

METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

Special Report

SPECIAL BRANCH

22 day of February 1972

Women's Revolutionary Union formerly the 'Women's Liberation Front'

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

1. "On Sunday, 20 February 1972, the executive committee of the Women's Revolutionary Union met at Privacy. The following were present:

Privacy

The proceedings lasted from 6 pm to 11.45 pm. The meeting was opened by Privacy the Chairman, who read a letter from Privacy in which she resigned from the executive committee. The letter was also extremely critical of Privacy role in the group (see copy attached herewith).

2. The previous WRU meeting held on 17.2.72 was discussed and it was felt that Privacy wanted to disrupt the organisation. Firm control would have to be made of her disruptive tactics at future meetings. Privacy and Privacy apparently intended to continue participating in WRU activities but it was felt by the executive committee that if they were not prepared to play a positive role in the organisation it would be better if they left. There followed a long critical discussion on how the organisation had been run in the past and how Privacy had been the prime offender.

3. The film show 'Red Detachment of Women' was then discussed and a provisional date of 11.3.72 was set for a showing at Camden Studios.

4. The forthcoming Women's National Conference was the next item and it was decided that in view of the disaster which had befallen the Skegness conference, the organisation needed only to send representatives to the conference.

5. The provisional date for the fund-raising Jumble Sale was set as 25.3.72 but the venue was not arranged.

6. Lengthy discussion then ensued on the selection of literature for the proposed study classes. Privacy produced four books she had received from the Women's party in Albania and these were discussed as possibilities. Privacy mentioned she proposed drawing-up a leaflet on a

Reference to Papers 400/11/272

1

'rising prices campaign' directed specifically at women.

7. She next announced that the North London Alliance would hold a study class at the Laurel Tree Public House, Bayham Street, NW4, on 25.2.72. All WRU members were encouraged to attend. The WRU would also have a study session on 24.2.72 at

Privacy

8. It was proposed that the WRU weekly meetings be changed from Thursday to Tuesday evenings as a new group has been formed in North London which hold its meetings on Thursday evenings. It was hoped that members of the WRU would participate in this new group's activities - details of which were not given.

In conclusion it was agreed to submit all the proposals made to a general members meeting for approval."

10. Special Branch references are given in the attached Appendix.

HN348

WDC

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Submitted

HN332

Chief Inspector

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CRIME SUBMITTED

APPENDIX

to Special Branch report on a WRU meeting
held on 20.2.72.

Privacy

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CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

(Name) 10777

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(Date) 10777

(Time) 10777

(Page) 10777

APPENDIX

to Special Branch report on a WRU meeting
held on 20.2.72.

Privacy

20th February, 1972.

Dear Comrades,

With regard to the present situation in W.L.F. and my position on the Executive Committee, I would like to state the following.

In recent months contradictions have heightened in our organisation, particularly since the W.N.C.C. conference at Skogness. Two political lines are becoming more and more clear.

I totally reject the analysis of the Secretary in her report to the A.G.M. that this is an irreconcilable contradiction, in which "one line (supposedly that of Privacy appreciates the need to combine practical work among Working Class women and progressive intellectuals such as students with intensive study of the theory of the Woman Question, in order to contribute towards the building of a dynamic mass movement of women for the realisation of our social equality and emancipation and for a society free from exploitation and injustice." and that "the other (supposedly Privacy myself and others) is based on "selfishness and personal ambition and seeks to secure careers and positions in isolated little groups of academics". The first Privacy "has confidence in the masses of women" the other "contempt" etc. To present the problem in this way is to cover the real political differences we have - attempting to mask political differences by attacking and slandering individuals.

Contrary to this I hold that the contradiction is basically one of narrow practicalism versus a recognition of the importance of theoretical and ideological struggle, combined with planned practical activities and campaigns.

The political line that I and others have consistently held is that theoretical and ideological struggle is essential to the building of a correctly oriented mass Working Class women's movement. A principled theoretical struggle must be waged against feminist, Trotskyist, revisionist - all petty bourgeois theories which at present are dominant in the women's political movement. While bemoaning the fact in her report to the A.G.M. that we have carried out little practical activity, Privacy should also bemoan the fact that we have done little concrete analysis and criticism of incorrect ideas. (i.e. ideas that the majority of these good women fall prey to). (See page 2 of the Provisional Secretary's Report to the A.G.M.) The little we have done in this regard has been mainly in the W.N.C.C. and in our paper. Simultaneous to this work we must initiate and carry out campaigns and planned practical activities, guided by our theory, that are oriented to the needs of Working Class women. We must not allow this work to become diffuse and spontaneous, but must analyse to the best of our ability the contradictions in society, particularly those affecting women, and then concentrate our forces in order to reap the best results. Through all of this work, theoretical and practical, we must aim at winning new women to the political struggle for the complete emancipation of women through Socialism.

Privacy adopting a line of narrow practicalism has more and more shown open contempt for theoretical and ideological struggle. In spite of the fact that the G.L.F. have caused great disruption in the women's movement, and have prevented Working Class women from participating in this movement, Privacy has told us that it is unnecessary to discuss the G.L.F. and deal with their incorrect and counter-revolutionary ideas and that we have spent too much time on them although we have never discussed the political essence of GLF and have thus not been able to arrive at any common understanding. Also, she has said that we have spent too much time on feminism. However, we have never seriously studied, analysed or refuted any of the feminist material that is so prevalent and influential in the women's liberation movement.

While Privacy pays lip service to the importance of building a national women's movement, she never showed much interest in the W.N.C.C. and, following Skogness, offered no suggestions for initiatives that we could take but refused to have anything to do with the U.W.L. initiative in maintaining the W.N.C.C., saw no point in taking part in the regional set-ups by sending W.L.F. representatives or taking part in their coming Manchester conference, and even failed for over 2½ months to contact those groups who have expressed a desire to exchange views with us. Her statement on

Thursday that we were not liable to come in contact with the G.L.F. shows that she has little interest in participating in and fighting for a correct line in the Women's Liberation movement.

How then do we build the national movement of working class women? It seems by taking up practical activities and by integrating with "the struggle women are already waging" and by "bringing out the political essence" of these. Then we will together with the masses of women "grow and develop in maturity and consciousness." But this is not sufficient! Our practical activities will not spontaneously lead to either the masses or to "our growing and developing in maturity and consciousness", without a fierce principled theoretical struggle against all incorrect ideas. We must thoroughly smash and expose all diversionary counter revolutionary theories - theories which divert or drive Working Class women away from political activities. It is not surprising that Privacy tells us that we should now temporarily shelve our paper, because we have no practical activities to report. Also she said that there was no point in discussing with other groups until we have some practical activities to propose to them. This is narrow/practical approach which denies the importance of theoretical struggle. In the building of our movement our activity in theoretical struggle, must be placed on a par with our activities on political and economic struggles, and our theory must guide all our activities.

Privacy has suggested that we should now study Sylvia Pankhurst. Why? So that we can see how she organised women in the East End of London. Surely it is of even greater importance at this stage to study the principal of political struggle she waged against the petty bourgeois political line in the Women's Social and Political Union, of which her own mother and sister were articulate spokesmen, for it was this political position that guided her great successes in organising working class women of East London. Also we should learn from her serious political errors that led to her turning her back on the infant and revolutionary C.P.G.B. and on the British Working Class Movement.

While we turn our back on the women's liberation movement and "the majority of these women are good", it seems that the W.L.F. is to become a front of the London Alliance. Initially the London Alliance (N.L.A.) was meant to be a true alliance uniting all organisations and individuals that could be united in a fight to defend democratic rights and oppose the menace of fascism. The clause which states that all groups must be represented on all Alliance committees is a sectarian clause which has already forced two groups (C.U.O. and M.L.W.A.) who did not have the forces to be represented on the Tribunal Committee, out of the Alliance. This clause, the emphasis on individual members, and the inclusion of the aim of the dictatorship of the Proletariat (myself and other members of the M.L.W.A. initially made this mistake but now realise that this is the aim of a Communist organisation, not a part of W.L.F. aims) are destroying the possibility of any true alliance of anti-fascist groups and turning the London "Alliance" into another Marxist Leninist group. We at an earlier general members meeting and again at the A.G.M. supported the resolution that said we could not accept the clause of the Alliance that said that we had to be represented on all the Alliance Committees, because this takes away our autonomy and our democratic right to decide what committees, campaigns etc. that we will undertake.

Covering up the political differences as she does, Privacy is then left in the position of having to resort to dishonesty and slander in her report. Her accusations of "obstruction", ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ "consciously hold it up" etc. etc. are down right falsehoods and she knows it. Her/I would like to deal with examples of dishonest trickery that Privacy resorts to in her report.

W.L.F., although not a communist organisation, certainly does not bar communists. Why does Privacy throw into her report two references to that "so-called communist organisation that Privacy and Privacy lead, the M.L.W.A." She makes the unfounded accusation that this organisation of which I am proud to be a member tried to gain control of the Alliance and also that we tried but failed to discipline Privacy. In a communist

organisation there is discipline. After full and democratic discussion, of all issues involved, the minority submits to the opinion of the majority. There is nothing wrong in this. It is the correct way of communist working. Therefore there would be nothing wrong in demanding that Privacy put the majority view of the organisation. However, if Privacy were honest, she would also state that she characteristically ran away at a time when the M.L.F.A. was just beginning to examine certain contradictions. (I say characteristically because Privacy seems to cast aside discussion of differences as haggling or even worse "obstruction". Privacy would not except Privacy review of Skogness but when Privacy could not accept Privacy "amendments" she was accused of obstruction. Privacy even admitted that she did not bother to write members of W.L.F. telling them of these meetings that were discussing the letter because they were so "boring". This was Privacy fault because she did not give up her political analysis and accept Privacy opportunist position. In passing, I would also like to state that Privacy is also now grossly distorting the position we hold with regard to the W.N.C.C. conference at Skogness and the U.W.L.) There was no question of disciplining Privacy any more than there was of disciplining Privacy myself and others. Throwing in these references suggests that there is something wrong in working in this manner and it certainly amounts to red baiting.

Although Privacy doesn't see fit to criticise the G.L.F. and the feminists, she certainly does not lose an opportunity to attack the U.W.L. (failing to see both their positive and negative side) although she can cast aside any of their criticisms of us merely by saying that she has no time to waste on these "academics". How subjective Privacy report is can be seen in that she says that "It began to seem that plans were being hatched for a merger.. like T.U.C. bureaucrats and the boss having arbitration talks on behalf of the rank and file to reach a "mutually agreeable settlement" and regarding the G.L.F., "indeed their role is apparently of such utmost importance that we need even more discussion and analysis in the next issue of our journal, and this most probably based on the disgusting and superficial analysis done recently by U.W.L.". Anyone who examines our political position ~~carefully~~ "alongside that of the U.W.L., as well as Privacy article on the G.L.F. can only conclude that there is no objective basis for these remarks at all.

In view of the fact that I consider Privacy report on the present situation as dishonest and subjective, ~~and~~ making personal attacks in order to cover our real political differences and because I am in disagreement with the present political line of W.L.F., which I characterise as narrow practicalism, I have given careful consideration to my position on the Executive Committee. It was indeed quite astonishing when I, as a part of "the baggage", of the "careerists who use honest women for their own selfish ends" was elected. Elected officers should be those who best represent the political views of the membership. Therefore, with the serious criticisms I hold of Privacy report which was adopted at the A.G.M., and the present narrow practical approach of the W.L.F., I feel it would be unprincipled of me to remain on the Executive Committee and therefore must resign and remain in the W.L.F. as an ordinary member only. I shall continue with the work I have been doing on tenants and as the representative of the W.L.F. will be glad to make reports to general members meetings, that is if there is any interest in this particular practical work.

I hope that in future we shall be able to overcome the contradictions in W.L.F. through principled struggle and that the correct emphasis will be placed on theoretical and practical work.

Yours in struggle,

Privacy