

E.R.

Blatherwick

I received a further telephone call this afternoon from Mr Michael Canavan, Law and Order Spokesman for the SDLP. He was not pressing for a reply on his request of yesterday for a meeting with the Secretary of State for the group called Silent Too Long but he wanted to make the following points.

He did not intend to accompany the group as they were anxious to establish themselves as non-political. Although, having said that, he broadly agrees with what the group is trying to do and if his presence could help in any way, he would be willing to accompany them.

One of the aims of the group is, as you know, to establish that Loyalist terrorism exists, indeed their members had suffered as a result, therefore he felt confident that one of the subjects the group would raise with the Secretary of State was the Proscription of the UDA.

Mr Canavan went on to say that he wished to make a formal protest about the harassment by the police and army of some of the members of the group, particularly Mr Bernard Blake, the group's public relations officer who I understand was arrested on Tuesday 26 January, questioned closely on the group's activities and later released. To Mr Canavan's mind this arrest was an abuse of the Emergency Provisions Legislation. The homes of two other members, a Mr Seamus McAlorum who acts as Chairman and a Mr Edward McWilliams were also visited by the military on Monday 25 January, although they were not actually arrested.

By way of contrast he pointed out that on 18 January 1982 there had been a demonstration by some 30 men of The Third Force on the streets of the village of Ahoghill, Co Antrim. The men, in three groups of 10, were checking the vehicles and clearly usurping the powers of the police force yet no apparent action was taken to apprehend them.

Roberta Cunneen

E R LUNN (MRS)
Private Secretary

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