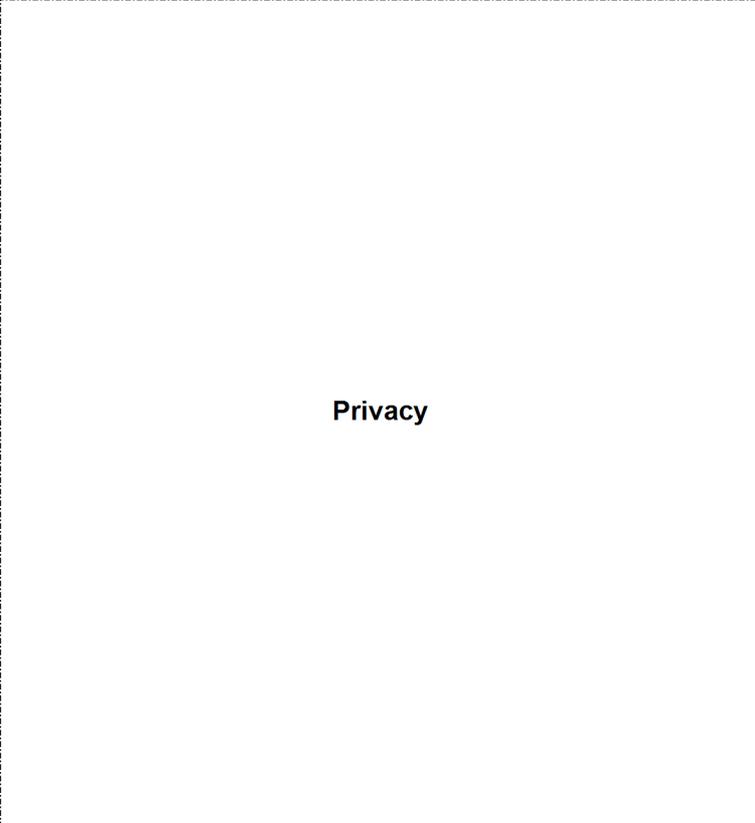


Privacy



Bob PURDIE  
(International Marxist Group)  
(Central London AIL)

RF 405/67/82



Privacy

