

S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

Special Report }

METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

SPECIAL BRANCH

15 February 72.

.....day of.....19.....

SUBJECT:.....

.....Liberation.....

.....Front.....

Reference to Papers

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

2. "On Thursday 10 February 1972, the Women's Liberation Front held a general members meeting at the home of Privacy

Privacy The following persons were present:-

Privacy

3. The meeting was chaired by Privacy who announced the following decisions which had been made at an Executive Committee Meeting held on 9. 2.72. She called for full discussion on any point of disagreement.

4. The decisions were:-

- (a) that the WLF Paper would be cancelled for 2 months..
- (b) that the Nursery Campaign be a priority of the WLF work.
- (c) that a part of each General Members meeting be taken up with study.
- (d) the organisation's name be changed to "The Revolutionary Women's Union".
- (e) that the WLF hold a fund raising campaign to clear it's debts.
- (f) that the WLF did not participate in the WICC organised by the UKL but would participate and work with other groups in building a National Women's Movement.

5. Privacy disagreed with all the proposals save for (c) - the suggestion for study. She felt the postponing of the paper was a grave political error. She then said she had received a letter from the Union of Women for Liberation regarding the open letter previously sent to all Women's Liberation Groups by the WLF and asked that it be read to the group. This was agreed and the letter was duly read by Privacy (see copy attached).

BOX 500

"we would certainly welcome a meeting called to discuss Skegness and the present situation in the movement". You are obviously aware of the fact that the W.N.C.G did have such a meeting on December 10th because...

Once it had been read [Privacy] stated that the group had been "diverted enough" and that the document should be treated with the contempt it deserved.

6. At this [Privacy] started shouting that one could not ignore a political document and that it should at least be replied to. [Privacy] felt the document could not be ignored. [Privacy] proposed a vote on whether to have further discussion on the U.S. paper. There was a 4 to 4 vote. [Privacy] then suggested that those who did not wish to discuss the document should go into another room, but no one moved.

7. All the proposals made at the Executive Committee meeting were discussed but no decisions were reached.

8. [Privacy] then gave details of the Phoenix demonstration planned for Sunday 13 February 1972 (previously reported). Some 20 WLP members would attend.

9. [Privacy] then asked if the next meeting of the WLP planned for 17.2.72 could be held at [Privacy] home. [Privacy] replied that in view of the outcome to the AGM and AIRCC [Privacy] was in prison she did not wish to have future meetings at her home. As a result [Privacy] announced that the next meeting would be at her home [Privacy] on 17.2.72."

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

[Redacted] HN348 [Redacted] 1

Submitted:

[Redacted] HN332 [Redacted] 2

Chief Inspector [Redacted] 3

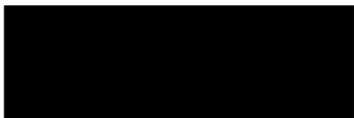
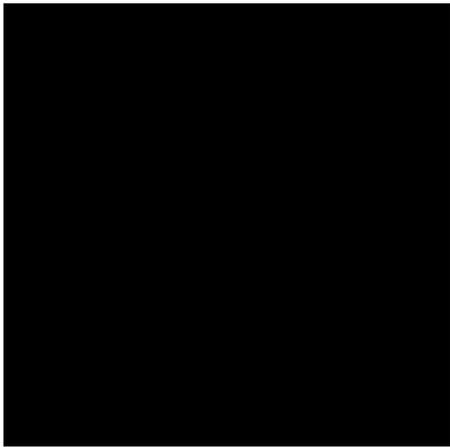
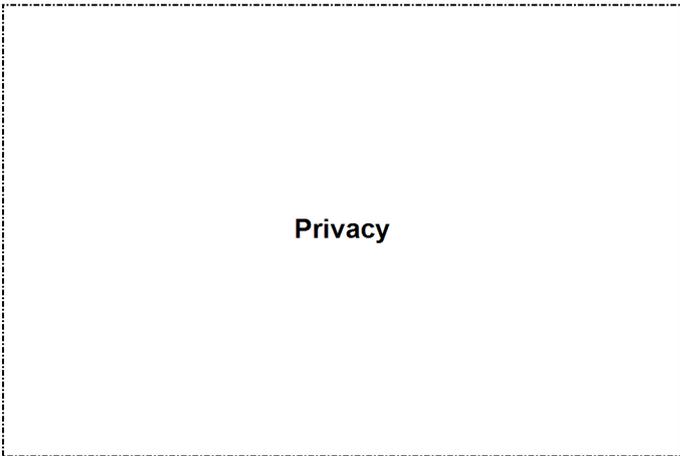
[Redacted] [Redacted] [Redacted]

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APPENDIX

Appendix to Special Branch report on a KLF meeting held on 10.2.72.



Privacy

1st February, 1972

to: Women's Liberation Group,  
c/o [redacted] Privacy

Privacy

Dear Comrades,

Regarding your "Open Letter to all Women's Liberation Groups of the W.L.C.C."

We have received your letter, on which we have the following comments to make:-

Since our formation we have regarded participation in the W.L.C.C. as a top priority amongst our activities insofar as we believe that if the women's liberation movement is to be effective in achieving its aim, it is necessary to build a national organisation of women united around a correct policy. Unity in the women's movement can only come about if this unity is based on a common understanding as to the cause of women's oppression and as to the enemy against which we must direct our strength. However, because at the present time there is a wide divergence of opinions and utter confusion within the women's movement on these basic issues, there can at the present time be no unity.

However it is essential that we strive for that unity and its prerequisite a common understanding of the cause of women's oppression and as to the enemy of women's liberation. You state in your letter that you "believe that it is only through practice and open ideological struggle that the women's movement can achieve understanding and unity..." A Federal organisation, such as the W.L.C.C., is the only possible forum for such "open ideological struggle" open to the whole women's movement on the basis of the equality of all groups. It is the only forum in which all the different analyses as to women's oppression and their liberation

can contend on an equal footing so that women may learn and increase their understanding of the different views being put forward and after a thorough debate decide which policy they believe to be correct, and then form a unified national organisation round that policy. Thus participation of women in the W.N.C.C. is essential if the movement is to advance to a higher stage of unity and not to disintegrate. Therefore it is the duty of women who genuinely wish to fight for their liberation to fight also for the W.N.C.C.

These are the principles for which we in the UWL are fighting, and which we believed you in the WLF were also fighting, but events have led us to have severe doubts as to whether you are consistent in your recognition of the need for "open ideological struggle" and support for the W.N.C.C. for this purpose. Disquiet was first caused to us by your open-armed welcome and praise of the Birmingham group's proposals for the replacement of the W.N.C.C. by a unified national organisation prior to common understanding being reached on essentials such as the cause of women's oppression and the main enemy to be fought, for the express purpose of suppressing the views of the revolutionary minority - such as the UWL.

At Skegness we were positively alarmed by your complete failure to defend the W.N.C.C. agenda and decisions, in particular by **Privacy** failure to take the Chair on Saturday evening and her abandonment of the Chair on Sunday afternoon thus paving the way for the disruption of the Conference. You appear to have been guided by a desire to present yourselves as 'reasonable' to the enemies of the W.N.C.C., rather than by a desire to expose the treachery behind the apparent 'reasonableness' of the revisionists and the Trotskyites concerned to dismantle the W.N.C.C. for their own sectarian ends.

In view of the above, your letter did not come as a surprise to us, but merely confirmed our worst fears. The chief characteristic of this letter is to dilute your 'support' for the W.N.C.C. with pathetic attempts to appear 'reasonable'. In particular we would like to comment on the following:

1. Having stated that the Skegness conference had no right to make decisions, you then in effect 'recognise' the 'decisions' of the usurpers of the conference; in particular, you support the regional committees they set up in OPPOSITION to the W.N.C.C. saying: "Other regions may already have might/establish effective co-ordination bodies but this meeting clearly should (sic) that those in 'control' in London not only refuse to co-ordinate any activity but also intend to block any serious national discussion with the farcical proposals for the 'conference'. We hope that all serious groups will strongly voice their opposition to the 'no agenda circus' planned by the GLF and their cohorts. In other words, you are in favour of women supporting the 'regional committees' set up by the enemies of the W.N.C.C. provided they insist on agendas and terms of reference (as otherwise serious groups and working class women will be driven away)! Moreover you state: "we would certainly welcome a meeting called to discuss Skegness and the present situation in the movement". You are obviously aware of the fact that the W.N.C.C. did have such a meeting on December 19th because you

were represented there. Why is no reference made to it in your letter? We cannot believe that your memory is so short that you can have forgotten your presence at that meeting or its proceedings. We can only conclude that not only do you accept the 'decision' to set up 'regional committees', which are in opposition to the W.N.C.C., and advise us to how these 'regional committees' are to be strengthened, but that you in fact accept the 'decision' to abolish the W.N.C.C. also.

2. You state: "in retrospect it is easy to see that such conference should have been internal and only open to those groups affiliated to the W.N.C.C. who had agreed in the first place that such a theoretical conference was necessary to develop our understanding of Women's Liberation".

This statement shows the unbelievable extent to which you have misjudged the forces at work at Skegness. The one thing that makes the W.N.C.C. valuable, and which makes it worth preserving in spite of the tremendous difficulties involved in maintaining such a federal structure, is that it, and it alone at the present stage of the movement, can bring together all trends in the movement to participate on an equal basis in debate for the purpose of clearing theoretical confusion. Whatever difficulties might be caused, we do not want to exclude any serious women with views on women's liberation from that debate, or any serious women from attending and observing that debate: on the contrary, we welcome all such women. We cannot tell in advance who is serious and who is not, so it would be entirely wrong to demand that "such a conference should have been internal and only open to those groups affiliated to the W.N.C.C. who had agreed in the first place that such a theoretical conference was necessary to develop our understanding of Women's Liberation". Normally those women who are NOT serious would be put off by a conference the agenda of which involved debates on theoretical and practical aspects of the movement. However, for the Skegness conference women who would not normally even dream of attending were mobilised specifically for the purpose of suppressing this debate and moving on to attempt to destroy the W.N.C.C. to try and ensure that NO such genuinely open and democratic debate might take place in the future. Since you are in favour of excluding non-serious elements, one would have thought that at the stage when during the conference it became obvious that many non-serious and positively disruptive elements had attended for the purpose of disrupting and suppressing the debate, then you should have been quite happy for them to leave, so that the serious women should continue the business of the conference without further interruption. But no, you state: "These differences should have and could have been resolved through open democratic (!) discussion as was urged by many women remaining after the walkout... the refusal of such a discussion was a mistake, and only led to irritate the situation rather than resolving anything". At the conference itself you were hand in hand with the revisionists of Durham and Bristol in encouraging these proven non-serious elements to <sup>to turn</sup> and even allowed yourselves to be persuaded that **Privacy** should not take the chair on Saturday evening because she would 'antagonise' just these elements!!! and now in your letter you say that we should at the instigation of these elements have abandoned the agenda even earlier, on Saturday afternoon. In the face of these your deeds and words, how can

you now say that these elements should have been included in the first place? The fact is that their presence and their disruption created a situation where revolutionaries had to take a stand: a state of affairs which you found a severe embarrassment in view of your distinct preference for sitting on the fence so as to be chums with everyone, and consequent inability to fight on any issue where struggle is called for. This demonstrates that you are 'revolutionaries' in word only and not in fact.

3. In your analysis of the Skegness conference you wrongly lay virtually the whole blame for the disruption of the conference on the manipulation and bureaucracy of the Leamington Office. This analysis is completely short-sighted and out of proportion. Surely it is apparent to you that without the undeniable wholehearted and active support of the Trotskyites of the I.M.G./Socialist Women Groups and of the International Socialists, and of the revisionists (particularly from Birmingham, Bristol and Durham) the Leamington Office, who are totally disorganised (and who have moreover since disbanded) would have been ignored as would the irrelevances of the G.L.F. It so happened that it was in the interests of the I.M.G., I.S. and C.P.G.B. to break down the W.N.C.C. in order to suppress revolutionary politics and to set up in the place of the W.N.C.C. a 'centric' through which in due course each hopes to gain bureaucratic control of the women's movement. It is only insofar that Leamington and GLF acted in the interests of and under the leadership of the sham socialists that they were able to disrupt in the way that they did.

4. Instead of attacking the sham socialists, the Trotskyites and revisionists, you prefer to attack the revolutionaries, the U.W.L., and you attack us in an extremely underhand way, and 'without naming names' in true liberal tradition: viz --

"We certainly disassociate ourselves from those who contemptuously label women as 'sexual perverts.' "

"...men...would be allowed to attend the conference. We here criticise both those who tried to reopen this discussion as well as those who abused it."

Both these remarks will be recognised by the few people who bother to read the WLF letter as referring to the U.W.L. The first is presumably a sop to the GLF on the one hand, and on the other hand to feminists who believe it is 'unsisterly' for any woman ever to criticise another woman; so, to show their 'reasonableness', WLF declares it will not call a female sexual pervert a sexual pervert! Since both Privacy and members of the Front have, quite rightly in our view, publicly referred to the women of the GLF as sexual perverts, this remark indicates the most disgusting hypocrisy on your part. (see Note)

The second remark is designed to give credence to the out and out lie that one of the men comrades accompanying the U.W.L. comrades in some way misbehaved himself at the conference. At the conference Comrad.

Privacy who had done absolutely nothing wrong whatsoever, but who with comrad. [redacted] (U.W.L.) brought up by certain comrades for special abuse for the purpose of our case against the programme for women's liberation put forward by the G.L.F. is set out in our article "Condemn the G.L.F. programme for women's liberation".

of mobilising the feminists against the U.W.L. The 'abuses' alleged against him by various factions were (a) that he laughed and (b) that he was violent. At the conference WLF put forward the view that it was unreasonable to demand that nobody should laugh when people make fools of themselves. With your desire now to increase your 'reasonableness' in the eyes of the feminists you would no doubt like to add the rider "except if a woman makes a fool of herself". We do not accept that rider. Further, we would once more remind you that Comrade **Privacy** never initiated violence at the conference, as well you know. On two occasions he struck back when physically assaulted by GLE, led by the and <sup>was provoked</sup> and once he, together with comrades of the U.W.L., went to the rescue of a U.W.L. comrade who was physically prevented from speaking. If this correct behaviour made him an obvious target this was all the more so insofar as the WLF comrades were prepared to sit back and do absolutely nothing when Comrade Harpal and U.W.L. comrades were physically attacked, and then you tut-tutted like a pack of pacifist parsons when **Privacy** and U.W.L. comrades hit back at their assailants. Worse! One of your comrades even went so far as to assist in the forcible removal of Comrade **Privacy** from the conference hall! 'Turning the other cheek', comrades, is neither a principle nor a tactic for revolutionaries. As it was, you showed your complete bankruptcy at Skegness by first totally capitulating in the fight for the W.N.C.C. and for revolutionary principles in general (which explains why it was U.W.L. and not W.L.F. who were physically attacked) and then later, when it became necessary, in failing to fight physically to defend our principles. And you now have the gall to try and turn your own spinelessness and bankruptcy into a virtue: U.W.L. comrades were violent, sisters; we in the WLF accept defeat at the very first blow and modestly turn the other cheek! So now in your letter you add further grist to the mill of those who singled Comrade **Privacy** out in order to mobilise feminist backwardness against the U.W.L. It is fantastic what depths you will plumb in your ardent desire to sound 'reasonable' and present an image of 'respectability' to the reactionaries.

5. We think that you are absolutely incorrect in implying that Comrade **Privacy** should have opened up the conference on Saturday afternoon, which is what is meant by your statement: "these differences should have and could have been resolved through open democratic discussion as was urged by many women remaining after the walkout:"

(a) if it is undemocratic for others to try to overthrow the agenda agreed by the W.N.C.C. it would certainly be undemocratic for Comrade **Privacy** to have in any way participated in subverting this agenda.

(b) it would have led to the disruption of the entire conference taking place earlier than it actually did and, moreover, with Comrade **Privacy** consent and blessing.

(c) if our comrades participate in undemocratic manoeuvring and consent to the disruption of the conference, they can scarcely be in a position after the event to criticise the successful manoeuvring.

(d) One of the lessons of the history of any movement is that, the weak, i.e. those who have

you formulated clear principles to guide their actions, into which category fell the majority of the women attending the Skegness conference, will, when an issue comes to a head, always side with the opportunists, for it is a long process, impossible to undertake during the course of a relatively short time (e.g. two or three days) to render the unprincipled principled and clear the confusion that exists in the movement. The "mistake" that "in retrospect" you "realise" you made was in not being a little more opportunistic and overthrowing the W.N.C.C. agreed agenda earlier for a discussion of the walkout. You feel that by being slightly more opportunistic (more 'reasonable') you could have won the Marsh. However, this is also a "mistake". To win the Marsh in this situation you have to be the biggest opportunists going, and to abandon every iota of revolutionary politics, which if you do not correct the erroneous course you are now taking you will no doubt end up by doing.

6. Your letter is written in a hurt and apologetic tone: you complain about Leamington, you complain about lies and slanders (not being above throwing in one or two yourselves), you complain about bureaucratic manoeuvring, and this comes out as a protracted moan and grumble quite simply because you have no positive programme to offer. One would have thought that since you are the keen supporters of "open ideological struggle" you would have stressed the importance of supporting the W.N.C.C. particularly at this time when it is under attack from every enemy of women's liberation and of the working class, but instead one gets a lame "we would welcome views and advice of other groups" !!! How 'reasonable' can you get? We revolutionaries, to demonstrate our good faith, and to stop you saying horrid things about us, will not suggest you support the W.N.C.C. because you might not like it, and we would then lose our influence over you: so you tell us what we should do. Revolutionary politics indeed!

We should really like you to clarify what is your attitude to the W.N.C.C.: You sent delegates to its last meeting on December 19th 1971, and these delegates mouthed words of support for the W.N.C.C. Yet if you support the W.N.C.C., why is there in your letter no mention of the discussion of the Skegness conference at the W.N.C.C. meeting, just as though this discussion had not taken place? Why is there no urgent request for support for the W.N.C.C., and its organ Women's Struggle, if you recognise the W.N.C.C. as being the only form of organisation which will enable the women's liberation movement to develop to a new and higher stage of unity? And, to bring in the events of December 19th, why, when supposedly supporting the W.N.C.C. did you deny the W.N.C.C. the right to control its own finances by refusing to vote for the proposals for the of Privacy and Privacy (two women committed to trying to destroy the W.N.C.C. since Skegness) as signatories of the W.N.C.C. account and their replacement by persons known to be pledged to support of the W.N.C.C.?

With regard to this last point, you openly admitted at the meeting that you refused to support the Treasurer's proposals because of what people might think. We accept that people might think that W.N.C.C. supporters have 'bureaucratically' taken the control

of W.N.C.C. funds away from the hands of persons who are not only not members of groups affiliated to the W.N.C.C. but further are pledged to its destruction. As it was, however, the WLF were there to save the day for the enemies of the W.N.C.C., which we are sure these will greatly appreciate, and think very highly of you as a result.

Comrades, you must get off the fence. You cannot both fight to preserve the W.N.C.C. and maintain a foothold to popularity among the enemies of the W.N.C.C. in the event of their being successful in their attempts to destroy it. If you were to make a real effort to uphold the W.N.C.C. then you would lose all hope of any popularity among its enemies. If you bow to the opinions of those who do not support the W.N.C.C. then you assist them in undermining the W.N.C.C.

To us the side you should come down on seems obvious for without the W.N.C.C. at this stage not only will the women's movement not advance, it will actually disintegrate:

(a) The first and most important reason for this is that the basis for the new 'organisation', the opportunist alliance between the I.M.G., I.S. and C.P.G.B., is opposition to revolutionary politics. While in the short term it might be possible, while the influence of bourgeois ideology is strong in all classes of society, to build an organisation on the basis of anti-communism, under the leadership of such an opportunist alliance, in the long term the only kind of organisation which can develop and involve the masses, is an organisation which promotes the true interests of the masses of women, viz which is guided by the policy that only with the elimination of private property will the masses of women achieve their real liberation.

(b) The whole object of setting up this 'organisation' was to suppress revolutionary politics, so your ability to put forward revolutionary politics to the women in this 'organisation' will obviously be severely restricted, so that there will be no chance of your being able to contact any serious women there, (even if there were any such women in this 'organisation' to contact in view of the fact that any serious women would in any event be driven away in disgust by the petty-bourgeois intellectuals' anarchistic frolics of the Street Theatre type and the general atmosphere of disorganisation).

(c) The bureaucratic control of this 'organisation' by the I.M.G.-I.S.-C.P.G.B. is bound to alienate and drive out successive factions who cannot support the 'decisions' foisted upon the 'organisation' by the ruling clique. Moreover contradictions between the I.M.G., I.S. and C.P.G.B. themselves are bound to develop and lead to splits.

It seems to us that to abandon the W.N.C.C. for the sake of a friendly welcome in this rival 'organisation' set up by the Trotskyites and revisionists (which you won't get anyway) can give you no possible advantage. On the contrary, you are helping to give credence to this 'organisation' the basis of which is precisely opposition to revolutionary politics by sham socialists and feminists, and which whilst it does survive will play the dirty role of putting forward counter-revolutionary politics and diverting women

away from the task of building a revolutionary movement to fight their real enemy, viz. monopoly capitalism / Imperialism.

For these reasons there is nothing to be gained and everything to be lost in siding with the Browskyites and revisionists; but so long as the W.M.C.C. remains in existence there remains hope for the women's liberation movement, an alternative to disintegration; a forum for debate of the essential questions confronting the movement and for clearing away the confusion which is holding back our advance. It is the duty of those who call themselves revolutionaries in the women's movement to fight whole-heartedly and determinedly for the W.M.C.C., the key to the whole future of the present women's movement.

Yours fraternally,

UNION OF WOMEN FOR LIBERATION