

1A



S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report

INDEXED
Date 21/6/72 Initials [Redacted]

13 day of April 19 72

SUBJECT

Anti-Internment League

Reference to Papers

400/72/42

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

2. "On Tuesday 11 April 1972 between 9 pm and 10.30 pm a delegate meeting of the Anti-Internment League took place at the Irish Centre, Camden Town, NW1. The meeting was jointly chaired by Privacy and John GRAY. Fifty-five persons were present of whom 27 were voting delegates.

3. Privacy opened by repeating the resolution presented at the last meeting on Tuesday 28 March 1972. The resolution was:- "The Anti-Internment League calls for the immediate release of all persons imprisoned, whether in Ireland or in England, Scotland or Wales, because of their active support for the beleaguered population in Northern Ireland, and will campaign for this demand, and instructs the Committee to inform itself of the situation of persons imprisoned and awaiting trial and to advise on the direction of the campaign". It was unanimously adopted.

4. The next item was the election of five delegates to the Committee of the Anti-Internment League. Five vacancies had occurred as the result of poor attendance of members who had in consequence lost their seats. At the end of the voting, which was restricted to delegates only, the five successful delegates were:-

Privacy	13 votes
Privacy	10 votes
Privacy	9 votes
Paddy PRENDVILLE	8 votes
Privacy	8 votes

Gery LAWLESS, one of the 15 candidates, received only 7 votes and therefore failed to be elected.

5. Following the voting the delegate from Bristol explained, at great length, the current position on the demonstration in Bristol on Saturday 15 April. He said all political organisations within reasonable travelling distance of Bristol had been circulated for their support. After the march it was intended to hold a public meeting, but so far they had had no success in booking a hall so the meeting would probably be in the open. In the evening a

social would be held in Bristol, the profits of which would go to local Anti-Internment League funds. Privacy said three coaches would be travelling from London. The pick-up points would be as follows:

Quez Road, Kilburn NW6	-	10 am
Hole-in-Wall, Rochester Road, NW5	-	10 am
Hammersmith Broadway, W6	-	11 am

The return to London would be staggered with at least one of the coaches waiting until the end of the social. (A copy of a leaflet to be distributed on the march is attached).

6. GRAY then presented a discussion paper on 'Direct Rule and its implications'. It was asked that delegates should take this paper back to their own meetings to obtain the views of their own members. The whole subject would be debated at some later meeting. Several members suggested that because of direct rule and the possibility of the abolition of internment that the Anti-Internment League should organise itself on a broader base so that it could continue to present a united front on the problems in Northern Ireland. As a result it was arranged that an extraordinary delegate meeting would be held on Tuesday 2 May at which time the whole future of the League would be discussed. (A copy of this paper is attached).

7. Privacy called upon the treasurer, Privacy, to give the present financial situation. Much to Privacy consternation Privacy did not appear to be in attendance, which prompted mutterings as Privacy had been asked specifically to attend at the meeting.

8. Privacy then brought the meeting to a close stating that the next delegate meeting would be on Tuesday 25 April 1972.

9. Following the meeting there was much discussion in the bar on the proposed rally by Privacy and his Vanguard followers at Hyde Park on Saturday 29 April. No conclusions were reached save that it was agreed that a united front must be presented and as large a counter-demonstration as possible should take place.

10. A list of those persons identified as having been present at the meeting and of those persons mentioned in this report together with their Special Branch references is given on the attached appendix.

APPENDIX to Special Branch report dated 13 April 1972 concerning
a delegate meeting of the Anti-Internment League.

Privacy

/ Gery LAWLESS

Privacy

/ Paddy PRENDEVILLE

/ Bob PURDIE

Privacy

✓ Norman TEMPLE

Privacy

✓ John GRAY

Privacy

The Anti Internment League

MARCH AND RALLY (in Bristol)

SATURDAY
April 15th

PROTEST AGAINST THE
GLOSTERS MARCH
WITHDRAW TROOPS FROM IRELAND
RELEASE ALL INTERNEES

Assemble:- The Downs top of
Blackboy Hill at 1.00 pm
March through Bristol

Details from AIL 80 Kingsdown Pde
Bristol 6

Initiative or Trick?

The Tory 'initiative' contained no reforms at all. None of the proposals hawked around by Liberals of one ilk or another, e.g. P.R., community government etc. have been put into effect. The great virtue of the direct rule trick is that it has provided the illusion of reform, for the British establishment, and international opinion, without any of the reality.

It has achieved this effect for two reasons;-

1) The Stormont government has been abolished. As an instrument of Tory rule in Ireland it had proved increasingly unsubtle. It was an embarrassment to its masters. The British establishment are relieved that an inconvenient anachronism has been cleared away. Many people in the 6-counties believe that things cannot be as bad now that Stormont has gone.

2) Many people believe that Direct rule means Westminster rule, that the people of the 6-counties are now subject to what passes for British justice here in Britain.

We should make it absolutely clear that this is not so. William Whitelaw will administer all the repressive legislation passed by the old Stormont regime. He is described as Minister of State for Ulster. It would be more apt to describe him as Colonial Secretary with responsibility for Britain's last colony. Ulster's status in terms of the Westminster Parliament is not that of Scotland or Wales, it is that of Cyprus or Kenya in years gone by, with all the possibilities for unfettered repression implied by that.

We should emphasise that the Tory 'initiative' is a desperate reaction to defeat in the face of military and civil resistance, aided by public revulsion at Tory policy here in Britain and abroad.

Where does Imperialism go from here?

1) The revival of Stormont Stormont has been suspended for one year only. No one barring sections of the Vanguard movement believes that it will ever sit again. It has proved impossible to create an indigenous democracy within the 6-county state, a state set up by force and maintained by force. It is not 1912 today, in 1912 the U.V.F. had the support of the Tory party in Britain, and the support of the imperialist interest in Britain. Today those forces believe there are far subtler ways of dominating Ireland than through Mr. Craig.

2) Integration First the Rev. Ian Paisley, and now increasing numbers of Unionists (having waited to see whether Vanguard could do anything) have taken up a logical position, that the next step should be complete integration.

The government have not proposed this, and neither major party wants this, because despite the pretence of U.K. status, 'Direct Rule' etc. both major parties are aware that the 6-County area faces permanent instability under British rule - they want a dinghy on the end of the rope so that if it causes too much trouble the rope can be cut. Neither Labour nor Tory want more Ulster M.P.'s at Westminster. Their political positions are either anachronistic or destructive in terms of Westminster consensus politics.

3) Whitelaw and an illusion of democracy The government are already aware that it does not look too well to have one man entirely responsible for the rule of the area, hence Whitelaw's consultative body. Groups who welcomed direct rule, the S.D.L.P., the Alliance Party, some Unionists should logically press for some slightly less transparent farce. Let them do so, such a pretence can never represent the true voice of the working-class in the 6-counties. Middle-class opportunist politicians may well hang themselves politically if they attempt to lend credence to such moves, which would be welcomed by British Tories.

Conclusion

From the above it becomes clear that the Tory government have no room for manoeuvre. It provides them with an opportunity in the short term, to sow confusion. They do have an added flexibility in their executive control of Ulster. They can make the pretence of liberalism more effectively because they do not have to rely on Stormont to propagandise for them-(no-one ever believed Liberal words from Stormont). From this confusion and with the help of bribery (£15,000,000 for the shipyard and a government post for Robin Chichester-Clark) they hope to buy more time however the contradictions inherent in the situation will catch up with them.

This honeymoon will be over within months. How long will the Tory right tolerate continued military casualties while the government talks of liberalism. How long will the whole Tory party pay out the money to paper over the cracks in this inherently unstable situation.

As time runs out for the Tories, they may take advantage of any confusion within the resistance to fight for outright victory once more. Let us not be taken in let us prepare for the situation within months where what we say today on Direct Rule will be proved true, just as what we had to say about the consequences of internment, and the impossibility of reforming Stormont proved true.

Anti-Internment League Activity

In the short term our main activity must be to explode the myth that reforms have been made. Point out that the Special Powers Act is still operating, that 700 men are still interned and that more men are still being detained. Point out that the Tories say that the internees are now hostages for the good behaviour of the province.

Attack the Labour left, who have always used the excuse that they cannot discuss Ulster. Attack support for Direct Rule.

Within the next month all branches must hold discussion meetings on Direct Rule to clear up any confusion.

Within two months you should try to organise at least one public meeting.

Suitably expanded and amended after discussion. I hope this document can be generally distributed.

Privacy