S.B. No. 1 (Flimsy)

Special Report

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METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

[redacted]

(COPY)

28 day of April 1976.

SUBJECT

TUCAPTA

Reference to Papers

400/76/37

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

2. "In November 1975 a group of persons in West London opposed to the Prevention of Terrorism Act held a meeting to form an organisation known as the Trade Union Committee Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act (TUCAPTA). At the meeting a six man committee - comprised of Pat BOYLE, Privacy Privacy (phonetic) and Privacy Privacy was elected to organise a launching conference.

3. This conference was held at Hammersmith Town Hall from 1.45 pm to 6 pm on Saturday 10 April 1976. Approximately 75 persons were present.

4. Privacy chairman for the first session, welcomed the delegates and observers (the majority of the former being members of the International Socialists and the latter were mainly representatives of rival left-wing factions) to the meeting. In a lengthy introduction Privacy said that the campaign would be known as the Trade Union Committee Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and that the political basis of the committee would be self determination for the Irish people as a whole. Each speaker would relate his or her own experiences of the Act and how it had affected either them or their trade union colleagues. He said that the Provention of Terrorism Act was not acceptable to a vast number of trade unionists and claimed that the police were using the legislation to screen many active Irish trade unionists. Not only was the Act a threat to a person's rights but it also allowed the Government to continue to avoid the real solution of the Irish problem. If the British were to get out of Ireland and allow the Irish people to determine their own future there would be no need for the Act because the Provisional IRA would have achieved its aims and the bombing campaign would cease. Furthermore, of the 1,400 persons detained under the Act, only a few had been charged and none with a serious offence. Although it was true that 40 of those detained had been convicted of bombing offences, these crimes were already adequately covered by existing legislation. Finally, he said that the aims of the conference were to work around a resolution drafted by the committee which the delegates would be asked to ratify at the end of the conference. The six point resolution was:

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i) 'To raise the issues and actively campaign for the repeal of the Act'.

ii) 'To pass resolutions through trade union branches, joint shop stewards committees, trades councils, tenants committees and other local organisations'.

iii) 'To man pickets in support of people detained under the PT Act'.

iv) 'To raise money where possible for the PT Act campaign'.

v) 'To organise local meetings on the PT Act campaign (members of the committee would be available to speak'.

vi) 'To build local committees up and down the country'.

5. Privacy then introduced the first speaker, Privacy who described himself as a shop steward at Hammersmith Hospital and a member of NUPE. Privacy said that it was the arrest of an Irish cook employed at Hammersmith Hospital that had led to the campaign getting under way. Members of his shop stewards committee only found out about the case two days after the cook had been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. The fact that two days had gone by before his family or fellow trade unionists became aware of the situation was scandalous. He claimed success for the eventual release of this person and that, along with other members of the shop stewards committee at the hospital, he had initiated the campaign.

6. Privacy a member of Hatchley Trades Council and UCATT, then spoke about his arrest in 1975. He had been served with an 'Exclusion Order' but claimed that it was through the actions of his trades council and union that he was released after serving three weeks in Brixton prison.

7. Privacy cited the case of two brothers in Coventry, Privacy. Both had been arrested by armed police early in the morning and had been deported to Belfast even though the remainder of their family had lived in the Coventry area for several years. He said that this was the first case in which the campaign had become involved because the telephone number of 'Release' - the number for persons detained under the PT Act to contact - had become known to certain people even though it was not intended to take effect until 11 April. 'Release' had been in a position to put the two brothers in touch with local solicitors who, although unable to prevent their eventual deportation, had ensured that they were taken to a 'safe' area of Belfast.

8. Pat ARROWSMITH, dressed in a leather motor cycle jacket covered with CND and Troops Out Movement medallions, said that she had

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been distributing leaflets to civilians in the Aldershot area when police arrested her under the Act. The police were obviously concerned over the correctness of their action in arresting her but because of the existence of the Prevention of Terrorism Act they made use of it because no other legislation existed. She claimed that her pacifist views were very well known to the police who were quite clearly beginning to use the Act against non-Irish people. She said that she was currently suing the police for wrongful arrest and that any costs forthcoming would be donated to both the Troops Out Movement and TUCAPTA. ARROWSMITH advocated that ever, person arrested under the Act and subsequently released should take the same course of action as herself.

9. The final speaker in the first session was Steve COHEN, who was introduced as a barrister and the author of a pamphlet entitled 'The State the Law and Ireland'. He said that the law should be fought because it was a direct attack upon the Irish communities and that for the reasons already outlined in Privacy 's opening address it simply did not work. He then compared the present Act with the Prevention of Violence Act of 1939 which had been introduced following an IRA bombing campaign in Coventry. It was very significant that both Acts were similar in that neither contained any reference to internment which, he said, was a tool of a fascist regime rather than a socialist government.

10. Privacy closed the session by saying that the committee was in possession of about 50 telephone numbers which, by means of a pyramid, would be used to give immediate support to persons arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He invited those present to add their number to this list.

11. The second session was chaired by Privacy who complained that only 14 people had supplied their telephone number to the organisers during the break. He said that more were needed to enable an effective pyramid to be set up. He said that there would be a collection to cover the debts already incurred. He then introduced the only speaker of the session, Eamonn McCANN, who spoke for about 15 minutes on the necessity to fight against the repressive legislation contained in the Act. He likened it to similar repressive legislation in Northern Ireland (Special Powers Act) and said that because that particular piece of legislation had been on the statute books for so long, people accepted it as a way of life. The danger in this country was that the longer the PT Act remained the more the publicity value decreased for anyone who fell victim to it. He felt that since its introduction, and the existence of the Special Powers Act in Northern Ireland, sections of both the Army and the police were becoming increasingly politicised. The Army had refused an outright direction from the Prime Minister to break the Ulster workers strike and similarly in this country the police were becoming selective in the use of the Act. He cited the case of Privacy who, he said, because of her campaigns around the civil rights movements was very well known to the Special Branch and the Bomb Squad, which were the most politicised elements within the police. She had in effect become a thorn in their sides and had to be removed. Because she was so very

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well known to them and the fact that she was followed everywhere, her mail interferred with and her telephone tapped the police were fully aware that she was not involved in bombings. They were now using the Act to get rid of 'political nuisances'. The Privacy case was particularly unfortunate for the police, firstly since the head of the Bomb Squad had been particularly indiscreet with certain Fleet Street journalists when he had told them privately that he intended to get rid of her, and secondly TUCAPTA would use this case in support of its campaign. He thought that with application the campaign could become nationwide within months and that persons detained under the Act would, with one telephone call, be able to muster assistance.

12. Privacy a member of the Republican Movement, then gave a brief account of his detention under the legislation and his subsequent release because of the actions of Bletchley Trades Council. This was followed by contributions from other provincial delegates, who expressed concern as to whether the pyramid telephone system would work outside London, and from trade unionists who were clearly members of the International Socialists. The latter delegates insisted that the size of the committee be increased to include more trade unionists and Privacy their main spokesman, insisted that only the strength of the trade union movement was able to combat the Act and give effective guidance to the campaign. This was opposed by Privacy Privacy and Privacy all of whom saw it as a move by the IS to take control of TUCAPTA. The chairman, however, remained resolute and allowed all nominations from the IS ranks and effectively excluded any proposals from non-trade unionists. In the event Privacy Paul O'BRIEN and Jerry FITZPATRICK were elected to serve on the committee. Many of the observers became so incensed at this piece of IS bureaucracy that Privacy was unable to put to the meeting the previously agreed resolution and a collection taken at the end of the meeting obviously realised much less than it might otherwise have done.

13. It seems fairly clear that the International Socialists, quiet for so long on the question of Ireland, may now begin to initiate further committees nationwide. However, because of their bureaucracy and sectarian behaviour, the degree of support from other left-wing groups and the trade union movement is a matter of conjecture. This is particularly so in the light of the alternative movement - "The National Campaign Against the Prevention of Terrorism Act and Terrorists' - being organised by Jack PROMEY, the NCCL and the CPGB."

14. References of persons known to have been present:

Pat ARROWSMITH [redacted]

[redacted]

Privacy

Mention re TOM

Privacy

Privacy

Ramonn McCANN

RF.402/ Privacy

Privacy

Mentions re TOM

Privacy

Privacy

Mentions re IS

RF.405/69/746

Pat BOYLE

Privacy

Privacy

Paul O'BRIEN (IS)

RF.402/ Privacy

Jerry FITZPATRICK (Hackney Trades Council)

RF.402/ Privacy

Privacy

Privacy

[redacted]

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6 [redacted]

Privacy

Privacy

[redacted]

Steve GORMAN RF.402/72/103

Privacy

15. References of other persons mentioned in this report:

Jack BROWN RF.405/ Privacy

Privacy

Privacy

[redacted]

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[redacted] G.T.M Craft

Chief Inspector

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CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

[redacted]

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