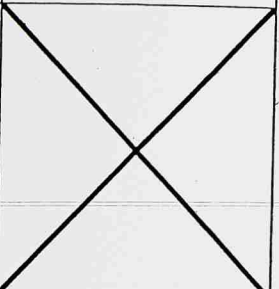
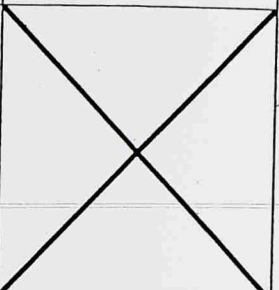



CAB 301/485

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cc - Mr. Partridge (Home office)
Mr. Davie

Ref. A086/910

PRIME MINISTERSubversion in Public Life

I have discussed with Permanent Secretaries the proposals in my submission of 6 December for management initiatives to improve the use made by Departments of information about subversives and to take countermeasures. I have asked them to take the necessary action in their Departments and to report progress later this year. This message has been reinforced to their Principal Establishment Officers, together with your point that Civil Service managers should be ready to apply disciplinary sanctions to subversive trouble-makers, where their conduct justifies it.

2. As to subversives above the level of HEO, I have had a check made with seven Departments, including the largest, who between them cover over two-thirds of the total number of known subversives in the Civil Service. The number above HEO level is relatively small. Some have nobody above HEO level. Assuming that these Departments are representative, there are in the whole of the Civil Service less than thirty at SEO level, less than 10 at Principal and Senior Principal level and none above that level. Furthermore, this special check has shown that none of them at these levels are active troublemakers.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

18 March 1986



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

type mark to Am
as needed. RA 18iii

10 March 1986

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

Sir R Armstrong

Mr Partridge got
confused over new
grade names. AS
divided. Do you still
need to speak?

Dear Robert, ms

A word with
Partridge. He

c- Mr Davie says
more done Partridge;

What he also says I do

Grade 6 not 5 & do

Grade 5. Both should be covered

OFFICE	
A	2690
11 MAR 1986	
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Since you asked Permanent Secretaries on 18 December to take the action agreed at SH's discussion of SPL(85)1, I have explained the position and the background to PEOs at EOM in January, so that they are aware of what has to be done and the importance of sensitive handling as part of good Departmental management. I have also seen individually the few PEOs of larger Departments who were not able to attend that EOM.

PEOs are thus aware that we shall be asking for some feedback in the Autumn, so that we can judge the extent to which the objectives of these new actions are being realised in practice. Meanwhile, I hope that this initiative will have alerted managements in all Departments to the need to be alive to possible subversive actions behind some of their troublesome incidents from now on (eg the DHSS dispute presently being planned in London).

In these meetings with PEOs I have also passed on the Prime Minister's expressed approval for vigorous management action against subversive troublemakers where their conduct justifies it, and I have also mentioned the point about the extent of Ministerial involvement, which will clearly vary between Departments.

I have now launched SPL on the further studies which you asked us to undertake. The timing of our further report will depend on how far we find we can usefully go, but that should become clear soon.

The Prime Minister also asked about the number of subversive troublemakers above the level of HEO in Departments. I am sorry that it has taken a little time to provide the answer but, as you know, we do not have central records in the Security Service or central Departments showing the grades of known subversives, so I have had to check with Departments. In view of the sensitivity and the likelihood of most enquiries of smaller Departments resulting in nil returns anyway, to judge from the information that we assembled during SPL's study, I have restricted my enquiries to the larger Departments and those

represented on SPL. Since these Departments cover more than half the Civil Service and contain two-thirds of the known subversives in it, I am confident that the results given an accurate picture.

My enquiries show that, while there is a significant number of known subversives at HEO level, especially in Departments such as DHSS and DE, the number above that level is very small indeed. The Departments which I have canvassed, which excluded only IR and Customs & Excise of the larger Departments, have revealed 19 known subversives at SEO level, 1 at Grade 6 and 8 at Grade ~~5~~ 7. From this I would deduce that there are fewer than forty in the Civil Service as a whole above HEO level, with fewer than thirty at SEO level and fewer than ten at Principal, and ^{one} nobody above that level.

What is more, none of them are described by Departments as trouble-makers. This is hardly surprising, because a known troublemaker at that level would be well known to senior management anyway. I can recall only one such case in my time at DHSS, a Principal manager in Scotland some years ago who made such a nuisance of himself in abetting rather than discouraging industrial action that he was moved from running a local office to Central Office where he could be under close control and supervision.

It is also perhaps significant that the majority of the known subversives above HEO level work at HQ. I have been able to find only 1 local office manager, and he is said to cause no trouble. Several of them are in the scientific and technical grades (ie SROs, SSOs rather than SEOs), which again will tend to give them less scope for subversion or troublemaking.

The existence of known subversives at senior level is a cause for concern, but I think the relatively small number, the close eye which is kept on them and the fact that none of them are known troublemakers give some cause for regarding this as not a major source of potential disruption. And our recent enquiries have led the main Departments concerned to have a fresh look at their own people listed.

... I am not sure whether the Prime Minister's letter called for a reply from you on this point. If you feel it does, I attach a draft for your consideration.

Yours ever,

Michael

M J A PARTRIDGE

Draft minute from Sir Robert Armstrong to the Prime Minister

910

Subversion in public life

I have discussed with Permanent Secretaries the proposals in my submission of 6 December for management initiatives to improve the use made by Departments of information about subversives and to take counter-measures. I have asked them to take the necessary action in their Departments and to report progress later this year. This message has been reinforced to their Principal Establishment Officers, together with your point that Civil Service managers should be ~~very~~ ready to apply disciplinary sanctions to subversive trouble-makers, where their conduct justifies it.

As to subversives above the level of HEO, I have had a check made with seven Departments, including the largest, who between them cover over two-thirds of the total number of known subversives in the Civil Service. ~~As one would hope and expect,~~ ^{above HEO level} The numbers are relatively ^{small} ~~low~~. Some have nobody above HEO level, ~~and there seem on this basis to be less than thirty~~ ^{at} ~~SEOs,~~ ^{level} and less than ten ^{at} ~~Principals~~ ^{Senior Principal level} listed for the whole of the Civil Service. Furthermore, this special check has shown that none of them ^{at these levels are} ~~are~~ troublemakers; since many of them are at Headquarters establishments, where their activities are under the close eye of senior officers, their scope for causing disruption is in any event reduced to the minimum and ~~would very quickly attract notice and management action.~~

Over the seven departments

found none above that level

Assuming that these departments are representative, that is the whole of the civil service

StP-2751



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

13 December 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1

cc - Mr. Davie
Mr R. Barker

CABINET OFFICE	
A	10416
20 DEC 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTION:	
FILE No	.....

Dear Robert,

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Thank you for your letter of 11 December.

... I attach a speaking note for your use in informing Permanent Secretaries of the assessment which has been made and of the management initiative which you would now like them to undertake in their Departments.

I have already been in touch with Box 500 about the further assessments which we have now been asked to make, and I shall be convening a meeting of the SPL Group in the New Year to take this forward, in consultation with the Departments concerned.

In response to the Prime Minister's question about the number of known subversives in the Civil Service above the rank of Higher Executive Officer, we have to hand the detailed information which we established for those Departments represented on the SPL Group for this particular inquiry. We can readily provide information to you about the position in those Departments. It would take a little longer to check the position in other Departments. I would propose to have a word with Box 500 to see what they have readily available, and I will then write to you again on the full position.

I am sending copies of this reply to the other recipients of your letter.

*Yours ever,
Michael*

M J A PARTRIDGE

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Speaking Notes for Sir Robert Armstrong

I think we are all aware of some disturbing examples of disruptive activities to some of our most sensitive operations over the past year or so. Some of this disruption has stemmed from genuine grievances, but some of it has been fermented by troublemakers, and some of those troublemakers are known to us as subversives.

After discussing the matter with some of you who have become particularly concerned about the extent of this disruption, I decided to commission an up-to-date assessment of the threat. This assessment has shown that, while the number of known subversives is thought to be of the same order as when we last reviewed the position in 1979, there has been a significant shift since then to the largest Trotskyist groups, and in particular to the Militant Tendency, which has increased from 1,500 members in 1979 to over 6,000 members now. MT is now the largest group after the Communist Party of Great Britain and still growing fast. Taken together, the MT and the Socialist Workers Party now have more members in the Civil Service than the CPGB has.

There is only a very small number of subversives who are active troublemakers in each Department, and the great majority of them are in the clerical or sub-clerical grades. These few subversive troublemakers cause disruption, however, out of all proportion to their number. They have concentrated their main efforts on gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest Civil Service unions, the CPSA and the SCPS. They have had mixed success in these efforts in recent years, winning and losing control at different times. But they have also shown themselves adept at exploiting real or manufactured grievances, in particular in sensitive key areas of work in certain Departments. This is particularly true of MT and SWP, whose members are much more disruptive than members of the CPGB and less ready to observe established industrial relations procedures and bide by agreements. MT in particular has shown itself adept at increasing its membership during disputes, especially among younger Civil Servants.

The main threat to security in the past has been considered to be the possibility of classified information being transmitted to hostile or potentially hostile foreign powers, and our security and vetting procedures are directed mainly at countering that threat. This remains a real and serious problem, but the vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding subversives from access to classified information.

Recently, however, a threat of a different kind has assumed significant proportions: that is the threat of the disruption of public business through industrial action directed at areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive, often at considerable cost to the taxpayer. This new threat to key areas is very different, and the traditional vetting processes are not really directed to dealing with it. The answer must lie in vigorous Departmental management measures directed at the relatively small number concerned, rather than by central rules.

To meet this threat, I should be grateful if Permanent Secretaries could concert with their PEO management action of the following kind:-

- (a) each Department has a Security Officer who should be kept informed by the Security Service of the known subversives working in the Department. Each Permanent Secretary and PEO should ensure that they are kept fully and regularly informed of the identity and location of these known subversives. The Departments represented on the SPL Group have found it very beneficial to go through their lists with the Security Service, to update them and to check their accuracy. I should like to see this done in future on a regular basis, at least every year. The Security Officer should alert the PEO and the Permanent Secretary to any significant changes which occur at any time;

- (b) all Departments should identify their key areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption. This may not be as easy as it seems at first sight. What we are concerned with is areas of work where relatively few people can cause disruption out of proportion to the effort required, and embarrass Ministers by the consequential costs or political disruption caused. Computer operations can be particularly sensitive to this type of threat, but so can other areas, especially those involving contact with the public and the main revenue collecting operations;
- (c) all Departments should review regularly the current threat to their operations and the appropriate management responses to it. The action which each Department can take will obviously vary according to its size, circumstances and procedures. I should like to think, however, that we at least have procedures to ensure that, as far as possible, known subversives were not posted to key areas and that persistent troublemakers, whether subversives or not, are identified and removed from there. That is a tricky management exercise, and easier to carry out with known troublemakers who identify themselves, than with subversives who may work through others. Nevertheless, I think it is important that we should be on the look out to take whatever management initiatives we can to reduce the threat to our operations;
- (d) all Departments should similarly take whatever action they can to ensure that those who are granted facility time off work, whether subversives or not, are using it only for the purpose for which it has been granted and are not abusing it for political or other objectives. I am not here talking about the quantum of facility time, although some Permanent

Secretaries may want to review that, but rather its legitimate use. That calls for sound local management, insisting on the proper use of diaries and knowing what those who have been granted facility time are doing with it on a particular day.

The necessary information will need to be assembled and kept within a restricted circle, and the action taken needs to be seen to be no more than the good and sound management that it is. The operation will require very sensitive handling, especially in getting the right message down to key managers, particularly in large Departments.

I have informed the Prime Minister of the conclusions of our assessment and of the action which we propose to take, but other Ministers have not so far been brought into the picture. It may be that this will not be necessary in many Departments; but there may be others where the Permanent Secretary will feel it right to keep his Minister informed of any management action which is to be taken, in particular if it may lead to any reactions or disruption. I am content to leave that to the judgement of individual Permanent Secretaries.

cc - Mr. Davis
Mr. Barker

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/3206

11 December 1985

Subversion in Public Life

You saw a copy of my submission of 6 December to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister has agreed that we should proceed with the management initiative set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 of the minute, and with the further assessments described in paragraph 12. I should be grateful if you could provide me with a speaking note for the first of these purposes.

She has remarked that she thinks that Civil Service managers should be very ready to apply disciplinary sanctions to subversive troublemakers, where their conduct justifies it.

The Prime Minister was somewhat disquieted to learn from paragraph 7 of my minute that there were even a very few subversives in the Civil Service above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. I should be glad if you could let me know whether there is any more information that we can give the Prime Minister about the number and distribution of subversive troublemakers at these levels.

I am sending copies of this letter to all those who attended my meeting on 27 November.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

M J A Partridge Esq CB



10 DOWNING STREET

CABINET OFFICE	
A	10091
9 DEC 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTION	
FILE No	.....

From the Principal Private Secretary

cc - Mr Darie

SIR ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

The Prime Minister was grateful for your minute Ref: A085/3179 of 6 December in which you report on the work of the group of Permanent Secretaries into the changing nature of the subversive threat, both within the Civil Service and more generally.

The Prime Minister agrees that you should proceed with the management initiatives listed in paragraphs 10 and 11 of your minute. She also thinks that it would be worthwhile for your group to make a similar assessment of the current threat of subversion in local government, education and the National Health Service.

The Prime Minister believes that one further action to counter the subversive threat in the Civil Service would be for management to be very ready to sack subversive trouble-makers if they showed any cause under the Civil Service rules.

You should also know that the Prime Minister is somewhat disquieted to learn from paragraph 7 of your minute that there are some, albeit very few, subversives in the Civil Service above the rank of Higher Executive Officer.

N.L.W.

N L WICKS

9 December 1985

Note

See SH(85)2 for circulation

Ref. A085/3179

PRIME MINISTERSubversion in Public Life

Earlier this year I discussed with a few Permanent Secretaries the changing nature of the subversive threat, both within the Civil Service and more generally, as evidenced by some disturbing examples of disruptive activities by the Militant Tendency in particular. As a consequence I decided to commission an up-to-date assessment of the threat. The work was undertaken by a small group of senior officials from Departments most affected, together with people from the Security Service and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch.

2. The group co-opted for their study several Principal Establishment Officers (PEOs) from some of the larger Departments most affected. This enabled them to follow through in some depth the information available from the Security Service, and to match it with management information from certain Departments. As a result, they have been able to construct a detailed picture of the location and activities of subversives in certain key Departments.

3. The group have thus produced a comprehensive and detailed account of the current threat from subversion and recommend a number of possible counter-measures which management in the Civil Service might take to combat it. I have considered their report with a number of Permanent Secretaries, and I am now minuting you with a summary of conclusions about the situation and proposals for action.

Extent and Nature of the Threat

4. The number of known subversives is thought to be of the same order as when the position was last reviewed in 1979 (using for this purpose the definition of subversion devised in 1972 and used by Ministers since then, most recently in the Parliamentary

proceedings on the Interception of Telecommunications Act last Session*). There are about 50,000 nationally, and 1,400 in the Civil Service. All but a small minority belong to left-wing organisations, and the largest scale single group continues to be the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

5. Within the national total, however, there has been a significant shift since 1979 to the largest Trotsyquist groups, and in particular to the Militant Tendency (MT), which has increased from 1,500 members in 1979 to over 6,000 members now. MT is now the largest group after the CPGB and still growing fast. The relevant figures are set out in Appendix I.

6. The group found broadly the same pattern among the known subversives within the Civil Service, with the CPGB still the largest single group, although the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has slightly more Civil Service members or sympathizers than has MT. Together, those two groups now have more members in the Civil Service than the CPGB has.

7. The great majority of subversives in the Civil Service are in the clerical or sub-clerical grades, with very few above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. It is noteworthy that the great majority are thus in the recruitment grades and that very few progress further. Only a very small number of subversives are active troublemakers (ie people who are unreasonably obstructive to management and determined to exploit or create industrial difficulties) - ten or less, even in the largest Departments. There is a similar number of known troublemakers in some Departments who are not known to be subversives.

* "Subversive activities are those which threaten the safety or wellbeing of the State and are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means."

8. These few subversive troublemakers cause disruption, however, out of all proportion to their number. They concentrate their main efforts on gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest Civil Service unions, the CPSA and the SCPS. They have had mixed success in these efforts in recent years, winning and losing control at different times. This is particularly true of MT and SWP, whose members are judged by management to be much more disruptive than members of the CPGB and less ready to observe established industrial relations procedures and abide by agreements. MT in particular has shown itself able to increase its membership during disputes, especially among younger civil servants, and it is those Departments where MT is most influential which have experienced the most trouble.

9. This highlights a significant change in the nature of the subversive threat. The main threat in the past has been considered to be the possibility of classified information being transmitted to hostile or potentially hostile foreign powers, and our security and vetting procedures are directed mainly at countering that threat. This of course remains a real and serious problem. Recently, however, a threat of a different kind has assumed significant proportions: that is the threat of the disruption of public business through industrial action directed at areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive, often at considerable cost to the taxpayer. The vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding subversives from access to classified information. The new threat to key areas is very different, and the traditional vetting processes are not really directed to dealing with it. It has to be countered by vigorous departmental management measures directed at the relatively small number concerned, rather than by central rules.

Counter-measures

10. The group have recommended a number of management initiatives:

- a. All Departments should now conduct the same sort of exercise as those represented on the group have done and

review regularly with the Security Service their lists of known subversives working in the Department. The objective of this is to ensure not only that the lists are kept up to date but also that senior management, and especially the PEO and the Permanent Secretary, are kept fully informed of the identity and location of known subversives in their Department, so that they can review regularly the current threat to their operations and the appropriate management responses to it.

b. All Departments should identify their key areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption.

c. All Departments should develop management procedures to ensure that, as far as possible, subversives are not posted to those key areas and that persistent troublemakers whether subversives or not, are identified and removed from there.

d. All Departments should take action to ensure that those who are granted facility time off work, whether subversives or not, are using it only for the purpose for which it has been granted and are not abusing it for political or other objectives.

11. These recommendations are fully in accord with the precepts of good management. We are faced with a new type of threat, which can only be contained by pinpointing the relatively few individuals concerned and their likely targets, and then using every means open to management to prevent the one from exploiting the other. This will require very sensitive handling, especially in getting the right message down to key managers. We obviously cannot circulate the conclusions of the latest assessment, or even refer to its existence or work, which we have taken great care to keep to a very restricted circle. Only a few Permanent Secretaries have been brought into this exercise so far. I would propose to

take an early opportunity to ask other Permanent Secretaries to undertake the same exercise with their security officers as those represented on the group have already done, and then to follow through with appropriate management action on the lines indicated. I shall stress that we are dealing with a relatively small number of known subversives and self-identified troublemakers in each Department, and also with a limited number of key areas. It should be possible for senior management in each Department to identify the particular measures which they can use to prevent or negate trouble and to ensure that facility time is not abused, if they assemble the necessary information and take an active role in tackling potential trouble. I would not think it right to widen the circle beyond that. It will be for each Permanent Secretary to inform his Minister as necessary about any particular problems arising in his Department and of the management action which will be necessary to counter them.

Further Studies

12. This exercise has been well worthwhile, and I have asked the group to make a similar assessment of the current threat from subversion in local government, education and the National Health Service. They will have to tackle this from the Security Service end alone, on the basis of the information available about known members of subversive organisations who work in each of these areas of public administration. It will not be possible to complement that information with a management view, such as the group were able to obtain from the PEOs of certain Departments, because of the political and public sensitivities of these areas which are not under direct central Government management. But the group consider that they can produce an assessment in the same confidential way that they have conducted the Civil Service inquiry, and I think this could be a useful contribution to our knowledge. We can consider what action to take when we have their further reports.

6 December 1985


ROBERT ARMSTRONG

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The circulation of this document has been strictly limited

SH(85) 2

COPY NO

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6 December 1985

CABINET

SUBVERSION (HOME) COMMITTEE

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

As agreed at the meeting on 27 November 1985, I am circulating herewith a copy of my minute of 6 December to the Prime Minister.

Signed ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Cabinet Office

6 December 1985

Ref. A085/3179

PRIME MINISTERSubversion in Public Life

Earlier this year I discussed with a few Permanent Secretaries the changing nature of the subversive threat, both within the Civil Service and more generally, as evidenced by some disturbing examples of disruptive activities by the Militant Tendency in particular. As a consequence I decided to commission an up-to-date assessment of the threat. The work was undertaken by a small group of senior officials from Departments most affected, together with people from the Security Service and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch.

2. The group co-opted for their study several Principal Establishment Officers (PEOs) from some of the larger Departments most affected. This enabled them to follow through in some depth the information available from the Security Service, and to match it with management information from certain Departments. As a result, they have been able to construct a detailed picture of the location and activities of subversives in certain key Departments.

3. The group have thus produced a comprehensive and detailed account of the current threat from subversion and recommend a number of possible counter-measures which management in the Civil Service might take to combat it. I have considered their report with a number of Permanent Secretaries, and I am now minuting you with a summary of conclusions about the situation and proposals for action.

Extent and Nature of the Threat

4. The number of known subversives is thought to be of the same order as when the position was last reviewed in 1979 (using for this purpose the definition of subversion devised in 1972 and used by Ministers since then, most recently in the Parliamentary

proceedings on the Interception of Telecommunications Act last Session*). There are about 50,000 nationally, and 1,400 in the Civil Service. All but a small minority belong to left-wing organisations, and the largest scale single group continues to be the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB).

5. Within the national total, however, there has been a significant shift since 1979 to the largest Trotskyist groups, and in particular to the Militant Tendency (MT), which has increased from 1,500 members in 1979 to over 6,000 members now. MT is now the largest group after the CPGB and still growing fast. The relevant figures are set out in Appendix I.

6. The group found broadly the same pattern among the known subversives within the Civil Service, with the CPGB still the largest single group, although the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has slightly more Civil Service members or sympathizers than has MT. Together, those two groups now have more members in the Civil Service than the CPGB has.

7. The great majority of subversives in the Civil Service are in the clerical or sub-clerical grades, with very few above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. It is noteworthy that the great majority are thus in the recruitment grades and that very few progress further. Only a very small number of subversives are active troublemakers (ie people who are unreasonably obstructive to management and determined to exploit or create industrial difficulties) - ten or less, even in the largest Departments. There is a similar number of known troublemakers in some Departments who are not known to be subversives.

* "Subversive activities are those which threaten the safety or wellbeing of the State and are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means."

8. These few subversive troublemakers cause disruption, however, out of all proportion to their number. They concentrate their main efforts on gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest Civil Service unions, the CPSA and the SCPS. They have had mixed success in these efforts in recent years, winning and losing control at different times. This is particularly true of MT and SWP, whose members are judged by management to be much more disruptive than members of the CPGB and less ready to observe established industrial relations procedures and abide by agreements. MT in particular has shown itself able to increase its membership during disputes, especially among younger civil servants, and it is those Departments where MT is most influential which have experienced the most trouble.

9. This highlights a significant change in the nature of the subversive threat. The main threat in the past has been considered to be the possibility of classified information being transmitted to hostile or potentially hostile foreign powers, and our security and vetting procedures are directed mainly at countering that threat. This of course remains a real and serious problem. Recently, however, a threat of a different kind has assumed significant proportions: that is the threat of the disruption of public business through industrial action directed at areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive, often at considerable cost to the taxpayer. The vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding subversives from access to classified information. The new threat to key areas is very different, and the traditional vetting processes are not really directed to dealing with it. It has to be countered by vigorous departmental management measures directed at the relatively small number concerned, rather than by central rules.

Counter-measures

10. The group have recommended a number of management initiatives:

- a. All Departments should now conduct the same sort of exercise as those represented on the group have done and

review regularly with the Security Service their lists of known subversives working in the Department. The objective of this is to ensure not only that the lists are kept up to date but also that senior management, and especially the PEO and the Permanent Secretary, are kept fully informed of the identity and location of known subversives in their Department, so that they can review regularly the current threat to their operations and the appropriate management responses to it.

b. All Departments should identify their key areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption.

c. All Departments should develop management procedures to ensure that, as far as possible, subversives are not posted to those key areas and that persistent troublemakers whether subversives or not, are identified and removed from there.

d. All Departments should take action to ensure that those who are granted facility time off work, whether subversives or not, are using it only for the purpose for which it has been granted and are not abusing it for political or other objectives.

11. These recommendations are fully in accord with the precepts of good management. We are faced with a new type of threat, which can only be contained by pinpointing the relatively few individuals concerned and their likely targets, and then using every means open to management to prevent the one from exploiting the other. This will require very sensitive handling, especially in getting the right message down to key managers. We obviously cannot circulate the conclusions of the latest assessment, or even refer to its existence or work, which we have taken great care to keep to a very restricted circle. Only a few Permanent Secretaries have been brought into this exercise so far. I would propose to

take an early opportunity to ask other Permanent Secretaries to undertake the same exercise with their security officers as those represented on the group have already done, and then to follow through with appropriate management action on the lines indicated. I shall stress that we are dealing with a relatively small number of known subversives and self-identified troublemakers in each Department, and also with a limited number of key areas. It should be possible for senior management in each Department to identify the particular measures which they can use to prevent or negate trouble and to ensure that facility time is not abused, if they assemble the necessary information and take an active role in tackling potential trouble. I would not think it right to widen the circle beyond that. It will be for each Permanent Secretary to inform his Minister as necessary about any particular problems arising in his Department and of the management action which will be necessary to counter them.

Further Studies

12. This exercise has been well worthwhile, and I have asked the group to make a similar assessment of the current threat from subversion in local government, education and the National Health Service. They will have to tackle this from the Security Service end alone, on the basis of the information available about known members of subversive organisations who work in each of these areas of public administration. It will not be possible to complement that information with a management view, such as the group were able to obtain from the PEOs of certain Departments, because of the political and public sensitivities of these areas which are not under direct central Government management. But the group consider that they can produce an assessment in the same confidential way that they have conducted the Civil Service inquiry, and I think this could be a useful contribution to our knowledge. We can consider what action to take when we have their further reports.

6 December 1985


ROBERT ARMSTRONG

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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21 October 1985

CABINET

SUBVERSION (HOME) COMMITTEE

—————
THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE
—————

The attached Report prepared by the Interdepartmental Group is circulated for consideration by the Committee at its forthcoming meeting.

Signed ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Cabinet Office

21 October 1985

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CABINET

INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

Covering note by the Chairman

Attached is a report from the SPL Group (membership in Annex A) giving an up-to-date assessment of the threat of subversion nationally and with particular reference to the Civil Service. The report is now being submitted for consideration by SH.

The main points in the report are:-

(1) Definition of subversion

The definition used is that devised by SPL in 1972, quoted publicly by Ministers in 1975 and confirmed recently by Ministers during the Parliamentary proceedings on the Interception of Communications Act (paragraphs 4-7).

(2) Extent of the subversive threat

A detailed assessment of the threat nationally and in the Civil Service is at Annex B, and is summarised in paragraphs 9-11 of the report. The numbers are about 50,000 nationally (0.1 per cent of the adult population) and 1,420 in the Civil Service (less than 0.3 per cent), much the same as in 1979. All but a small minority belong to left-wing organisations, and the largest single group remains the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB); but the largest Trotskyist groups have increased in size, in particular the Militant Tendency (MT).

The numbers in Government Departments are set out in Appendix II to Annex B, and assessments by the PEO members of SPL of the position in their own Departments are at Annex C. These assessments cover the activities of known subversives, the amount of facility time granted, the areas most vulnerable to disruption and the measures taken by Departments to restrict the activities of known subversives and others who cause trouble. An account of subversive influence in the Civil Service Unions last year and this year is at Annex D.

On the basis of these analyses and assessments, SPL has concluded that the subversive threat is not much different in size from six years' ago and in the Civil Service continues to be heavily concentrated among the clerical and sub-clerical grades; but that a much larger part is now played by the younger and more active members of MT and the SWP, who are less ready than members of the CPGB to observe procedures and abide by agreements. There is still the traditional threat to classified information, but there has now grown up an additional and serious risk of disruption of public business through industrial action aimed at vulnerable or politically-sensitive areas of work, in particular the revenue-gathering and public payments centres such as those in DHSS, DE, Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise, and DVLC, Swansea. Trouble-making is by no means confined to known subversives, and only a few of them are active trouble-makers; but those few are adept at exploiting real or imagined grievancies among the lowest grades of younger civil servants, with seriously disruptive results in some cases. The exploitation seems to be more opportunistic than part of a planned strategy (paragraphs 12-15).

(3) Counter-measures

The report concentrates on the securing and dissemination of accurate information about subversives and on measures to curb their activities (and those of non-subversive trouble-makers). The main responsibility should be firmly with each Department, in consultation as necessary with the Security Service, as the Radcliffe Report said. Further measures recommended are:-

- (a) better arrangements between each Department and the Security Service to keep lists reviewed and up-to-date, as SPL has now done for the Departments represented by PEOs on it (paragraph 16);
 - (b) better arrangements within Departments to ensure that, in addition to the Security Officer, the PEO and Permanent Secretary know of the information available, and review it regularly and their assessment of the current threat and what management response is needed (paragraph 17);
 - (c) Departments should identify their key areas vulnerable to disruption and develop procedures to ensure as far as possible that subversives are not posted there and that persistent trouble-makers, whether subversives or not, are removed from there (paragraphs 18-22);
 - (d) Departments and the Treasury should take management action arising from their current review of facility time to curb abuses and reduce the scope for the achieving of political objectives in departmental time (paragraph 23).
- (4) Further work by SPL

This report comments briefly on the NHS and local government. SPL could undertake a further review of other areas such as the NHS or local government in, say, twelve months' time if that was thought worthwhile, although it could not examine other areas in such detail or so covertly as has been possible for the Civil Service in this report, with the help of the PEOs on the Group (paragraph 3).

M J A PARTRIDGE

Cabinet Office
21 August 1985

CABINET
INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Introduction

1. As the Inter-Departmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) we have been asked to produce an up-to-date assessment of the current threat to the Civil Service posed by members of subversive organisations, to assess the changes which have taken place in that threat since our last review in 1979 (contained in its final form in SH(79)3 (Revised)) and to provide a means for the appropriate dissemination of information on the threat. The composition of the Group and our terms of reference are set out in Annex A to this report, together with the names of the representatives of certain other departments whom it was thought appropriate to bring into our discussions for this particular task from the Ministry of Defence, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health and Social Security. The contribution of the Principal Establishment Officers (PEOs) to our discussions has been invaluable in enabling us to set alongside the security assessment of the subversive threat a management analysis of the problems posed by known subversives to their employing departments and a practical appreciation of possible counter-measures that might be considered necessary.

2. We preface our assessment of the current threat by an account of the situation on the definition of subversion, because that lies at the heart of this matter and has been the subject of considerable public debate in recent months. Our assessment describes the scale and nature of the subversive threat nationally and in the Civil Service. As with our 1979 report, we have not covered the threat from espionage or from Irish terrorism, which are separate and special problems, but on this occasion, we have commented on the number of Scottish and Welsh nationalist extremists, which is extremely small. We have then gone on to analyse in some detail the distribution, size and nature of the subversive threat in major departments, and to discuss with the help of the PEOs on the Group our assessment of the activities of the known subversives within their departments and our views on possible counter measures.

3. We now present our conclusions on all these matters for consideration by the Subversion (Home) Committee (SH) and invite them to consider how work on a response should be taken forward and to direct further action by us, either on further periodic assessments of the threat or on whether we should examine in a similar way other areas of public life. Study of the subversive involvement in Local Government and the National Health Service has been suggested. The Security Service does not systematically investigate either area, but its impression from its study of the various subversive organisations themselves is that in both cases the threat is limited. Only MT has been systematically

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seeking to secure for its members seats as local councillors and, to date, it has achieved significant success only in Liverpool. Similarly, there is very limited subversive involvement in the Health Service unions at national level and, while there is some subversive involvement at District level in NUPE, the Security Service's impression is that the threat posed by subversives in the NHS at present is not large. A comprehensive examination of either area by the Security Service would take time and those of our members with administrative links with the NHS and local government would find it difficult to add significantly or systematically to any Security Service work. Nonetheless, a further review by the Security Service of the subversive threat to all areas of public life might be considered worthwhile in, say, twelve months' time.

The definition of subversion

4. In our 1979 report, we referred to the 1952 Directive to the Director General of the Security Service to defend the realm from actions of persons and organisations "which may be judged to be subversive to the State", and to the definition of "subversive" which was devised in 1972 and which has been generally accepted for this purpose:-

"Subversive activities are those which threaten the safety or well-being of the State and are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means."

5. The definition was quoted by Home Office Ministers in both Houses of Parliament in 1975 and was confirmed by the Home Secretary in his evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons for Home Affairs during its recent investigation into the Special Branch and adopted by them in their report (House of Commons paper 71, May 1985). This definition was also used by the Home Secretary and the Lord President during debates on the Interception of Communications Bill currently before Parliament.

6. The Home Secretary has confirmed in Parliament that both parts of the definition have to be satisfied before an activity can properly be classed as subversive for this purpose, and that the definition does not cover activities which are hostile to a Government or its policies, but which are not intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy. These limitations are important in ensuring that legitimate political or industrial opposition to the Government is not classed as subversive, and that counter-subversive investigations and actions do not become politically biased or influenced, and hence do not infringe the injunction in the Directive to the Director General that the Security Service should be kept "absolutely free from any political bias or influence and nothing should be done that might lend colour to any suggestion that it is concerned with the interests of any particular section of the community, or with any other matter than the Defence of the Realm as a whole".

7. The main criticism which has been levelled at this definition of subversion is that it is too wide and should be narrowed by being further restricted to activity which is unlawful. Such a restriction has been resisted by Ministers in Parliamentary debates on the Interception of Communications Bill on the grounds that it would allow too much scope to many subversive organisations, who take care to keep within the law and who profess their intention of achieving power by legal and constitutional means, but whose real aims are the destruction of the present system of Parliamentary democracy. Our review has given us no reason to recommend any change in the present definition.

The subversive threat

8. The Security Service provided us with a detailed assessment of the subversive threat nationally and with particular reference to the Civil Service, which we attach at Annex B as amended in the light of our discussions. This takes forward and updates the historical account of subversive groups contained in our 1979 report, and goes into more detail about the current threat in the Civil Service.

9. The current number of subversives is about 50,000 or a little over 0.1 per cent of the adult population, and it has not changed significantly in size since 1979. These people belong to more than 70 organisations, of which by far the most significant in size are the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), with about 13,000 members, and the three largest Trotskyist groups:

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Militant Tendency (MT), with over 6,000 members, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), with about 4,000 members each. The CPGB is only about two-thirds of its size in 1979, the SWP has remained approximately the same size, but the MT has increased four-fold over that period. On the extreme right, the National Front (NF), with 2,500 members, and the British National Party (BNP) with 1,500 members, are the most significant organisations though not all members are judged to hold subversive views. The NF is far smaller than it was even five years ago.

10. The scope for most of these individuals to make trouble in pursuit of their subversive political objectives is limited, but it centres on their employment and the opportunities which that offers for disruption. Only the CPGB, MT, WRP and SWP pose a significant subversive threat on a national scale. The public service (the Civil Service, nationalised industries, NHS, education system and local government) and the Labour Party are the organisations most at risk from their activities.

11. We have concentrated in this report on the threat within the Civil Service. The total number of people with subversive records in the Civil Service known to the Security Service has increased since 1979, from 1,270 to 1,420. Of these, those associated with the CPGB remain the largest single group (at about 600) but, whereas they represented about two-thirds of the total

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number in 1979, they now represent less than half. The Trotskyist groups have been the fastest growing in the Civil Service over the last six years. The MT and SWP are particularly numerous, and in some Departments, such as DHSS, DE and the Inland Revenue their combined strength now exceeds that of the CPGB. By contrast, the number of civil servants known to belong to extreme right-wing groups, mainly the NF, is very small.

12. There are several important points to be made about these figures. First, they represent only those individuals known to the Security Service to be civil servants and to belong to, or be associated with, these groups, so that to this extent they may understate the true number of subversives. Our assessment, however, is that, with the possible exception of MT, which attempts to keep its membership secret, understatement on this account is relatively small. More importantly, the numbers include all those who are known to have been members or close associates of the organisations concerned at some time, and to this extent they will overstate the number of those currently active, who may be a significantly smaller proportion of the total.

13. Secondly, the total number in relation to the size of the Civil Service is less than 0.3 per cent, and by no means all those listed who are active in subversive organisations take an active part in Civil Service affairs. The political activities of some are confined to their outside political interests. We asked our PEO members for their assessment of those listed in their departments who were known to take an

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active part in Civil Service trade union activities, with particular reference to who were known troublemakers. In this context, by troublemakers we mean those who appear unreasonably obstructive to management and determined to exploit or create industrial difficulties. The various departmental assessments are summarised in Annex C. The number of active troublemakers on each list was 10 or less, even in the largest department. Moreover, by no means all the known troublemakers in departments were subversives.

14. On the basis of the departmental assessments we found no evidence of concerted efforts by subversive organisations to recruit civil servants or to organise their concentration in particular areas. The majority of those on the list were in clerical or sub-clerical grades, and very few were above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. (It is worth noting that, with the exception of HEO, these are all recruitment grades.) Their main activities, particularly those of MT, were directed at gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest Civil Service unions, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS), at which they have had mixed success in recent years, at some times winning control and at others losing it, as they have recently done with the CPSA NEC. The SCPS NEC has stayed the same so far as subversive members are concerned. In Annex D we set out the subversive membership for 1984/85 and 1985/86 of the main Civil Service trade union executives.

15. The vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding members of subversive organisations from access to classified information. The risk now is of disruption of public business through industrial action directed at those areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive. Such areas include the major computer centres which handle social security contributions and payments to the public, which were the target of industrial action in the 1981 pay dispute and in the more recent Newcastle shift-working dispute, both of which were sustained for many months. Others are the revenue-gathering activities of the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise, and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre at Swansea. But CPGB, MT and SWP members are active and adept at exploiting real or imagined grievances among staff, particularly among clerical and sub-clerical grades, and at exploiting any disruption begun by others, though CPGB members in particular among the subversives traditionally observe established industrial relations procedures, and abide by agreements. One important consequence of such exploitation is an increase in the membership of the subversive groups during the disruption, especially among younger civil servants, which in turn increases the influence and resources of the groups. MT in particular has increased its membership during disputes in recent years, and it is those departments where MT is most influential which have experienced the most trouble. Non-subversive troublemakers have been equally in evidence, however, in recent years causing disruption.

Possible measures to counter the threat

16. We examined the arrangements under which the Security Service provides information about

individual civil servants with subversive records to security officers in departments, which are set out in the Manual of Personnel Security Measures. A summary appears in Annex E. We considered that these arrangements were working effectively, in that each department has, in its possession, a list of subversives employed there. As the report on security procedures in the public service (the Radcliffe Report, Cmnd 1931) made clear, each Government Department is individually responsible for maintaining a proper standard of protective security within its own field, advised as necessary on technical questions by the Security Service. We thought, however, that the arrangements for keeping the lists of subversives up-to-date could be improved and we concluded that departments should review their arrangements with the Security Service.

17. It was not clear what use departments made of these lists, apart from ensuring that people on them were not posted to sensitive posts such as Ministerial offices or to posts with access to classified information, and we concluded that there was room for improvement in the way in which departments used this information. It is particularly important that the information should not remain solely with the Security Officer, but should be made known regularly to the CEO and the Permanent Secretary, so that all departments could make the kind of periodic assessment of the threat within their department which we have made in our work for the departments represented on our group for this review; and so that they could also regularly assess what management response was needed from time to time to counter it. Proper security arrangements would need to be made, and care would need to be taken, to ensure that the information remained secure and that it was not used improperly by management. Nevertheless, we think that a more

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active use of the information is called for, both to focus on the extent and the nature of the actual threat from subversives, and to enable departments to keep subversives under observation to determine which are the troublemakers and take action to limit their capacity for causing disruption.

18. In view of the importance of vulnerable areas of work to the strategies of subversive groups, we have considered whether there might be scope for reducing the number of those areas. We recognise, however, that the division or duplication of work that would be required would, in most cases, be prohibitively expensive. We consider, however, that departments should identify formally, where they have not already done so, those Key Areas of work within their responsibility which are vulnerable to disruption although we recognise that, outside the core key areas of Private Office and mainframe computer operations, these may vary from time to time.

19. We have also considered whether the vetting arrangements should be extended or other checks should be introduced for staff transferred or recruited to work in Key Areas. Our conclusion is that this would not be practicable. An extension of vetting would be particularly contentious and costly. Positive Vetting (PV) and (unavowed) Normal Vetting (NV) have been developed as methods of protecting classified information. Their extension to unclassified work would not only go against assurances given by Ministers to Parliament over many years, but would be beyond the Security Service's present resources to support. It also seems to us very doubtful whether the substantial additional work involved would be worthwhile in terms of results. Nonetheless, departmental recruiters

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at any level need to be advised that they must beware of potential troublemakers when making their selections. Such advice could not be overt, but seems to us to be sound management sense, and should be explained as such.

20. The primary responsibility for counter-measures must lie with departmental management, in the light of the periodic assessments which we recommend they should make of their own subversive threat, to develop procedures in conjunction with the Security Service and to ensure that any relevant Security Service information is considered before postings are made to work in vulnerable areas. This is already done by some departments, on an ad hoc basis, and should, in our view, be extended to all. It would need to be a covert process, because any systematic barring of known subversives from certain work would be contentious. It must be left to the judgment of each PEO and Permanent Secretary, in consultation with the Security Service, to decide how widely to disseminate the information he has about subversives and how this should be communicated.

21. We recognised that such procedures could only address part of the problem. Many areas of Civil Service work are staffed by non-mobile grades who, once recruited, cannot be dismissed, without serious fault, or transferred elsewhere. This is especially the case with clerical grades, which is the level at which subversive organisations have been most successful in recruiting civil servants. Nevertheless, it seems to us important that persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, should, wherever possible, be identified and distanced from such work, and there might be scope in some departments for achieving this, even for non-mobile grades.

22. For many departments, the numbers involved are so few that each case could be the subject of individual attention. Departments with larger

numbers of subversives listed might find it most effective to concentrate their efforts, at least in the first instance, on the known troublemakers who come to their notice, while continuing for the rest to ensure that they do not have access to sensitive posts or material. Each department will need to make its own assessment and adopt the most practical counter-measures suited to its purpose. It will probably find it necessary and desirable, however, to keep a particularly close eye on all activities of subversive troublemakers and ensure that wherever possible they come under the supervision of a good line manager.

23. One aspect to which we have paid particular attention is the number of known subversives involved in Civil Service trade union activities and the amount of facility time granted to them on that basis. For many departments, this overlap is small, and relatively few are on substantial facility time of 70 per cent or more. For some departments, however, the number is more worrying, and this gives a fresh impetus to the need for action to curb abuses of facility time which the Treasury and individual departments already have in hand, to ensure that known subversives are not allowed to use the position which they have secured to further their political objectives in departmental time. It is obviously desirable, for example, for departments to keep a close eye on the granting of substantial facility time to known subversives. It is even more important that line managers check as far as possible on the way in which facility time is used. We also concluded that good management measures of this kind would be as effective against troublemakers who are not subversives as against subversives.

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24. For most of the grades in which subversives are employed, no regard is paid to security information in the normal promotion procedures; but at the higher levels where problems of postability can arise, one or two departments do have covert systems to enable them if necessary to take these problems into account before promotions are decided. We consider that this action is right.

Recommendations

25. We recommend that SH should:

(a) take note of our assessment of the size and nature of the current threat of subversion in public life generally, and in the Civil Service in particular;

(b) agree that no study of other areas of public life is necessary at present, but should invite the SPL Group to reconsider the threat from subversion in public life in twelve months' time, or earlier if the Security Service advises that there has been a significant change in the threat;

(c) invite departments to review with the Security Service the arrangements necessary to ensure that their list of those subversives who are working in their department is always up-to-date;

(d) invite departments to review within their departments the arrangements for ensuring that senior officers (principally the PEO and the Permanent Secretary as necessary and in addition to the Departmental Security Officer) receive all information about the subversives working there and in the light of it decide on appropriate counter-measures;

(e) invite departments to identify formally, where they have not already done so, those Key Areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption;

(f) invite departments to develop procedures to ensure that, as far as possible:

(i) subversives are not posted to work in Key Areas; and

(ii) persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, are identified and removed from work in Key Areas;

(g) invite departments to satisfy themselves that all those who have been granted facility time, whether they are subversives or not, are not abusing it.

CABINET

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMPOSITION

1. The Composition of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Mr M J A Partridge, Home Office

Members

Mr D H J Hilary, Home Office
Mr D B Smith, Department of Employment
Mr W O Ulrich, Department of Education and Science
Mr C J S Brearley, Cabinet Office
Mr W K Reid, Scottish Office
Mr C O Shipp, Security Service
Deputy Assistant Commissioner C V Hewett,
Metropolitan Police
Mr R M Hastie-Smith, Ministry of Defence
Mr K F J Ennals, Department of the Environment
Mr N E Clarke, Department of Health and Social
Security

TERMS OF REFERENCE

2. To give guidance on the collection, and to co-ordinate the assessment of, intelligence about threats to the internal security of Great Britain arising from subversive activities and to make periodic reports to the officials concerned.

SECRETARIAT

3. The Secretaries are:

Mr R A Harrington, Home Office
Mr S R Davie, Cabinet Office
Mr J F H Barker, Cabinet Office
Mrs S Rimington, Security Service

The Threat from Subversion: 1985Introduction

Subversion was defined in 1972* as

"activities which threaten the safety or well being of the state and are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means".

That definition was accepted by Ministers in the 1970-74 Conservative administration and in subsequent Labour administrations. It was quoted in both Houses of Parliament by Home Office Ministers in 1975 and defended in its entirety by the Home Secretary in February 1985 before the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee. Pressure for change to the definition inside and outside Parliament is likely to continue.

Subversive Organizations and Individuals

2. The heart of the definition lies in its reference to the undermining or overthrowing of parliamentary democracy. Those persons judged to be subversive under the definition, are, in consequence, for the most part, those who subscribe to the main anti-democratic philosophies. These are Trotskyism, Fascism, Marxism-Leninism (previously known as Maoism), Anarchism and, despite the protestations of some Eurocommunists to the contrary, Communism. There are currently at least seventy organizations in Great Britain which adhere to those philosophies, varying in size from the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) with about 13,000 members, to a handful of exclusive Anarchist and

* SPL (72)1 of 11 October 1972

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Marxist-Leninist groups with only two or three members each. The total membership of all subversive organizations in Britain at present probably does not exceed 35,000 (see Appendix I). However, some of the larger organizations, such as the CPGB, have attracted persons, who, while never actually members, are sympathetic to their aims. Such sympathisers probably number about 15,000. In addition, other individuals, few in number, hold anti-democratic views, but are not members of, or sympathetic towards, any established subversive organization. The total number of subversive individuals in Britain, therefore, is probably currently about 50,000 or a little over .1% of the adult population.

The Current Threat

3. The scope for most of these individuals to pursue actively their subversive political objectives is limited, depending as it does largely on their employment and the opportunities it offers for disruption. To that extent, therefore, the threat posed by most subversives at any one time is potential rather than real. On the extreme right, some of the small Fascist organizations, and groups like the National Front and the British National Party, whose leaders, but not all of whose members, hold subversive views, present public order problems. They have little influence in industry and the public service, however, and do not, in consequence, present a subversive threat of any proportion outside the public order field. Members of some anarchist organizations, and of other groups, such as certain Black racial extremists in London, and Scottish and Welsh nationalist extremists, also present localized or limited public order problems largely resulting from their propensity for violence. On the extreme left, most groups are small and, as organizations, have little impact. At present, therefore, only the largest Communist and Trotskyist parties pose a significant threat on a national scale.

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The Communist Party of Great Britain

4. The CPGB is now a quarter of the size it was in 1940. It is also currently rent with internal policy differences. Three factions within the Party are discernable; first the pro-Soviet hardliners led by Fergus NICHOLSON and numbering approximately 400; second the "Industrials", who emphasize the importance of trade union work, look to the Soviet Union for Communist leadership, comprise about a third of the membership, and enjoy the support of the 'Morning Star' newspaper; and third, the Eurocommunists, whose views are, for the most part, accepted by the Party leadership, and who probably have the support of more than half the membership. The rivalry between these factions came to a head in May 1985 when the Party held its first Special National Congress since the one held in 1957 after the Soviet intervention in Hungary. The Congress reflected and consolidated the control of the Party apparatus by its Eurocommunist wing. Despite these divisions, the CPGB remains the largest subversive organization in Britain and the best established in many areas of public life. Moreover, while its leadership no longer slavishly follows the political line laid down by the Soviet Union, the Party still supports the main aims of Soviet foreign policy and many members continue to see themselves as part of an international movement led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In consequence, Party members are in the forefront of support for the activities of International Communist Front Organizations such as the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions, and, domestically, play a leading role in the British "peace" movement, where members of the Party's hard-line pro-Soviet factions, at least, have consistently advanced Soviet views on disarmament.

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5. Historically the CPGB's greatest influence has been in industry, particularly in heavy industry, and the Party continues to exercise a disproportionate influence within some trade unions. Three Party members sit on the 50 member Trade Union Congress General Council; Ken GILL of the Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section (TASS) of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW), Mick McGAHEY of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Ray ALDERSON of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA). In addition another four members of the General Council have varying degrees of sympathy with the Party's aims. The Party does not currently control any trade union at national level, but dominates AUEW/TASS and has significant influence in other sections of the AUEW, in the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians, the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) and in the NUM. It seeks to co-ordinate the activities of Communist trade unionists through a system of national and local industrial organizers, and of trade union or industry "advisory" committees. In practice these arrangements are only partially effective due largely to the indifferent calibre of the full-time Party officials involved. Nevertheless the Party or its members still have the ability on occasions to exploit, for political ends, real or imagined grievances among workers and to exacerbate any industrial unrest to which those give rise, and Communists have played a significant part in, for example, every coal strike since 1970, the 1982 rail strike, and in the industrial action at Grunwick and at the 'Messenger' print-works in Warrington. However, Communist agitation in industry is only effective when and where there are industrial issues which can be exploited. Moreover, the current retrenchment in those heavy industries within which the Party has been most successful in the past, has acted as a brake on militancy, and this has reduced the Party's ability to make trouble.

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6. In recent years the Eurocommunist dominated leadership of the CPGB has encouraged its members to involve themselves in what the Party manifesto 'The British Road to Socialism' (1977) describes as "broad democratic alliances". By this means the leadership has hoped both to increase the Party's influence within the Left in British politics and to shift the Left's policies further leftwards. The Party claims that this policy has had some success. Communists have joined such pressure groups as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF) in comparatively large numbers, and it is true that some of those bodies espouse causes which are also advocated by the Party. CND, for example, advocates policies on nuclear weapons virtually indistinguishable from those of the Party, and the CPBF's main objective, the acceptance by the media of a "right of reply", was first advanced by the Party, in 1977. However, the significance of these similarities of view should not be over-estimated. The policies of the Left in Britain have always tended to move leftwards during periods when the Labour Party is in opposition, and the CPGB no longer, as it once did with CND, dominates any major pressure group. In most, its members are now greatly outnumbered by campaigners with no subversive affiliations, who, while supporting individual policies also advanced by the Party, do not accept the Party's leadership or ideology.

7. Of all subversive groupings in Britain, the domestic Communists (ie the CPGB and the much smaller New Communist Party which broke from it in 1977), remain the best established in public sector employment. About 45% of the 1800 or more Civil Servants and employees of public corporations identified as having subversive records are Communists or Communist sympathisers, and Communists are the best represented among school teachers and lecturers in higher and further education. The threat posed by these people, however, is

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significant in the Civil Service only in certain circumstances; where the individuals are union officials, where there are concentrations of members and the work lends itself to disruptive activity, and where individuals have access to information which could be exploited for political purposes. Similarly, in education their influence is significant only in the few institutions where members are concentrated, in certain disciplines which have attracted Communist teachers, and at Universities where Communist academics hold leading positions or have attracted a student following. and Eric HOBBSAWM, formerly of Birkbeck College, for example, have both exerted considerable influence within their own academic disciplines and beyond.

Trotskyist Organizations

8. Britain is the only European country in which Trotskyism has attracted and retained a significant following, but the history of British Trotskyism has been characterized by a succession of divisions, ideological disputes and realignments. For many years it has concentrated round the policies and activities of three men; Gerry HEALY, Tony CLIFF and Ted GRANT, now leading members respectively of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Militant Tendency (MT). Trotskyists adhere to TROTSKY's 'Transitional Programme' of 1938 which envisaged the establishment of a situation of "dual power" between workers' organizations on one side and the state administration on the other, in the expectation that the resulting conflict between the two would lead to revolution. While all British Trotskyists accept this theoretical basis for their activities, they differ over the means necessary to achieve the ends envisaged by TROTSKY. Two different approaches are discernable. Some groups like MT, and the groups formerly

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known as the Socialist League (SL) and the Workers Socialist League (WSL) practise entryism into the Labour Party, that is they seek to further their revolutionary aims by the clandestine penetration of the Labour Party with the aim of influencing, and eventually controlling, its policy. Other groups like the SWP, the WRP, the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Revolutionary Communist Party label entryism as "reformist", and seek in their different ways to undermine the authority of the State and its institutions directly rather than through an established non-subversive political party. Trotskyists have traditionally stressed the importance of international revolution. However no Trotskyist, as opposed to Communist, government has ever been established. British Trotskyist groups, in consequence, do not enjoy the political and occasional financial support that, for example, the CPGB has received from Eastern Europe.

Militant Tendency

9. The largest and most threatening Trotskyist group in Britain is now MT which, with a membership exceeding 6,300, is four times larger than it was at the time of the 1979 General Election. It has ambitious plans for future membership growth and for extending its activities. Its greatest strengths have been the dedication of its members and its strong internal discipline. These have given it an influence out of proportion to the comparatively small size of its membership. Most members are young; the average age of known and fully identified members and sympathisers in Liverpool and Glasgow (some 10% of the total), for example, is 30. Despite its recent growth, however, MT is rarely able to muster sufficient strength on its own within any organization to exert a dominating influence upon it. In consequence it operates by first establishing a well disciplined, if small, group of members within an organization.

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Those members then seek to attract the support of others by disguising their Trotskyist philosophy and instead advocating left-wing or radical policies which they anticipate will attract a wider following. Indeed MT's own political programme, published in the 'Militant' newspaper in 1981, was designed specifically, not to publicise its revolutionary objectives, but to attract recruits by arousing disillusionment with moderate Labour Party policies. It calls, inter alia, for the nationalization of the top 200 companies and the abolition of the monarchy and House of Lords. Once established with a following in an organization, MT is often able, through the assiduous attendance of members and sympathisers at meetings and on committees, to exert considerable influence.

10. MT's activities reflect its aim of infiltrating and eventually controlling the Labour Party. In pursuit of that aim, its principal targets are Constituency Labour Parties, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), local councils, trade unions and the National Organization of Labour Students (NOLS). In all those areas it has achieved notable successes in recent years. MT now has two MPs* and significant influence in approximately 20 Constituency Labour Parties. At the 1984 Labour Party Conference, ten resolutions were actually proposed by MT members on topics ranging from local government and control of the police to the economy and defence. Five of those resolutions were carried against the wishes of the Party's National Executive Committee (NEC). MT claimed, probably accurately, that 30 of its members spoke during the debates out of an overall total of 80 from Constituency Parties. These successes were achieved despite the fact that during 1984 MT gave trade union activity priority over Constituency Party work. They reflected MT's strength in the Labour Party at local level, a strength derived from the membership of all MT members of the Labour Party itself.

* Terry FIELDS (Liverpool Broadgreen) and Dave NELLIST (Coventry South East)

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11. MT has been engaged during the last eighteen months in a major recruitment drive which has included trade unionists, and has been particularly successful in the white collar unions such as the CPSA and the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU). The Tendency employs in its London Headquarters at least eight full-time industrial organizers and others in the provinces, and has set up "caucuses" (clandestine groups which meet to co-ordinate MT activity) in nearly thirty unions. Numerically too thin on the ground to win great influence within unions unaided, MT generally operates by seeking to establish or take over "Broad Lefts" (loose coalitions of union members with a wide range of left-wing views) in unions. The CPSA and POEU national executive committees were both under the control of "Broad Lefts" set up by MT although the CPSA "Broad Left" has since split in two. In addition MT currently enjoys varying degrees of influence at national level in the TGWU, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades '82, the National Union of Seamen, the Confederation of Health Services Employees and the Fire Brigades Union. Members of NALGO and the National Union of Public Employees are also currently a target for MT.

12. MT members were involved in industrial action during 1984 at DHSS in Newcastle, at British Leyland, in the national docks strike and in the miners' strike. MT as an organization, however, does not foster industrial militancy as an end in itself; rather it sees it as a way of gaining recruits among union members and of raising the political consciousness of the workers with the aim of eventually shifting the policies of the trade unions, and through them the Labour Party, leftwards. MT, therefore, judged their involvement in the DHSS and miners' strikes as particularly beneficial, and in October 1984 claimed to have recruited up to 600 miners. Similarly, despite the eventual collapse of the DHSS strike, MT believes that it is held in high esteem by

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CPSA members in Newcastle and that it is likely to make more recruits to add to the eighteen made during the strike. MT now claims to have 400 members in the CPSA, and while there is no evidence that it has singled out Civil Servants as a particular target, it is clear that it is making a number of recruits within the Civil Service, particularly at clerical officer level. The number of known MT members in the Civil Service increased in 1984 by about 70 to at least 300. On the information currently available Departments most affected are DHSS, the Department of Employment and the Inland Revenue.

13. MT has had successes in other areas. The LPYS, the official youth wing of the Labour Party, is controlled by MT at national level and has been since 1970. This gives it a seat, as of right, on the Labour Party's NEC. MT has also made intermittent progress within NOLS, the student body for Labour Party members and supporters, although its current influence on the NOLS executive is slight. In local government it has been conspicuously successful in Liverpool City Council. This success has resulted from hard work. MT members and sympathisers only represent a minority within the ruling Labour majority on the Council but they have rehearsed their voting tactics carefully in advance and adhered closely to them at meetings. Members have also attended virtually all meetings of the Council and Sub-Committees diligently, gained chairmanships of key Sub-Committees, and tried hard and, with some success, to attract support from other Labour Party Councillors. These tactics have given MT an influence on the Council far greater than its mere voting strength. Attempts by MT to exploit local government issues elsewhere, by encouraging members to stand for election as councillors, are still at an early stage.

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14. MT has, however, had its problems, and these have reduced its subversive impact. The five members of the editorial board of 'Militant' were expelled from the Labour Party in 1983 amid considerable press speculation about MT's activities, and the Labour Party leadership is well aware of MT's true Trotskyist character. Press interest continues to have an adverse affect on the organization. MT hopes that in the selection and reselection process of Labour Party Parliamentary candidates for the next general election they will succeed in obtaining more candidacies. The organization has, however, been upset by the publicity which has been focused on their intentions and believe that this has damaged their chances particularly in Central Scotland. Internally the very rapid expansion of membership in the last eighteen months has not been problem free. It has forced MT to relax its very strict requirements for the training and "integration" of recruits. As a result the commitment and ideological understanding of some new members is lacking and the leadership has come to accept that quite a high proportion of new recruits may leave within a few months. Moreover, MT started 1985 in some financial difficulty and found it necessary for a time to postpone the appointment of further full-time staff.

Other Trotskyist Groups

15. Other Trotskyist groups which practise entryism into the Labour Party, such as SL and WSL have not been as successful as MT. Indeed SL is now divided over the effectiveness of that tactic, and despite some limited success in the LPYS and in a few Constituency Parties, may well break up over it. In fact the impact of most of the smaller Trotskyist groups is limited, and, besides MT, only the SWP and WRP present a significant subversive threat. Those two groups have both suffered a decline in membership from peaks in the

mid 1970's, however, and to that extent are less of a threat than they were. In addition, the SWP has had an ambivalent attitude towards the involvement of its members in trade union activity at senior level. During 1983 and 1984 SWP members were forbidden by the Party to take national office in trade unions. However, members were still often involved in picketing, in the sale of their newspaper 'Socialist Worker' at industrial disputes and sometimes in violent work-place confrontations with the police. Moreover, that Party, like MT, claimed to have made successful recruitments among miners during the miners' strike, and during 1983 alone its members were actively, and sometimes violently, involved in industrial troubles at Tilbury Docks, in the October 1983 social workers dispute and, in large numbers, in the 'Messenger' newspaper picketing. Such SWP activity will continue and may increase after the recent SWP decision to resume work within trade unions at national level.

16. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the SWP (then known as the International Socialists) attracted large numbers of higher education students to its ranks. That educational background of some of the membership is still reflected in the comparatively large number of SWP members who are employed in the Civil Service and as teachers. After the CPGB, the SWP has, with at least 380 the largest number of known members and sympathisers employed in the Civil Service of any subversive organization. Its members are apparently most numerous in the DHSS. However, they are only likely to have an impact if they are union officials or where a number work together. At educational institutions, however, SWP members, although not as numerous as Communists, are often more conspicuously active among the students, largely because the Party encourages their involvement in public demonstrations. During the spring of 1982 alone, the Party led twenty-one occupations of College buildings

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in protest over alleged education cuts and more recently its members have been involved in the unrest at the Polytechnic of North London and in the numerous protests over cuts in student grants. Such activity is seen by the Party as a good way of attracting recruits, and as a means of undermining what it considers to be "bourgeois" educational institutions. The SWP supports a full-time student organizer from Party funds and an SWP national student committee assists with the co-ordination of Party activity at more than 50 institutions. As a means of extending the Party's influence and attracting new student recruits, Party members organize Socialist Worker Student Societies (SWSS) at colleges and polytechnics. Many SWSS members eventually join the SWP. However, the Party is not the force it once was in the education field. Its student membership was down from about 800 in 1976 to about 450 in 1984, and its school teacher membership from approximately 300 in 1978 to about 200 in 1984. Nearly 100 of those school teacher members, however, work in London where they have been involved in industrial action over the teachers current pay claim.

17. The WRP continues to receive financial assistance from the Palestine Liberation Organization and to benefit from the earnings of Vanessa and Corin REDGRAVE both of whom are WRP Central Committee members. As a result, it is comparatively wealthy, and is able to produce a professional daily newspaper, 'News Line', and to spend lavishly on attempts to recruit young people to its youth section, the Young Socialists (YS). It has, in recent years, concentrated on the establishment of Youth Centres in areas of high unemployment. Those Centres, administered by YS members, ostensibly provide vocational training and recreation for unemployed youth, but are, in fact, effectively venues for Party activity and recruitment among a potentially disaffected section of the

population. Centres have so far been opened in Brixton, Glasgow, Liverpool, Merthyr Tydfil, Nottingham, Newcastle and Manchester. In industry, the WRP is less successful and less conspicuously active than either MT or the SWP, but its front organization, the All Trades Unions Alliance has attracted some trade unionists to WRP policies.

1985: The Vulnerable Areas

18. One area particularly vulnerable to subversive activity is the Civil Service. At the end of 1984 approximately 1400 Civil Servants were identified as having subversive records; the majority were Communists and Trotskyists. 1144 of these were employed in eight Departments (see Appendix II). However, those statistics probably understate the real figures. MT, in particular, is a clandestine organization and details of all its members are not known. The MT members in the CPSA and the Communists in the SCPS in particular will be hoping to exploit Civil Service pay negotiations, and changes in work practices resulting from the introduction of new technology, to recruit new members and disrupt the machinery of government. Vetting and other security procedures have virtually excluded subversives from the Armed Services and the Police and have protected classified information within Departments. The Navy and the RAF vet most of their employees, but the Army vets only those who have access and commissioned officers. Nevertheless the number of soldiers with subversive records is negligible. One effect of vetting procedures, however, has been to concentrate those with subversive records in Departments, whose information is not, in the main, classified.

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19. Other organizations are also at risk. The nationalized industries are a perennial target for subversive attack, particularly from the CPGB via their unions. Dissatisfaction among Health Service employees will continue to offer opportunities for subversive groups, particularly MT. Following the rate capping legislation and MT's success in Liverpool, local government is likely to be a target for subversive groups who will be hoping to secure seats as councillors, and recruits among local authority workers, and to use local grievances to attack government policies. After a period of comparative stability, the education system offers to subversives the opportunity for disruptive action, primarily to Communists and, in London, to SWP teachers, who will continue to try to exploit discontent over salaries. Trotskyist students are also likely to be in the forefront of unrest over grants and the control of student union funds. Finally, the Labour Party is at risk from MT and the small entryist groups, who will continue to seek to exploit the selection and reselection process for Parliamentary candidates, and local government grievances, to increase their influence within that Party.

20. The importance of subversive organizations and the risk they pose, however, should not be over-estimated. Subversive groups are small and are only really effective when they can exploit events, policies or grievances to attract the support of others for their activities. Even then, and this applies particularly to MT's machinations within the Labour Party, such support is volatile and can easily be lost, if, for example, their real intentions are exposed. In some areas, notably within industry and on employment issues, subversive organizations find it comparatively easy to find opportunities that can be exploited. In other areas they find it more difficult. A number of Trotskyist groups, for example, have attempted to use the unrest

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in Northern Ireland as a vehicle for attacking successive governments, but support for Irish Republican extremism on the mainland has remained negligible. Nevertheless, subversive organizations remain constantly on the look-out for new opportunities to exploit and for chances to misrepresent government policies for their own political ends.

Summary

21. In sum, there are probably about 50,000 subversives in Britain divided between some seventy organizations. The ability of most of those individuals to make trouble in pursuit of subversive political objectives is limited, but the CPGB and the three largest Trotskyist groups, MT, the SWP and the WRP do currently pose a significant subversive threat on a national scale. The Civil Service, nationalized industries, National Health Service, education system, and local government as well as the Labour Party are the organizations most at risk from their activities.

SECRETSubversive Organizations in Great Britain - December 1984

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Approximate Membership</u>
<u>Domestic Communist Parties</u>	
Communist Party of Great Britain	13,000
Young Communist League	400
New Communist Party	450
Others	60
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Total	13,910
 <u>Foreign Communist Parties</u>	
(with significant Great Britain membership)	
AKEL (Cypriot Communist Party)	730
Italian Communist Party	600
Iraqi Communist Party	350
Turkish Communist Party - Leninist	250
Others	360
	<hr/>
Total	2,290
 <u>Trotskyist Groups</u>	
Militant Tendency	6,300
Workers Revolutionary Party	4,000
Socialist Workers Party	4,000
Socialist League	700
Revolutionary Communist Group	230
Red Action	200
Revolutionary Communist Party	190
Others	550
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Total	16,170

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Organization

Approximate
Membership

Right Wing Extremist Organizations

National Front*	2,500*
British National Party*	1,500*
Fascist Groups	420

Total (subversives only) c500

Marxist-Leninist (formerly Maoist) Groups

Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)	450
Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)	120
Revolutionary Communist League of Britain	100
Others	130

Total 800

Anarchist Organizations

Anarchist Federations	300
Big Flame	150
Direct Action Movement	100
Others	300

Total 850

Other Subversive Organizations

Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Extremists	50
Black and Asian Racial Extremists	150
Others	50

Total 250

Overall Total of Subversives

= approximately 35,000

* These organizations attract individuals of a wide range of opinions; not all hold subversive views.

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Appendix II

Government Departments - holders of subversive records on 31 December 1984

The total number of identified holders of subversive records for whom Government Departments had security responsibility was 1420 on 31 December 1984. 733 had Trotskyist records, 607 Communist records and anarchist, nationalist and Fascist records totalled 80. The table below sets out in detail the figures for the 8 Departments with more than 50 such people and gives combined figures for the rest. The table covers individuals with records ranging in significance from 1984 membership of a subversive organisation to old sympathies. (It does not, however, include anyone whose subversive record has been re-assessed and found to be no longer significant.) In line with vetting requirements the figures also include close relatives of members or sympathizers who are not themselves members of a subversive group.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Subversive Total</u>	<u>CPGB/ NCP</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>MT</u>	<u>Other Trotskyists</u>	<u>Anarchists/ Nationalists</u>	<u>Fascists</u>
Health and Social Security	360	116	114	86	31	7	6
Employment Group	239	96	58	46	30	6	3
Inland Revenue	169	53	44	50	11	5	6
Defence	111	66	16	13	11	-	5
Environment/Transport	108	56	17	14	13	4	4
Trade and Industry	53	29	4	12	5	1	2
Home Office (including the Prison Service)	52	29	2	5	4	1	11
Customs and Excise	52	24	4	13	4	4	3
	1144	469	259	239	109	28	40
Other Departments	276	138	58	45	23	7	5
	1420	607	317	284	132	35	45

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DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SUBVERSIVES:
MARCH 1985Introduction

In examining their records, Departments found that there were a few discrepancies between their records of the subversives employed and those of the Security Service. The main reasons for this were that the Security Service had not received regular notification of retirements, resignations and transfers from Departments and had not itself always informed Departments of the name of the Trotskyist group to which an employee belonged.

Scottish Office

2. The Departments of the Secretary of State for Scotland employ just over 12,000 staff. In those Departments, 25 persons have come to notice as subversives, seven of whom are Communists, seven SWP members and seven MT members or sympathisers. Three of the 25 are of HEO grade, the remainder being more junior; five are prominent trade union activists, and two of those (in the Department of Registers of Scotland) are CPSA office holders. The Departments' experience is that the targets most vulnerable to disruption are payments made by mainframe computer to such groups as farmers, retired teachers, recipients of student grants and suppliers generally, and the work of the Sheriff Courts and the conveyancing and house sales facilitated by the Department of Registers. In the Scottish Office as a whole, there are about 150 accredited representatives of the Unions, who log about 10 per cent facility time on average. Only 9 people receive 100 per cent facility time.

Department of Education and Science

3. There are some 2,400 staff in DES of whom 15 have come to notice as subversives. The DES also has security responsibility for the Research Councils whose staff are neither Civil Servants nor employed by the Crown, and who total around 12,000 of whom 27 have come to notice as subversives. As regards the DES staff, the majority of subversives employed belong to the CPGB. Most work in London, but two are employed at the computer centre in Darlington. Only one is an active member of the trade union side and he has no facility time. The Department's policy is to keep known subversives away from posts in Ministerial Private Offices and from sections supporting them or the most senior officials, and from Establishments, Finance and Science Branches. The Department has experienced no significant problem caused by the subversives, and has few areas of work vulnerable to disruption.

Department of Employment

4. The Group (ie the Department itself, the Manpower Services Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and ACAS) employs about 54,500 staff, the great majority in regional and local offices. Of the subversive total of around 240, Trotskyists account for over 130 and the Communists for just under 100. Many have been employed for some time and most have not, by their behaviour, known activities or in other ways attracted the adverse attention of management. Although nearly half of the total number of subversives are active in trade union affairs and 71 receive facility time, most - particularly CPGB members - act responsibly whereas there are other activists without any subversive record who are both troublesome and irresponsible. In recent years subversives have not been responsible for disruptive industrial action and there are currently no offices in the Group which appear vulnerable to such action. Management ensures that known subversives are not posted to sensitive HQ areas or to specially vulnerable work.

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Department of Health and Social Security

5. The DHSS has over 93,000 staff, most of whom are employed in social security offices locally or at headquarters in Newcastle and North Fylde. The Department is the largest employer of subversives in the Civil Service, with in excess of 350. About a third are Communists and two-thirds Trotskyists. Most are CPSA members, and 74 are trade union activists receiving significant facility time. The DHSS areas most vulnerable to disruption are the computer centres at Newcastle, Washington, North Fylde, Reading and Livingstone, where industrial action by computer staff has an immediate effect on the payment of benefit to the public and/or related work. Emergency measures had been devised and used successfully to maintain a reduced service during industrial action in 1984, but those were expensive. The local office network generally is not considered to be especially vulnerable, short of a national Civil Service strike, because only a small proportion of the offices would be affected at any one time. However, a disproportionately large number of members of subversive organisations work in local offices in Inner London, which may be more at risk than those in the provinces. The Department takes care to keep subversives away from Ministerial Offices and classified information. In the development of the computer projects within the Social Security Operational Strategy - referred to in the recent Green Paper as the Computerisation of Social Security Administration - careful consideration is being given to their vulnerability to various contingencies, including industrial action and fall-back arrangements are so far as possible being included in the design of the projects.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Ministry of Defence

6. The MOD has 174,000 staff, of whom 79 have a subversive record (more than 30 having left the Department since their name had been notified by the Security Service). The majority (54) were CPGB members, with much smaller numbers in the various Trotskyist groups. The individuals concerned are scattered across a large number of MOD UK establishments, and the only significant feature is a large concentration in the Rosyth area, where 13 CPGB and 2 MT members are employed. About 20 subversives are trade union activists who receive facility time, about 12 of whom are involved in extra-mural political activity, ranging from standing as a prospective Parliamentary candidate to taking part in demonstrations. The Department has been unable to find any evidence for a pattern of activity among this scattered group and on the evidence available concludes that there do not appear to be any MOD areas of work which are currently particularly vulnerable to disruption.

Department of the Environment/Department of Transport

7. The DOE (which includes PSA) and the DTp have about 48,000 staff of whom about 100 are known subversives. A slim majority are Communists with most of the remainder being members or sympathisers of various Trotskyist groups. Eighteen are trade union activists, of whom eleven are trade union side office holders and three received 100% facility time. Not all the Departments' troublemakers are people with subversive records. The Departments have not experienced any significant industrial action since 1981. The most vulnerable unit within the Departments' responsibility was the DVLC computer centre at Swansea, which was the subject of serious disruption in 1981. There is another major computing centre at Hastings (which is more quiescent) and a number of highly sensitive military and civil establishments which the PSA maintains, but in respect of which the risk of militant action remains low.

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Annex D

Subversive influence in the Civil Service Unions

A. Civil and Public Services Association

The subversive membership of the 1984-85 National Executive Committee (NEC) was 16 out of 29, there being 5 members of MT, 9 Trotskyist sympathisers and 2 members of the CPGB. The subversive membership of the 1985-86 NEC is 2 out of 29, there being 1 member of the CPGB and 1 Trotskyist sympathiser.

B. Society of Civil and Public Servants

The subversive membership of the Executive Council has remained 11 out of 26, 1984-86. There are 8 CPGB members, 1 former member of the New Communist Party assessed as a pro-Soviet Communist, 1 member of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and 1 Trotskyist sympathiser.

C. Institution of Professional Civil Servants

There were no known subversives on the 1984-85 National Executive Committee nor are there any currently.

D. Civil Service Union

None of the members of the National Executive Committee 1983-85 has a subversive record.

E. Inland Revenue Staff Federation

The Executive Committee 1984-85 and 1985-86 includes 1 member of MT out of a total of 29.

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Arrangements for providing Departments with Security Service Information

Departments obtain information held by the Security Service in three ways:

- a. from the normal vetting process;
- b. from the positive vetting process; and
- c. through the 'after care' arrangements.

Normal Vetting

2. In general, normal vetting is applied to all persons who are being considered for employment which affords access to information classified CONFIDENTIAL or above. Departments submit details of the candidate being vetted and the Security Service then either -

- a. advise that there is "no security objection" (NSO); or
- b. provide the Department with a summary of the security information and give an assessment of the degree of risk which would attach to the employment of the individual in a post affording access.

Positive Vetting

3. In general, positive vetting is applied to all persons who are being considered for employment which affords constant and regular access to TOP SECRET information. During the positive vetting process Departments submit details (additional to those required in normal vetting) and the Security Service makes checks and provides any information or advice that may be necessary.

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After Care

4. A Security Service reply 'NSO' to a vetting enquiry is necessarily valid only for the moment when it issues. It is not a certificate of reliability. It is, therefore, important that any new information which might affect the reliability of someone occupying a sensitive post is brought promptly to the attention of the responsible authorities. This is met by procedures known collectively as 'after care'. They include a service of information provided by the Security Service.

5. If the Security Service receive significant adverse information about a civil servant, they provide the Department concerned with a summary, whether or not he has currently access to classified information. Similar action is taken in respect of those employed by certain other public bodies for which there is a vetting commitment, and for members of the Armed Forces.

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DATE: 6 December 1985

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CABINET OFFICE

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cc PS/Chancellor
PS/Minister of State
Sir P Middleton
Mr Kemp
Mr C D Butler
Mr Truman

PS/Minister of State
Privy Council Office

c- Mr Partridge

Sir R Armstrong f.i.

CPSA AND MILITANT

You will have seen yesterday's Times article on the above (copy attached) and it may be useful for you to have a line, especially as there has been some Press comment before about Militants in government employment, particularly in the Sundays.

2. The reported planned campaign by CPSA is, of course, internal union business and part of the long-running internal power struggle within the union. There is nothing to be gained by getting directly sucked into this, and any questions about particular Militants in particular departments must be referred to the department concerned.

3. As to any more general questions about the Government's attitude towards Militants employed by and in the Civil Service, I think it is best not to say anything about the lack of constraints over action which might be taken - after all, Militant is not a proscribed organisation and any question of using Civil Service conduct rules on political activity in this area are fraught with difficulty and sensitivity. The preferable response is:

Q1 Government's attitude?

A1 The Government is of course supportive (as Government and as employer) of any effort by civil service unions to eradicate any unrepresentative power block.

Q2 What is the Government doing?

A2 The Government's programme of legislation in the employment field has done much to put decision-making in unions back in the hands of its members. Within the civil service, when CPSA

extremists tried to take the membership out on strike without proper ballot, legal action was taken and in the event the membership decided not to strike.

4. This is the line that will be incorporated into briefing for Oral Questions for the Civil Service Minister on Monday 16 December, subject of course to any developments in the short term.

Alan Hurst

A F HURST

IRD

Moderate union leaders plan Militant purge in Civil Service

By David Felton, Labour Correspondent

Moderate leaders of the largest Civil Service union are planning a purge from positions of influence of supporters of the Militant Tendency which has used the union as one of its main footholds in the labour movement.

The leadership of the Civil and Public Services Association believes that at least a third of the union's 900 branches are either controlled or heavily influenced by Militant, which has for some years held a stranglehold on the Department of Health and Social Security section, which with 60,000 members is the largest.

Opening shots in the anti-Militant campaign are expected today from Mr Alistair Graham, CPSA general secretary and a member of the TUC General Council, in a speech in the north-east. The union's leaders also are expected to make full use of a leaked document written by a Militant sympathizer analysing the far left's chances of controlling dozens of branches in Scotland.

The document, drawn up for the national committee of the Broad Left organization in CPSA which draws together Militant and other Trotskyist factions, relates only to the west of Scotland. But it is understood a similar operation has been mounted in all regions of the country.

A key Militant aim is to retain and increase its influence in the DHSS section and to try to win official posts in branches in the Ministry of Defence. The moderate backlash is likely to be aimed initially at the Militant leadership of the largest branch, the 5,000-strong Newcastle central office computer centre which has been used as the grouping's power base in the union.

The document on Scottish recruitment unearthed by the moderates has been written by a left winger who holds official positions in the Department of Trade and Industry in Scotland

Referring to the 200-strong branch in the Procurator Fiscal's office, the document says that the rival BL84 left wing organization "usually try to influence this lot, but they are inexperienced and impressionable and could be won".

Overall the author says that he believes "we have to make progress in DHSS specifically and possibly in MoD. The area committee (covering all branches) can be controlled by us but I believe we should wait till the next annual general meeting and ensure that we have a turnout there to take over".

"When we have control of the committee we can gain more BL (Broad Left) supporters particularly if we can get the organizer's post and run day schools," the document states in a reference to using the union's education system to win more members.

It calls for more campaigning to recruit more BL members "but take care not to serve too much notice of intent to the BL84 about the area committee as they'll retreat to their nearest meeting place in some masonic lodge to plan opposition. We should therefore play on their inactivity and ignorance."

In earlier references to particular branches, the author draws attention to membership at Glasgow airport and suggests that advice may be sought from Mr Terry Adams, a full time CPSA official responsible for civil aviation, who is one of the leaders of the Militant faction in the union.

Union leaders are hoping that the anti-Militant mood being generated by Mr Neil Kinnock in the Labour Party can be emulated in the CPSA and that Militant can be "smashed". As a first step it is likely that a rival moderate organization will be established at the Newcastle computer centre to challenge Militant's domination.

● Sheffield city council's ruling Labour group has ditched

SECRET AND PERSONAL

COPY No. 1 of 12 copies

SIP-2751



Permanent Secretary
Terry Heiser CB

Department of the Environment

2 Marsham Street London SW1P 3EB

01-212 8051

5th December 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB
Permanent Secretary
Cabinet Office
WHITEHALL
London SW1

MS

cc - Mr Davie
Mr R Barker

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Dear Robert

SH(85) 1st MEETING: MINUTES
SUBVERSION (HOME) COMMITTEE

It seems to me that paragraph 9 of the minutes of last week's meeting is rather compressed. I think we agreed that SPL should seek to establish the current threat from subversion in local government, in education and in the national health service in relation to the main thrusts and direction of effort by subversive organisations concerned on the basis of existing information, rather than in relation to new enquiries related to the disposition and behaviour of individuals.

I am copying this to other members of the Committee who were present, and to Sir Lawrence Airey.

Yours
Terry

T M HEISER

StP-2751



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

4 December 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

CABINET OFFICE
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~~c - Mr. Davie~~

Dear Robert,

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

After the meeting of SH Committee on 27 November I offered to prepare for your consideration a draft of the minute which it was agreed that you would send to the Prime Minister to inform her of the work of the SPL Group and of the conclusions which SH reached on it.

... I enclose a draft for this purpose. I have assumed that you would not be sending the Prime Minister a copy of the SPL Group report itself, and therefore I have made the minute self-explanatory. The only part which I have suggested enclosing is Appendix I of the report, which sets out succinctly our estimates of the size of the various subversive organisations. If you wished to enclose the full report, a suitable reference could readily be added to paragraph 2 of the draft.

I have tried in the draft to bring out the limitations and sensitivities involved, and also to lay the main emphasis on good management practice. That should help with the emphasis on Permanent Secretaries rather than Ministers being made responsible for the follow-up action, and also with the management message to be put down the line. I have also tried to bring out that efforts need to be concentrated on only a very small number of key people, and that we are not talking about tackling the several hundred known members of subversive organisations who are currently causing no trouble at all. Similarly with facility time, we placed a deliberate emphasis in our report on controlling the abuse of it rather than concentrating on the quantum, although some Permanent Secretaries will no doubt wish to tackle the latter in some cases as well.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Brian Cubbon and I will ensure that the Home Secretary is fully briefed on the situation before you circulate your minute. I shall be in touch with the SPL Group to put in hand our further studies which you have requested.

Yours ever,

Michael

M J A PARTRIDGE

SECRET AND PERSONAL

3119

E.R.

Draft minute from Sir Robert Armstrong to Prime Minister

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Earlier this year I discussed with a few Permanent Secretaries the changing nature of the subversive threat, both within the Civil Service and more generally, as evidenced by some disturbing examples of disruptive activities by the Militant Tendency in particular.

As a consequence I decided to ~~revive the official Commission on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) under Home Office chairmanship to produce an up-to-date assessment of the threat, and to provide a means for the appropriate dissemination of information on it.~~

undertaken by a small group of senior officials from departments most affected, together with people from the Security Service and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch.

3. The SPL group have ^{thus} produced a comprehensive and detailed account of the current threat from subversion and have ~~usefully gone on to~~ recommend a number of possible counter-measures which management in the Civil Service might take to combat it. I have considered their report ^{with a number of} in the Permanent Secretaries' ~~Committee on Subversion (Home) (SH)~~ and I am now ^{proposing for} minuting you with ^{a summary of} our conclusions about the situation and ~~the action we should now take.~~

and nature
Extent of the threat

4. ^{number to be} The SPL Group's ~~assessment is that~~ ^{was last} the number of known subversives is of the same order as when they ~~last reviewed~~ ^{the position} in 1979 (using for this purpose the ~~same~~ ^{same} definition as they ^{used since 1979} devised in 1972 and as ~~has been~~ used by Ministers since then, most recently in the Parliamentary proceedings on the Interception of Telecommunications Act last Session*). There are about 50,000 nationally, and 1,400 in the Civil Service. All but a small minority belong to left-wing organisations, and the largest single group continues to be the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB). ⁹⁵ Within the national total, however, there has been a significant shift ^{to the largest Trotskyist} groups, and in particular to the Militant Tendency (MT), which has

*"Subversive activities are those which threaten the safety or well-being of the State and are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means."

E.P.

increased from 1,500 members in 1979 to over 6,000 members now, and ^{MT} ~~which~~ is now the largest group after the CPGB and still growing fast. The relevant figures are set out in Appendix I.

6. The Group found broadly the same pattern among the known subversives within the Civil Service, with the CPGB still the largest single group, although the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has slightly more CS members or sympathizers than has MT. Together, those two groups now have more ^{in the Civil Service} CS members than the CPGB has.

①
↑

2. The Group co-opted for ^{their} ~~this~~ study several Principal Establishment Officers (PEOs) from some of the larger Departments most affected. This enabled them to follow through in ^{some} ~~more~~ depth ~~than previously~~ the information available from the Security Service, and to match it with management information from certain Departments. As a result, they have been able to construct a ~~more~~ detailed picture ~~than ever before~~ of the location and activities of subversives in certain key Departments. ^{in the Civil Service} The great majority of subversives are in the clerical or sub-clerical grades, with very few above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. It is noteworthy that the great majority are thus in the recruitment grades and that very few progress further. Only a very small number of subversives are active troublemakers (ie people who are unreasonably obstructive to management and determined to exploit or create industrial difficulties) - ^{ten} 10% or less, even in the largest Departments. ~~And~~ There is a similar number of known troublemakers in some Departments who are not known to be subversives.

the Socialist Workers Party

8. These few subversive troublemakers cause disruption, however, out of all proportion to their number. They concentrate their main efforts on gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest ^{Civil Service} CS unions, the CPSA and the SCPS. They have had mixed success in these efforts in recent years, winning and losing control at different times. This is particularly true of MT and ^(SWP), whose members are judged by management to be much more disruptive than members of the CPGB and less ready to observe established industrial relations procedures and abide by agreements.

E.P.

MT in particular has shown itself able to increase its membership during disputes, especially among younger civil servants, and it is those Departments where MT is most influential which have experienced the most trouble.

9. The ~~Group~~ ^{thus} have highlighted ^a the significant change in the nature of the subversive threat, ~~from obtaining classified information to the disruption of public business through industrial action directed at areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive, often at considerable cost to the taxpayer.~~ The vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding subversives from access to classified information. The new threat to key areas is very different, and has to be countered by vigorous Departmental management measures directed at the relatively small number concerned, rather than by central rules.

Counter-measures

- 10. The ~~SPL~~ ^{Group} have recommended a number of management initiatives:-
 - (i) all Departments should now conduct the same sort of exercise as those represented on the Group have done and review regularly with the Security Service their lists of known subversives working in the Department. The objective of this is to ensure not only that the lists are kept up to date but also that senior management, and especially the PEO and the Permanent Secretary, are kept fully informed of the identity and location of known subversives in their Department, so that they can review regularly the current threat to their operations and the appropriate management responses to it;
 - (ii) all Departments should identify their key areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption;
 - (iii) all Departments should develop management procedures to ensure that, as far as possible, subversives are not posted to those key areas and that persistent trouble-makers, whether subversives or not, are identified and removed from there;

The main threat in the past has been considered to be the possibility of classified information being handed to hostile or security liable foreign powers, and our security and vetting procedures are directed mainly at preventing this threat.

This is where we remain a real and serious problem, which is readily, however, a kind of a defence line has assumed a significant proportion. Only is the threat of

and the traditional vetting processes are not really directed to dealing with it. It

E.P.

(iv) all Departments should take action to ensure that those who are granted facility time off work, whether subversives or not, are using it only for the purpose for which it has been granted and are not abusing it for political or other objectives.

10. ~~The SH Committee have endorsed~~ ^T these recommendations, ~~which~~ ^{are} fully in accord with the precepts of good management. We are faced with a new type of threat, which can only be contained by pinpointing the relatively few individuals concerned and their likely targets, and then using every means open to management to prevent the one from exploiting the other. This will require very sensitive handling, especially in getting the right message down to key managers. We obviously cannot circulate the conclusions of ~~the SPL~~ ^{one level} ~~Group~~, ^{we} or even refer to its existence or work, which ~~they~~ ^{we} have taken great care to keep to a very restricted circle. Only a few Permanent Secretaries have been brought into this exercise so far. ~~I would regard the action we are taking as part of good management practice in Departments to reduce the incidence and effects of disruption by troublemakers.~~ I would propose to take an early opportunity to ask Permanent Secretaries to undertake the same exercise with their security officers as those represented on the ~~SPL~~ ^{group} have already done, and then to follow through with appropriate management action on the lines indicated. I shall stress that we are dealing with a relatively small number of known subversives and self-identified troublemakers in each Department, and also with a limited number of key areas. It should be possible for senior management in each Department to identify the particular measures which they can use to prevent or negate trouble and to ensure that facility time is not abused, if they assemble the necessary information and take an active role in tackling potential trouble. I would not think it right to widen the circle ^{beyond that. It will be for}

11. ~~The only Minister who is so far aware of this work is the Home Secretary, with his particular responsibilities for security matters. The primary responsibility for action should lie with each Permanent~~

E.R.

~~Secretary, who will need to inform his Minister~~ ^{as necessary} ^{any} ~~about the~~ particular problems arising in his Department and of the management action which will be necessary to counter them.

Further studies

12. This exercise by the ~~SPL Group~~ has been well worthwhile, and I have asked ~~them~~ ^{the group} to make a similar assessment of the current threat from subversion in local government, education and the national health service ~~for our consideration~~. They will have to tackle ~~this~~ from the Security Service end alone, on the basis of the information available about known members of subversive organisations who work in each of these areas of public administration. It will not be possible to complement that information with a management view, such as the ~~SPL group~~ were able to obtain from the PEOs of certain Departments, because of the political and public sensitivities of these areas which are not under direct central Government management. But the ~~SPL Group and the Security Service~~ consider that they can produce an assessment in the same confidential way that they have conducted the civil service inquiry, and I think this ~~could~~ be a useful contribution to our knowledge. We can consider what action to take when we have their further reports.

~~13. I am sending a copy of this minute to the Home Secretary.~~

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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SH(85)1st Meeting

Copy No: 1

CABINET

SUBVERSION (HOME) COMMITTEE



MINUTES of a meeting held in Conference Room C,
Cabinet Office, 70 Whitehall,
on Wednesday 27 November at 11am

PRESENT

Sir Robert Armstrong (In the Chair)
Cabinet Office

Sir Kenneth Stowe
Department of Health and Social Security

Sir Brian Cubbon
Home Office

Sir Clive Whitmore
Ministry of Defence

Sir Michael Quinlan
Department of Employment

Mr T M Heiser
Department of the Environment

Sir Angus Fraser
HM Customs & Excise

Sir William Fraser
Scottish Office

Sir David Hancock
Department of Education and
Science

Sir Antony Duff
Security Service

Mr M J A Partridge
Home Office

SECRETARIAT

Mr J F H Barker

Mr S R Davie

Cabinet Office
2 December 1985

SECRET AND PERSONAL

The Chairman said that the meeting had been convened to discuss the report from the Interdepartmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL), (SH(85)1) which assessed the present threat of subversion with particular reference to the Civil Service. He had decided in January 1985 with some of those present that it was time to have such a review.

2. Introducing the report, Mr Partridge said that the departments represented on SPL had found this a most useful exercise. It had, however, identified some weaknesses in the present procedures, including, for example, the fact that the departmental lists of those with subversive records were not always up to date, and that the information about staff on them did not always reach the senior staff who had a 'need to know'. The established procedures for looking after classified information were reasonably clear and defined but subversive troublemakers, who did not necessarily have access to classified material, could still cause considerable danger and disruption and procedures were necessary for dealing with them. Departments were therefore urged to identify their key areas where troublemakers could do most damage and to find ways of preventing subversives from working in those areas. This was not something which could be laid down by central edict; it was primarily a matter of good local management.

3. In general discussion, Permanent Secretaries agreed that the report from SPL was helpful and that the exercise had been worthwhile. But one particular problem was how to get the right message to key managers. Unlike the positive vetting procedures, which were laid down and published, action taken to deal with troublemakers, whether subversive or not, would be much more difficult to defend publicly if the need arose.

4. Sir Kenneth Stowe commented that he felt some concern, since, as Accounting Officer for the Department of Health and Social Security, he was ultimately responsible for paying salaries to those of his staff who were on facility time but who, in reality, spent their time opposing and undermining Government policies. Throughout the 1984 strike at

Newcastle, three people, who were listed as subversives, were master-minding the strike while being paid from public funds because they were on facility time. He recognised, however, that it would be difficult to get out of the facility agreement, but he was concerned about the reaction of Ministers if they were informed. Moreover, any action, particularly in the DHSS area, which departments might take against subversives might well lead to government embarrassment in the run-up to the next election. He also thought it would be difficult to communicate the message contained in the SPL paper to his 500 managers; there would, for example, be considerable risks if all his managers were invited to exercise maximum disciplinary pressure on the subversives within their commands.

5. In further discussion, it was noted that not all troublemakers were members of subversive organisations, but they could be equally difficult to handle. Indeed, it appeared that only half of the known troublemakers in departments were, in fact, listed by the Security Service as subversives. It was also noted that there was currently a good deal of disaffection with government policies which had resulted in some senior civil servants, including Principals, seeing themselves as part of the general workforce rather than as managers. Any briefing to managers would therefore need to be carried out on a discretionary and selective basis; this might need to be done personally by the Departmental Security Officer.

6. While there was some doubt about whether Ministers should be given precise information about subversives in their Departments, it was generally agreed that they would have to be informed about the problems arising from the facility time agreement, since any effort to reduce this dramatically could have undesirable effects. Moreover, any change would need to be arranged centrally, since it would be invidious and could lead to difficulties if any one Department took the initiative.

7. As far as further work (ie in the local government, education and National Health Service fields) by SPL was concerned, Permanent Secretaries thought that the Group should move cautiously until it was clear what action was possible in relation to civil servants. Nonetheless, it was

desirable to go certainly as far as establishing what the subversives' targets were in those areas and what success they had achieved to date. In the education area, there were already a number of informal reports by HM Inspectors about the disruption caused by subversive teachers; Sir David Hancock emphasised, however, that there was no evidence as yet of teachers indoctrinating children.

8. Summing up the discussion, Sir Robert Armstrong said that SH were grateful for the work which Mr Partridge and the SPL group had undertaken. SH endorsed the recommendations in the report that departments should:-

- i. review, with the Security Service, the arrangements necessary to ensure that their lists of subversives working in their department were always up to date;
- ii. review the arrangements for ensuring that senior officers and especially the PEO and the Permanent Secretary, received all the information about subversives working there;
- iii. identify formally key areas of work which were vulnerable to disruption;
- iv. develop procedures to ensure that, as far as possible -
 - a. subversives were not posted to work in key areas; and
 - b. persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, were identified and removed from work in key areas; and
- v. satisfy themselves as far as possible that those who were granted facility time, whether they were subversives or not, were not abusing it.

9. SH agreed that SPL should seek to establish the current threat from subversion in local government, in education, and in the national health service. (Other areas of the public sector should be left until later.)

10. No written information should be given to Ministers about the SPL report, but Sir Robert would minute the Prime Minister, with a copy to the Home Secretary, about the findings of the group and suggesting what departments should be doing about it. This would emphasise the limitations. He would send 'blind' copies of his minute to Permanent Secretaries on a 'Personal' basis and they would then be free to inform their own Ministers orally. He would take a suitable opportunity, perhaps at the end of a Wednesday morning meeting, to inform those other Permanent Secretaries who were not represented on SH.

Cabinet Office
2 December 1985

S/P 2751

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Sir Robert Armstrong

c Mr Barker

SUBVERSION (HOME) COMMITTEE

Brief for Meeting on Wednesday 27 November at Ilam

Those invited and expected to attend are as follows:-

Sir Kenneth Stowe
 Sir Brian Cubbon
 Sir Clive Whitmore
 Sir Michael Quinlan
 Mr T M Heiser
 Sir Lawrence Airey - *apologises*
 Sir Angus Fraser
 Sir William Fraser
 Sir David Hancock
 Sir Antony Duff
 Mr M J A Partridge

Mr J F H Barker)
 Mr S R Davie) Secretariat

Terms of Reference of SH

"To advise Ministers, as necessary, on appropriate measures to counter subversive activities in the United Kingdom (other than those which are within the purview of the Official Committee on Security), and to oversee the work of the inter-departmental Group on Subversion in Public Life."

Purpose of the Meeting

This meeting has been convened to discuss the Report from the SPL group, which has been circulated to SH, giving an up-to-date assessment of the threat of subversion nationally, and with particular reference to the Civil Service.

Background

On 7 January 1985, you held a meeting with the Permanent Secretaries of the Department of Health and Social Security, the Home Office, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Employment, the Department of the Environment, and Customs & Excise, to discuss the effect of Militant Tendency on industrial relations within the Civil Service.

That meeting had been prompted largely by events during the computer strike in the DHSS office at Newcastle, but there had also been reports about the way in which MT operated in other areas, including local government and some schools, which had disturbing implications. At the end of that meeting, it was decided that the growth of MT represented a new and disturbing form of subversion and that the next step should be to produce a detailed picture of the threat within the Civil Service. It was subsequently agreed that the interdepartmental group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) should be revived to produce and disseminate a periodic threat assessment and to consider what measures could be taken in response, particularly what new techniques or variations in present techniques were necessary to meet new tactics.

After a number of meetings, SPL, under the chairmanship of Mr Partridge, produced their report and this was submitted to you on 21 August. The report provides an up to date assessment of the subversive threat, both nationally and, in much more detail, in the Civil Service. The last report of this nature was produced by SPL in 1979. The present report analyses the distribution, size and nature of the threat in major departments, and an assessment of the activities of the known subversives in departments.

The covering note by the chairman of SPL summarises the main points in the report, including:

- i. the definition of subversion;
- ii. the extent of the subversive threat;
- iii. the counter measures; and
- iv. possible further work by SPL.

Furthermore, SPL identified a new threat in the shape of the non subversive troublemaker, the remedies for which are simply those of good management.

Handling

You will, no doubt, wish to invite Mr Partridge to introduce the paper - probably by drawing on the covering letter which he sent you on 21 August. You may then wish to invite Sir Antony Duff to comment on the threat aspect generally before the meeting discusses the Group's recommendations.

The only written comments we have received, so far, have been from Sir Angus Fraser and he is generally content with the report. His only reservation is whether the report's suggestion that we should "keep a close eye on the granting of substantial facility time to known subversives" would lead to any practical measures to restrict it. We are aware, however, that Sir Kenneth Stowe will be anxious to speak at the meeting, particularly with reference to facility time for trade union activities. A recent note, prepared by the Industrial Relations Division of the Treasury shows that there are 2,545 staff in DHSS who are given some facility time for trade union activity, 138 of whom have more than 80% time off; 66 are on 100% facility time, and this is a substantially greater number than that in any other department.

The cost, as a percentage of the DHSS wage bill, is 0.32% which

is in the upper part of the range: the global figure for the cost of facilities is about 0.211% of the non-industrial pay bill in 1985. Sir Kenneth may also wish to say something about the recent disruption in some local offices over staffing levels - about which he wrote to you on 2 October - not least because in one office it was thought that the SWP were behind the strike call.

You may then like to seek endorsement from SH of the recommendations in the SPL report and particularly that departments should:-

- i. review with the Security Service the arrangements necessary to ensure that their list of subversives who are working in their department is always up to date;
- ii. review the arrangements for ensuring that senior officers, and especially the PEO, receive all information about subversives working there;
- iii. identify formally key areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption;
- iv. develop procedures to ensure that, as far as possible,
 - a. subversives are not posted to work in key areas; and
 - b. persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, are identified and removed from work in key areas.

You will also wish to consider, in the light of Sir Angus Fraser's letter, whether the last recommendation in the paper by SPL is feasible, namely to invite departments to satisfy themselves that all those who have been granted facility time are not abusing it.

Next Steps

Subject to endorsement of the SPL report, it will be necessary to consider how this report and any management action on counter measures arising from it is to be handled with Ministers. The first step would seem to be to inform the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, but, as Mr Partridge says in his letter of 21 August, there may be problems about consulting other Ministers on the report itself, and the Prime Minister may not wish to see it go any wider. Permanent Secretaries may, therefore, agree that they should be responsible for informing their Ministers separately of any proposed action without the sensitive security information being revealed.

Finally, SH might be invited to agree that no study of other areas of public life is necessary at present, and that the SPL group should reconsider the threat from subversion in public life in, say, twelve months' time, or earlier if the Security Service advises that there has been a significant change in the threat. They might also be asked whether there is any other work which they think the group should undertake in the meantime.


S R DAVIE

25 November 1985



Sir Angus Fraser KCB TD
Chairman

Board Room
H M Customs and Excise
King's Beam House
Mark Lane London EC3R 7HE

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Sir Robert Armstrong
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS



11 November 1985

Sean Roberts,

It looked as though I would not be able to attend the meeting to discuss SH(85)1 and I was on the point of sending some written comments. With the change of date I may be able to attend, but I send the comments anyway.

I was grateful to have a copy of the report from the SLIP Group, which is I think a useful one and points in the right direction. It rightly highlighted the need for both me and my PEO to take a closer watch on the subversives in Customs. Those who play an active part in the trade union activities were of course already well known to me. My experience confirms one of the conclusions of the report that members of the Communist Party of Great Britain are not generally disruptive. On the contrary, the two who have served as Chairman of our Departmental Trade Union Side proved to be very responsible trade union officers, fighting their corner hard but reasonably. On occasion both were able to cool potentially damaging situations.

I agree with the recommendations to improve arrangements both within Departments and between Departments and the Security Service. I also agree that we need to identify key areas but I see some difficulty in preventing the posting of potential trouble-makers to them and even more in removing trouble-makers from these areas,

SECRET AND PERSONAL

unless they have committed some breach of the disciplinary code. We have already had difficulties in refusing to post staff who have had an adverse Normal Vetting report because we could not disclose the real reason for our refusal. Fortunately we have no known subversives in our main key area, the computer complex at Shoeburyness and Southend. I agree that we need to ensure that facility time is not abused but I do not believe that the report's suggestion that we should 'keep a close eye on the granting of substantial facility time to known subversives' would lead to any practical measures to restrict it. We cannot intervene in the election of trade union officers. But as I have said, two Chairmen of our Trade Union Side, who both had 100 per cent facility time, have acted responsibly.

Otherwise I am well content with the report and the line it adopts. I enclose an assessment of the activities of subversives in the Department, to match the ones appended to the report.

I am sending copies of these comments to those who received the SH documents.

Yours ever
Amfr

A M FRASER

SECRET AND PERSONAL

HM CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

There are over 25,000 staff in Customs and Excise of whom 52 have come to notice as subversives (0.21 per cent). Twenty are Executive Officers (some promoted from clerical grades), seven are Higher Executive Officers and 3 are Senior Executive Officers (one a long serving full time officer of the Society of Civil and Public Servants). The area most vulnerable to disruptive action is the computer complex at Shoeburyness and Southend. Although many of the staff there are militant trade unionists and have successfully caused considerable disruption to the collection of revenue during Civil Service pay campaigns, none is a known subversive. Subversives in the Department are scattered throughout the country (although there is a small number concentrated in the Liverpool area) but none is in a key area. A particular problem faces the Department in Northern Ireland. Some staff are members either of the Official IRA or of the loyalist groups, including part-time membership of the UDR. The members of the Official IRA could pose a threat to the security of our border controls (conniving in smuggling) but no cases have come to light and only one known subversive is at a border post. Members of both factions pose a threat to their colleagues as they are targets for terrorist reprisals. Two officers have been murdered, one as he was leaving his office and one actually in his office in front of colleagues.



70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/2677

21 October 1985

Subversion in Public Life

Further to your discussion on 9 October with Sir Robert Armstrong, I am writing to convene a meeting of SH to discuss the report from the SPL Group together with the Chairman's covering note. I am sending a copy of these documents, as SH(85) 1, to other recipients of this letter.

There is no fixed membership of SH, but for the purposes of the present meeting I think it would be useful if those on the attached list could be present. I should be most grateful to learn whether those concerned could manage a meeting at 3.00 pm on 12 November, in Sir Robert Armstrong's office. If this time is impossible for several on the list, we will liaise with Private Offices to identify an alternative time.

I am sending this letter under 'Strictly Personal' cover. I should be grateful if recipients would restrict access to the papers to themselves and PEOs only. It would be helpful if any advance comments on the report could be circulated, under the same caveats, by 5 November.

M. C. STARK(M C Stark)
Private Secretary

M J A Partridge Esq CB

Sir Robert Armstrong
Sir Kenneth Stowe, DHSS
Sir Brian Cubbon, Home Office
Sir Clive Whitmore, MOD
Sir Michael Quinlan, Employment
Mr T M Heiser, DOE
Sir Lawrence Airey, Inland Revenue
Sir Angus Fraser, Customs and Excise
Sir William Fraser, Scottish Office
Sir David Hancock, DES
Sir Antony Duff
Mr S R Davie
Mr M J A Partridge
Mr Royd Barker

~~cc - Mr Davie
Mr Barker~~

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL



70 Whitehall, London SW1A 2AS Telephone 01-233 8319

Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/2610

10 October 1985

Thank you very much for your letter of 2 October about the recent disruption in some of your local offices.

I am glad that you sent a copy of your letter and the accompanying documents to Brian Cubbon.

The report of Michael Partridge's group on subversion is to come to a group of Permanent Secretaries shortly; I hope that you will be one of that group, so that we can consider the implications of the report for management.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522 ext 6981

From the Permanent Secretary

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

StP- 2751

CABINET OFFICE

A 7900

30 OCT 1985

FILING INSTRUCTIONS

FILE No.

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London
SW1A

Sir R Armstrong
To Lythole R...

cc - Mr Davie
Mr R Barker

2 October 1985

My dear Robert,

The Department has recently been experiencing a certain amount of disruption in some Local Offices, mainly in our London North Region, over staffing levels - I mentioned it today.

..... This has included a one-day strike last Friday in some offices. I am drawing this to your attention, since, as the attached report from our Regional Directorate shows, the action on Friday was taken without the support of Departmental Trade Union Officials and it is thought that the SWP were behind the strike call from the Ilford Office, the focus of the disruption. I would not regard this entirely as disruption for purely political motives because I have no doubt that there is some genuine dissatisfaction among staff over pressure of work and staffing levels. It is more, I think, an example of how quick the militant element is to fasten on to grievances. But I still think this has a bearing on the work of Michael Partridge's group on subversion and I am therefore copying this letter to Brian Cubbon so that he and Michael are aware of it.

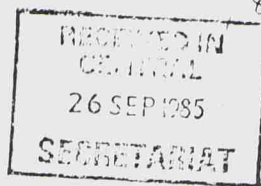
In the event, 22 DHSS offices in London were affected by Friday's strike, in addition to Ilford; and 16 were closed to the public. In addition, I understand that 3 DE Unemployment Benefit offices were also closed.

Norman Clarke will of course continue to keep your people informed if there are further significant developments and he can supply more information on events so far if you need it.

Yours m.
Kw

CONFIDENTIAL

MANAGEMENT IN CONFIDENCE



Mr Clarke

INDUSTRIAL ACTION IN LONDON LOCAL OFFICES

1. You are aware, from earlier reports, that in the last few weeks there has been an outbreak of industrial action in the London area over staffing levels. The action has very largely been orchestrated at branch level.
2. The industrial action led to continuing strikes at Canning Town and Ilford local offices. At Canning Town the strikers have returned to work; but at Ilford, despite a recommendation from CPSA Departmental Officials that a settlement, which had been negotiated with Regional Management and with Departmental Officials at a meeting on Monday 23 September, should form the basis of a return to work the strikers voted at a meeting this morning to continue their strike (by 47 votes to 11).
3. At Ilford a total of 66 CPSA grades out of an office complement of 190 are on strike. The office is closed to the public but the Region are operating an Emergency Payment Centre to deal with the public.
4. During this period we have been in touch with Departmental CPSA Officials and have stressed the importance of the complement review, which is just starting, as the means of determining staffing levels and that there was no way in which any increases of staff could be authorised outside of complement review. We have emphasised the danger of their losing control of the situation. These points have been well taken by Union Officials and they have tried to restrict action to Ilford - which was made official - and on which we, and they hoped, we had agreed a basis for return to work.
5. Following the vote this morning at Ilford the local strike committee have circulated all London local offices calling for a one day strike on 27 September. A copy is attached. We are receiving reports of meetings taking place today and tomorrow in several London offices (about 10 to date mainly in the East London area). Of the meetings which have taken place today we understand two offices, Walthamstow and Plaistow, have voted to strike on Friday but at Woodgrange Park the vote was against (surprisingly because Woodgrange Park has a long history of very militant action).
6. On learning of the call by the Ilford Strike Committee for support we again contacted CPSA Departmental Officials. In an "off the record" conversation with CPSA (and it is essential this confidence is respected, please) I gathered that action being taken by the Ilford Strike Committee was without authority and it was thought that the SWP were behind the strike. (Other samples



of circulars from Ilford are also attached). The CPSSA are calling a meeting of London representatives tomorrow to try and sort out what is happening.

7. I think Departmental Union Officials have been trying to damp down this action and appreciate the seriousness should it get out of their control. However there are considerable work pressures in local offices at the present time and they may not be able to maintain this position if the Ilford strikers get any degree of support.

8. We need to await the outcome of tomorrow's meeting but in the meantime you will wish to know of the general situation and the possibility of more widespread action in London on Friday. For this reason I am also copying this minute to Private Offices and Press Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R J Tilney'.

R J TILNEY
RD10-19
Room A609 AFH
Ext 6332

25 September 1985

Copies to:

Mr Laurance)
Mr Phillips) minute only
Mr Cockett)
Mr Kerin
Mr Bird
Mr Taylor
Mr Bridges
Mrs Jewlett-Davies
Mr West
Mrs Kellaway

WORKERS POWER

STRIKE ACTION TO SUPPORT ILFORD NO

CPSA BULLETIN

FIGHT TORY DHSS STAFFING CUTS !

DEATH OF A THOUSAND CUTS

Since the Tory knives came out, just over 6 years ago, the working class and the labour and trade union movement have been the targeted victims of a murderous Tory policy of the death-of-a-thousand cuts.

Attacking first the weaker sections of workers and trade unionists, the Thatcher government and the bosses have continued a united and resolute campaign taking on the 'big battalions' of the unions.

THE STRIKE BY CPSA WORKERS AT ILFORD DHSS

It is at this point in a ruthless and united onslaught by the bosses and Tories that the CPSA members at Ilford DHSS office have raised the cry - NO MORE ! Sick to the back teeth with carrying an ever-increasing workload, already at an impossible level, due to cuts in staffing levels, the CPSA members have come out on strike. They are demanding:

- * ANOTHER 20 STAFF NOW!
- * AN END TO CASUAL WORK IN OFFICES
- * CASUAL WORKERS TO BE GIVEN FULL-TIME PERMANENT EMPLOYMENT.

Naturally, DHSS management's staffing 'complement system' - totally subject to Tory cuts as it is - has proven hopelessly inadequate as an answer. It has been rejected by the CPSA members.

ILFORD MUST NOT WAIT, WHY?

The main objection of the 'Society's' officialdom to the CPSA strike at Ilford was eloquently expressed by Jim Gee (Secretary, East London 'Society' branch) at Thursday's meeting at Woodgrange Park DHSS office. Gee opposed the CPSA strike on the grounds that it jeopardised plans for proposed united London-wide action against staff cuts. This action would commence in mid-September, said Gee. Until Thursday it had been scheduled for

abandon their strike, counsels Gee, and await the promised action. Gee's argument dangerously, even fatally wrong.

Gee might think he is preserving 'unity' 'strength'. In fact his bureaucratic manoeuvring is a clear signal to management that will encourage them to further divide unions, offices and sections. Management and bosses have learned from the Health Service unions strike action 4 years ago against cuts, that bureaucratic control of the rank and file in strike action streng their hand.

A strike campaign which begins by sacrificing its most militant strikers does not threaten the bosses - it heartens them. With October only 3 weeks away, the only healthy tactic is to begin to build for united action NOW AND ON THE BASIS OF THE PRESENT STRIKE ACTION BY THE ILFORD WORKERS.

Besides, a fundamental principle of trade union solidarity is already at stake. Nam - DO THE ORGANISERS (Gee included) OF THE PROPOSED UNITED ACTION IN OCTOBER INTEND CONTINUE PASSING CPSA PICKET LINES AT ILF

Every union rep and member in DHSS office should be seriously confronting that question. It is no question of simple abstract trade union principle, much less sentiment. As will be discovered now and in October, the question will gauge the real mettle of any resistance to cuts in staff. It will be an acid test. To cross a picket line now is give management and government a powerful weapon with which to divide and crush any action - now or in the future. To wait till October, to cross CPSA picket lines until then, is to fight management's fight for them. As a tactic, it is a shovel to dig one's own grave with. It must be seen for what it is - and REJECTED!

FULL ACTIVE SOLIDARITY WITH CPSA PICKETS !

REFUSE TO CROSS CPSA PICKET LINES!

BUILD A MASS PICKET AT ILFORD DHSS OFFICE!

BUILD THE STRIKE

In this struggle against cuts, the CPSA workers of Ilford must command the widest and deepest support from all trade unions. The effects of strike action left isolated by other union branches and officials is only too tragically clear. Those strikes have been crushed and their defeat used by the Tories to further weaken and divide resistance to cuts within and across trade unions.

Only UNITED action by trade unionists within and across unions can effectively begin to counter Tory 'divide and rule' politics. Immediate, full support must be given from other Civil and Public service unions, most urgently from the 'Society'. Beginning now, a campaign must be built to extend the action through PSA and the 'Society', and beyond into the other service and industrial unions.

The widest active strike action must be built. In full support of the Ilford CPSA strikers, WORKERS POWER calls for, and urges them to fight for:

EXTEND THE STRIKE ACTION!

IMMEDIATE SOLIDARITY STRIKE ACTION FROM THE 'SOCIETY' AND OTHER CPSA SECTIONS!

In order to win this strike, in the teeth of ruthless Tory opposition, the widest, most determined organisation and action will be needed. To defend the gains won will mean continuous, organised resistance to constant attacks by the Tories and bosses. They are determined to clawback all concessions won by workers in struggle.

READ WORKERS POWER

READ WORKERS POWER

READ WORKERS POWER

READ WORKERS POWER

Read Workers Power, monthly paper of the Workers Power Group. With coverage on British and International political situation, trade union affairs, labour history and Marxist theories.

Available from WORKERS POWER, BCM 7750 London WC1 3XX

GET NOW!

Second edition of Workers Power pamphlet: MEN'S OPPRESSION, WOMENS LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM - Why we need a working class men's movement.

Get from above address.

The same organisational means and tactics necessary to win the strike must be developed into a class-wide counter-offensive against Tory cuts. Only in this way can defence of working class gains be maintained. To this end, WORKERS POWER calls for:

A FIGHTING LABOUR AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN AGAINST TORY CUTS!

This campaign must be placed firmly under rank and file control and must organise to ensure that the trade union bureaucracy implements the demands of the rank and file. The miners' strike, the NUR collapse, the failure of the health service unions action 4 years ago against cuts, gives no cause for complacency or confidence about the trade union leaderships' willingness to really defend working class interests.

Only a class wide rank and file mobilisation and action can ensure a fightback which will match in determination and concentration the offensive of the bosses and Tories.

- * FIGHT CUTS NOW!
- * FIGHT CUTS LATER!
- * FIGHT CUTS ALWAYS!

Workers Power BCM 7750 London WC1 3XX

STAY OUT - STAY TOGETHER.

DON'T LET THE BUREAUCRATS SELL US OUT.

ILFORD DHSS HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE LAST THURSDAY IN ORDER TO WIN THE 28 EXTRA STAFF AND DECASUALISATION IN OUR OFFICE. WE NEED SOLIDARITY ACTION FROM OTHER DHSS OFFICES. THIS IS THE WAY WE WILL WIN EXTRA STAFF IN ALL THE DHSS OFFICES.

BUREAUCRATS.

HOWEVER, BUREAUCRATS AT THE TOP OF THE SCPS ARE TRYING TO HALT THE ESCALATION PROCESS. THEY WANT CO-ORDINATED ACTION TO BE CONTROLLED BY THEMSELVES. WE IN ILFORD HAVE STARTED TO CAMPAIGN FOR MORE STAFF IN DHSS OFFICES. THE SCPS BUREAUCRATS ARE PREPARED TO LET US WAIT IN ISOLATION AND SELL US OUT. THEY ARE FRIGHTENED OF THE RANK AND FILE OF BOTH THE SCPS AND CPSA TAKING CONTROL.

THE RANK AND FILE.

WE MUST WIN THE RANK AND FILE IN OTHER OFFICES OVER TO OUR SIDE. THAT INVOLVES MEMBERS AT ILFORD STAYING OUT ON STRIKE AND PUTTING THE ARGUMENTS OVER TO THE REST. WE HAVE BEEN OUT FOR OVER A WEEK ONLY - IF WE ALL GET ACTIVE WE WILL BE DECISIVE IN GETTING OTHER OFFICES OUT THIS WILL SAVE THEM FROM THE DISASTROUS ACTION PLANNED BY THE SCPS.

BEFORE.

THE RANK AND FILE HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF BEING UNDERSTAFFED AND ARE SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS ILFORD'S STRIKE. WE HAVE HAD SOLIDARITY ACTION IN THE FORM OF COUNTER AND TELEPHONE BANS. WE HAVE HAD GOOD COLLECTIONS.

KEEP FIGHTING.

WE ARE PROUD OF BEING ON STRIKE AT ILFORD BOTH FOR OURSELVES, OTHER DHSS OFFICES AND CLAIMANTS. KEEP FIGHTING AT ILFORD FOR;

- * MORE STAFF IMMEDIATELY,
- * PERMANENT JOBS FOR CASUAL WORKERS.

UNITY IS STRENGTH.

A MASS PICKET WILL BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 13TH - MAKE SURE YOU ARE THERE.

CPSA members at Ilford DHSS have been out on strike since 29th August 1985.

The Strike has now been made official by the CPSA.

The Strike was called after a series of fruitless talks with Management, where it was pointed out to them that :-

- 1) the office was hopelessly understaffed;
- 2) the existing staff cannot provide a proper and efficient service to the public; and
- 3) that the stress which the existing staff are constantly having to endure has reached an intolerable level.

Negotiations have been taking place with Regional Management resulting in an offer of 7 extra staff.

WHAT WE REALLY NEED IS 30 EXTRA STAFF!

This demand cannot be met by Regional Management and negotiations are now being arranged at Departmental level.

This will mean the involvement of Ministers and consequently the Government - as a Government rather than as our employer!

It is essential NOW that all other DHSS offices in London take action together and pursue their own claims for more staff.

WE ARE CALLING ON ALL LONDON OFFICES TO TAKE ONE DAY STRIKE ACTION IN SOLIDARITY WITH ILFORD ON FRIDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 1985.

WE ARE ALSO CALLING FOR ALL-OUT STRIKE ACTION THROUGHOUT LONDON IN PURSUANCE OF YOUR OWN CLAIMS FOR ADEQUATE STAFFING IN YOUR OWN OFFICES.

This issue is vital to the future staffing of all DHSS offices and the future job security of all of us - THIS TIME WE HAVE A REAL CHANCE TO WIN!

Remember! ILFORD'S VICTORY WILL LEAD TO YOUR VICTORY!
DEMAND ALL-OUT STRIKE ACTION AT YOUR OFFICE NOW!
SUPPORT THE ONE-DAY STRIKE ON SEPTEMBER 27TH!

STRIKE ON FRIDAY 27TH!

ISSU

by ° ILFORD CPSA STRIKE COMMITTEE, 203, ILFORD LANE,
ILFORD, ESSEX.

Tel.: 01-514-5116

If you're going to
tell a big lie, it's best
to tell a million.

THESE WORDS were not written by Margaret Thatcher. They were written by Dr Joseph Goebbels, who, as other claimants will remember, was Hitler's minister for propaganda during World War II. But they might well have been written for her.

Margaret Thatcher would certainly seem to have had Dr Goebbels's advice well in mind when she announced---to mindless public applause---that she intended to make drastic cuts in DHSS staff and reduce Social Security benefits. Vast sums of money could be saved, it was said, and, in some mysterious way which was never explained, everyone would be better off in consequence.

MARGARET THATCHER'S BIG LIES

Dr Goebbels might well have added---and Margaret Thatcher would certainly have agreed with him---that if your big lies blend in well with popular fictions, they will be even more readily believed.

Margaret Thatcher's big lies were that the DHSS was so overstaffed that scores of people were being paid to do next to nothing, and that thousands of people were living in luxury on Social Security payments.

Her lies were, and, sad to say, still are, accepted by millions of people without question because they blend very nicely (like powdered glass with sugar) with two popular fictions:

1. The (perhaps faintly comic) image of Civil Servants as people who divide their time between drinking tea and doing crosswords.

and

2. The insidious and evil notion, fostered by successive Tory governments, that people who are receiving Social Security benefits are all lazy, good-for-nothing spongers and parasites who wouldn't work if they had the chance because they are so much better off with Social Security payments than those people are who have jobs.

THE TRUTH

The truth is:

That the DHSS is seriously understaffed.

That Social Security payments are hopelessly inadequate.

We do not have anywhere near as many Clerical Officers and Clerical Assistants as we need to provide a proper and efficient service to you, the claimants. The Clerical Officers and Clerical Assistants are the people who do the vital work in all DHSS offices. They are the people who advise you on your rights, assess your claims, send out your giro's and order books, and talk to you on the phone and over the counter. They are the people whose job it is to look after you and protect your interests. And there are simply not enough of them. Look after you all properly.

...to work very hard, ... they do not help the people who are ... the very nature, successful at the best of times, ... is intolerable. ... during the last four months because they ... sustain support upon them by the staff only.

You, the claimants, know that Mrs Thatcher's big lies are lies because you are the ones who are suffering most.

You know that the DESS is seriously understaffed because you are the ones who have to wait for hours (not infrequently a whole day) in a dreary waiting room just to speak to someone over the counter for a few minutes, because we haven't got the staff to be able to deal promptly with the increasing numbers of people who, through no fault of their own, are now having to turn to us for help. You are the ones who sit at home worrying when your giro and order books don't arrive, because we haven't got the staff to cope with the workload.

You know that Social Security benefits are hopelessly inadequate because you are the ones who are struggling to make ends meet. Because it is your cupboards that are frequently bare, because it is your babies that are crying.

THE MANAGEMENT

The Managers at Nantworth House are fully aware of our problems. But they do nothing. They will not even try to help us. "It is nothing to do with us," they say. "We do not make decisions, we just do as we are told...it is out of our hands...you cannot fight the government...nothing can be done... you must accept the situation...etc....etc...."

OUR AIM

No-one with a conscience can possibly accept such a shameful situation. It is a disgrace to a civilised and, yes, wealthy nation. We are firmly resolved to do something about it.

We know that by striking we have inconvenienced a great many of you. We are very sorry about that. But it is the only way we can help you now. All other methods have failed.

Please understand that we are fighting for you. We are fighting for you because you do not have the weapons to fight for yourselves.

We have raised our voices on your behalf because your pleas for help for yourselves and your children are not heard above the thud of Mrs Thatcher's Big Lie machinery. We will not be silenced. We will continue to shout for you from the rooftops. We will shout until this nation's sleeping conscience stirs and awakes.

THE ILFORD STRIKE COMMITTEE



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT
21 August 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

CABINET OFFICE	
A	6866
21 AUG 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

Dear Robert,

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

... I enclose a copy of the report from the SPL Group (SPL(85)8 Revised) which you commissioned earlier this year. I have placed on the front of the report a summary of the main points and recommendations, in a covering note by the Chairman, in the hope that this will assist you and the SH Committee of Permanent Secretaries.

The report provides the up-to-date assessment of the subversive threat which you requested, both nationally and in much more detail for the Civil Service. It also recommends that all Departments should review with the Security Service means of keeping their assessment up-to-date in the way that we have done for those Departments who PEOs were on the Group. That process, and the PEOs' individual assessments of the position in their own Departments in Annex C, proved most illuminating, not only in improving the Security Service's and the Departments' knowledge and records, but also in bringing out how little knowledge or use is at present made of these lists by management. This recommendation therefore takes up in full your request that we should look at the means for the appropriate dissemination of the threat.

We have also gone on in the report to recommend to SH some appropriate counter-measures to the threat. This may have gone beyond what we were strictly asked to do, but you had signalled your wish to discuss this with Permanent Secretaries and the composition of SPL on this occasion was peculiarly apt for obtaining practical advice on measures which individual Departments might take, as a matter of good management practice, to counter the new threat which has emerged, of seizing opportunities to persuade young staff in clerical and sub-clerical grades to disrupt vulnerable and politically-sensitive areas of work in some Departments. I hope that the Committee of Permanent Secretaries will find the work which we have done on this helpful.

The fact is that our traditional counter-measures of vetting and classification of documents are principally designed to protect sensitive information, which has previously been seen as the most important threat. The new threat is very different and cannot be countered in anything like the same way, by central rules on

classification and special action confined to small areas of work in Departments, mainly at Headquarters, to restrict documents and choice of staff for a limited number of sensitive posts. What we have to combat now goes to the heart of each Department's total management will and actions, mainly in offices well away from HQ. Each Department needs first to target its potential subversives and trouble-makers, and its vulnerable points, and then take the set of management initiatives appropriate in that Department to ensure that trouble is avoided or contained. This will mean selecting at the highest level the most appropriate measures, ranging from not employing trouble-makers (recruitment, discipline, dismissal procedures), to restricting their scope for causing disruption (postings, promotion, facility time, effective supervision) to removing potential causes of conflict (good management, resolution of genuine grievances, countering of disruptive propaganda).

All this is very difficult and highly sensitive politically, and most of it lies well outside my and SPL's remit. But it parallels the more active approach which we have been pursuing on counter-terrorist measures, with some success, and a more active management stance is also very much what the Permanent Secretaries most concerned are inculcating in their Departments. They will no doubt want to set this problem and the counter-measures in that wider context.

In the report we have tried to help by pinpointing some specific points on which we think action is necessary and would be useful and effective. I think facility time in particular would benefit from action which the Treasury and Departments are already discussing. Action must obviously be within the bounds of legality, but there are ways of reducing facility time as I am sure many Ministers and many of us would wish to see. I am sure that Permanent Secretaries will have views on that.

As for the SH meeting itself, the composition can be tailored to the occasion, as with SPL. The "core" members of SH, apart from yourself, Brian Cubbon, the DGSS and I, are normally the Permanent Secretaries of FCO and DE. You may think it appropriate on this occasion to add those who attended your meeting earlier this year, Ken Stowe, Kerr Fraser, Clive Whitmore, David Hancock and Terry Heiser (in succession to George Moseley). All of them will have seen the SPL report.

You may also want to consider how the Treasury's position can best be covered. They have responsibility for two of the eight Departments specifically mentioned in Appendix II of Annex B (Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise), although neither of those Departments was represented on SPL. The Treasury are also co-ordinating the current review of facility time, in which the Prime Minister is likely to be interested. It occurs to me that Robin Butler might be a useful addition to SH for this particular meeting.

Finally, you will no doubt want to consider with Permanent Secretaries how this report and any management action on counter-measures is to be handled with Ministers. Clearly the Prime Minister will need to be consulted first, and the Home Secretary will have to be informed, but there would be problems about consulting other Ministers on the report itself, and the Prime Minister may not wish to see it go any wider. On the other hand, other Ministers will need to be told something before management action is taken in their Departments, if only because there may be some Union and public re-action to some of the measures in some Departments. The current controversy over the BBC and "vetting" shows how politically sensitive this could be. The action will not necessarily be the same in each Department, and it may be that the answer is for Permanent Secretaries to inform their Ministers separately of proposed action, without the sensitive security information being revealed. Further work by SPL in other areas which we discuss in the report is likely to be even more sensitive politically and publicly, since the staff of those other organisations such as the NHS and local authorities are not under our direct management control.

If you agree, the report could be circulated to SH, for a meeting later in September. At present I have discussed the issues with Brian Cubbon and Ken Stowe only, and I know that they will have points to make for your meeting when the paper is circulated. If you would like to discuss this with me on your return, I am of course at your disposal.

I am copying this letter to Rex Davie.

*Yours ever,
Michael*

M J A PARTRIDGE

SECRET AND PERSONAL

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

The circulation of this paper has been strictly limited

This copy is issued for the personal use of _____

SPL(85)9
21 August 1985

Copy No 16

CABINET

INTERDEPARTMENT GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

Note by the Secretaries

The Group will wish to see the attached 'Note by the Chairman' with which he submitted SPL(85)8(Revised) to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Signed: S R DAVIE
R A HARRINGTON
J F H BARKER
MRS S RIMINGTON

Cabinet Office
21 August 1985

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

The circulation of this paper has been strictly limited

CABINET

INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

Covering note by the Chairman

Attached is a report from the SPL Group (membership in Annex A) giving an up-to-date assessment of the threat of subversion nationally and with particular reference to the Civil Service. The report is now being submitted for consideration by SH.

The main points in the report are:-

(1) Definition of subversion

The definition used is that devised by SPL in 1972, quoted publicly by Ministers in 1975 and confirmed recently by Ministers during the Parliamentary proceedings on the Interception of Communications Act (paragraphs 4-7).

(2) Extent of the subversive threat

A detailed assessment of the threat nationally and in the Civil Service is at Annex B, and is summarised in paragraphs 9-11 of the report. The numbers are about 50,000 nationally (0.1 per cent of the adult population) and 1,420 in the Civil Service (less than 0.3 per cent), much the same as in 1979. All but a small minority belong to left-wing organisations, and the largest single group remains the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB); but the largest Trotskyist groups have increased in size, in particular the Militant Tendency (MT).

The numbers in Government Departments are set out in Appendix II to Annex B, and assessments by the PEO members of SPL of the position in their own Departments are at Annex C. These assessments cover the activities of known subversives, the amount of facility time granted, the areas most vulnerable to disruption and the measures taken by Departments to restrict the activities of known subversives and others who cause trouble. An account of subversive influence in the Civil Service Unions last year and this year is at Annex D.

On the basis of these analyses and assessments, SPL has concluded that the subversive threat is not much different in size from six years' ago and in the Civil Service continues to be heavily concentrated among the clerical and sub-clerical grades; but that a much larger part is now played by the younger and more active members of MT and the SWP, who are less ready than members of the CPGB to observe procedures and abide by agreements. There is still the traditional threat to classified information, but there has now grown up an additional and serious risk of disruption of public business through industrial action aimed at vulnerable or politically-sensitive areas of work, in particular the revenue-gathering and public payments centres such as those in DHSS, DE, Inland Revenue, Customs and Excise, and DVLC, Swansea. Trouble-making is by no means confined to known subversives, and only a few of them are active trouble-makers; but those few are adept at exploiting real or imagined grievancies among the lowest grades of younger civil servants, with seriously disruptive results in some cases. The exploitation seems to be more opportunistic than part of a planned strategy (paragraphs 12-15).

(3) Counter-measures

The report concentrates on the securing and dissemination of accurate information about subversives and on measures to curb their activities (and those of non-subversive trouble-makers). The main responsibility should be firmly with each Department, in consultation as necessary with the Security Service, as the Radcliffe Report said. Further measures recommended are:-

- (a) better arrangements between each Department and the Security Service to keep lists reviewed and up-to-date, as SPL has now done for the Departments represented by PEOs on it (paragraph 16);
 - (b) better arrangements within Departments to ensure that, in addition to the Security Officer, the PEO and Permanent Secretary know of the information available, and review it regularly and their assessment of the current threat and what management response is needed (paragraph 17);
 - (c) Departments should identify their key areas vulnerable to disruption and develop procedures to ensure as far as possible that subversives are not posted there and that persistent trouble-makers, whether subversives or not, are removed from there (paragraphs 18-22);
 - (d) Departments and the Treasury should take management action arising from their current review of facility time to curb abuses and reduce the scope for the achieving of political objectives in departmental time (paragraph 23).
- (4) Further work by SPL

This report comments briefly on the NHS and local government. SPL could undertake a further review of other areas such as the NHS or local government in, say, twelve months' time if that was thought worthwhile, although it could not examine other areas in such detail or so covertly as has been possible for the Civil Service in this report, with the help of the PEOs on the Group (paragraph 3).

M J A PARTRIDGE

Cabinet Office
21 August 1985

SECRET AND PERSONAL

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SPL(85)8(Revised)

14 August 1985

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CABINET

INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

—
Note by the Secretaries
—

A few further changes were suggested to the draft paper for SH, circulated under cover of SPL(85)8, and these have been incorporated into the attached version. The Chairman is content with this final text and now proposes to submit it to Sir Robert Armstrong.

Signed S R DAVIE
R A HARRINGTON
J F H BARKER
MRS S RIMINGTON

Cabinet Office

14 August 1985

SECRET AND PERSONAL

CABINET
INTERDEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Introduction

1. As the Inter-Departmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) we have been asked to produce an up-to-date assessment of the current threat to the Civil Service posed by members of subversive organisations, to assess the changes which have taken place in that threat since our last review in 1979 (contained in its final form in SH(79)3 (Revised)) and to provide a means for the appropriate dissemination of information on the threat. The composition of the Group and our terms of reference are set out in Annex A to this report, together with the names of the representatives of certain other departments whom it was thought appropriate to bring into our discussions for this particular task from the Ministry of Defence, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health and Social Security. The contribution of the Principal Establishment Officers (PEOs) to our discussions has been invaluable in enabling us to set alongside the security assessment of the subversive threat a management analysis of the problems posed by known subversives to their employing departments and a practical appreciation of possible counter-measures that might be considered necessary.

2. We preface our assessment of the current threat by an account of the situation on the definition of subversion, because that lies at the heart of this matter and has been the subject of considerable public debate in recent months. Our assessment describes the scale and nature of the subversive threat nationally and in the Civil Service. As with our 1979 report, we have not covered the threat from espionage or from Irish terrorism, which are separate and special problems, but on this occasion, we have commented on the number of Scottish and Welsh nationalist extremists, which is extremely small. We have then gone on to analyse in some detail the distribution, size and nature of the subversive threat in major departments, and to discuss with the help of the PEOs on the Group our assessment of the activities of the known subversives within their departments and our views on possible counter measures.

3. We now present our conclusions on all these matters for consideration by the Subversion (Home) Committee (SH) and invite them to consider how work on a response should be taken forward and to direct further action by us, either on further periodic assessments of the threat or on whether we should examine in a similar way other areas of public life. Study of the subversive involvement in Local Government and the National Health Service has been suggested. The Security Service does not systematically investigate either area, but its impression from its study of the various subversive organisations themselves is that in both cases the threat is limited. Only MT has been systematically

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seeking to secure for its members seats as local councillors and, to date, it has achieved significant success only in Liverpool. Similarly, there is very limited subversive involvement in the Health Service unions at national level and, while there is some subversive involvement at District level in NUPE, the Security Service's impression is that the threat posed by subversives in the NHS at present is not large. A comprehensive examination of either area by the Security Service would take time and those of our members with administrative links with the NHS and local government would find it difficult to add significantly or systematically to any Security Service work. Nonetheless, a further review by the Security Service of the subversive threat to all areas of public life might be considered worthwhile in, say, twelve months' time.

The definition of subversion

4. In our 1979 report, we referred to the 1952 Directive to the Director General of the Security Service to defend the realm from actions of persons and organisations "which may be judged to be subversive to the State", and to the definition of "subversive" which was devised in 1972 and which has been generally accepted for this purpose:-

"Subversive activities are those which threaten the safety or well-being of the State and are intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means."

5. The definition was quoted by Home Office Ministers in both Houses of Parliament in 1975 and was confirmed by the Home Secretary in his evidence to the Select Committee of the House of Commons for Home Affairs during its recent investigation into the Special Branch and adopted by them in their report (House of Commons paper 71, May 1985). This definition was also used by the Home Secretary and the Lord President during debates on the Interception of Communications Bill currently before Parliament.

6. The Home Secretary has confirmed in Parliament that both parts of the definition have to be satisfied before an activity can properly be classed as subversive for this purpose, and that the definition does not cover activities which are hostile to a Government or its policies, but which are not intended to undermine or overthrow Parliamentary democracy. These limitations are important in ensuring that legitimate political or industrial opposition to the Government is not classed as subversive, and that counter-subversive investigations and actions do not become politically biased or influenced, and hence do not infringe the injunction in the Directive to the Director General that the Security Service should be kept "absolutely free from any political bias or influence and nothing should be done that might lend colour to any suggestion that it is concerned with the interests of any particular section of the community, or with any other matter than the Defence of the Realm as a whole".

7. The main criticism which has been levelled at this definition of subversion is that it is too wide and should be narrowed by being further restricted to activity which is unlawful. Such a restriction has been resisted by Ministers in Parliamentary debates on the Interception of Communications Bill on the grounds that it would allow too much scope to many subversive organisations, who take care to keep within the law and who profess their intention of achieving power by legal and constitutional means, but whose real aims are the destruction of the present system of Parliamentary democracy. Our review has given us no reason to recommend any change in the present definition.

The subversive threat

8. The Security Service provided us with a detailed assessment of the subversive threat nationally and with particular reference to the Civil Service, which we attach at Annex B as amended in the light of our discussions. This takes forward and updates the historical account of subversive groups contained in our 1979 report, and goes into more detail about the current threat in the Civil Service.

9. The current number of subversives is about 50,000 or a little over 0.1 per cent of the adult population, and it has not changed significantly in size since 1979. These people belong to more than 70 organisations, of which by far the most significant in size are the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB), with about 13,000 members, and the three largest Trotskyist groups:

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Militant Tendency (MT), with over 6,000 members, the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), with about 4,000 members each. The CPGB is only about two-thirds of its size in 1979, the SWP has remained approximately the same size, but the MT has increased four-fold over that period. On the extreme right, the National Front (NF), with 2,500 members, and the British National Party (BNP) with 1,500 members, are the most significant organisations though not all members are judged to hold subversive views. The NF is far smaller than it was even five years ago.

10. The scope for most of these individuals to make trouble in pursuit of their subversive political objectives is limited, but it centres on their employment and the opportunities which that offers for disruption. Only the CPGB, MT, WRP and SWP pose a significant subversive threat on a national scale. The public service (the Civil Service, nationalised industries, NHS, education system and local government) and the Labour Party are the organisations most at risk from their activities.

11. We have concentrated in this report on the threat within the Civil Service. The total number of people with subversive records in the Civil Service known to the Security Service has increased since 1979, from 1,270 to 1,420. Of these, those associated with the CPGB remain the largest single group (at about 600) but, whereas they represented about two-thirds of the total

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number in 1979, they now represent less than half. The Trotskyist groups have been the fastest growing in the Civil Service over the last six years. The MT and SWP are particularly numerous, and in some Departments, such as DHSS, DE and the Inland Revenue their combined strength now exceeds that of the CPGB. By contrast, the number of civil servants known to belong to extreme right-wing groups, mainly the NF, is very small.

12. There are several important points to be made about these figures. First, they represent only those individuals known to the Security Service to be civil servants and to belong to, or be associated with, these groups, so that to this extent they may understate the true number of subversives. Our assessment, however, is that, with the possible exception of MT, which attempts to keep its membership secret, understatement on this account is relatively small. More importantly, the numbers include all those who are known to have been members or close associates of the organisations concerned at some time, and to this extent they will overstate the number of those currently active, who may be a significantly smaller proportion of the total.

13. Secondly, the total number in relation to the size of the Civil Service is less than 0.3 per cent, and by no means all those listed who are active in subversive organisations take an active part in Civil Service affairs. The political activities of some are confined to their outside political interests. We asked our PEO members for their assessment of those listed in their departments who were known to take an

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active part in Civil Service trade union activities, with particular reference to who were known troublemakers. In this context, by troublemakers we mean those who appear unreasonably obstructive to management and determined to exploit or create industrial difficulties. The various departmental assessments are summarised in Annex C. The number of active troublemakers on each list was 10 or less, even in the largest department. Moreover, by no means all the known troublemakers in departments were subversives.

14. On the basis of the departmental assessments we found no evidence of concerted efforts by subversive organisations to recruit civil servants or to organise their concentration in particular areas. The majority of those on the list were in clerical or sub-clerical grades, and very few were above the rank of Higher Executive Officer. (It is worth noting that, with the exception of HEO, these are all recruitment grades.) Their main activities, particularly those of MT, were directed at gaining control of the national and regional executive committees of the two largest Civil Service unions, the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) and the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS), at which they have had mixed success in recent years, at some times winning control and at others losing it, as they have recently done with the CPSA NEC. The SCPS NEC has stayed the same so far as subversive members are concerned. In Annex D we set out the subversive membership for 1984/85 and 1985/86 of the main Civil Service trade union executives.

15. The vetting processes have been effective in virtually excluding members of subversive organisations from access to classified information. The risk now is of disruption of public business through industrial action directed at those areas of non-classified work which are particularly vulnerable or politically sensitive. Such areas include the major computer centres which handle social security contributions and payments to the public, which were the target of industrial action in the 1981 pay dispute and in the more recent Newcastle shift-working dispute, both of which were sustained for many months. Others are the revenue-gathering activities of the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise, and the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Centre at Swansea. But CPGB, MT and SWP members are active and adept at exploiting real or imagined grievances among staff, particularly among clerical and sub-clerical grades, and at exploiting any disruption begun by others, though CPGB members in particular among the subversives traditionally observe established industrial relations procedures, and abide by agreements. One important consequence of such exploitation is an increase in the membership of the subversive groups during the disruption, especially among younger civil servants, which in turn increases the influence and resources of the groups. MT in particular has increased its membership during disputes in recent years, and it is those departments where MT is most influential which have experienced the most trouble. Non-subversive troublemakers have been equally in evidence, however, in recent years causing disruption.

Possible measures to counter the threat

16. We examined the arrangements under which the Security Service provides information about

individual civil servants with subversive records to security officers in departments, which are set out in the Manual of Personnel Security Measures. A summary appears in Annex E. We considered that these arrangements were working effectively, in that each department has, in its possession, a list of subversives employed there. As the report on security procedures in the public service (the Radcliffe Report, Cmnd 1931) made clear, each Government Department is individually responsible for maintaining a proper standard of protective security within its own field, advised as necessary on technical questions by the Security Service. We thought, however, that the arrangements for keeping the lists of subversives up-to-date could be improved and we concluded that departments should review their arrangements with the Security Service.

17. It was not clear what use departments made of these lists, apart from ensuring that people on them were not posted to sensitive posts such as Ministerial offices or to posts with access to classified information, and we concluded that there was room for improvement in the way in which departments used this information. It is particularly important that the information should not remain solely with the Security Officer, but should be made known regularly to the PEO and the Permanent Secretary, so that all departments could make the kind of periodic assessment of the threat within their department which we have made in our work for the departments represented on our group for this review; and so that they could also regularly assess what management response was needed from time to time to counter it. Proper security arrangements would need to be made, and care would need to be taken, to ensure that the information remained secure and that it was not used improperly by management. Nevertheless, we think that a more

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active use of the information is called for, both to focus on the extent and the nature of the actual threat from subversives, and to enable departments to keep subversives under observation to determine which are the troublemakers and take action to limit their capacity for causing disruption.

18. In view of the importance of vulnerable areas of work to the strategies of subversive groups, we have considered whether there might be scope for reducing the number of those areas. We recognise, however, that the division or duplication of work that would be required would, in most cases, be prohibitively expensive. We consider, however, that departments should identify formally, where they have not already done so, those Key Areas of work within their responsibility which are vulnerable to disruption although we recognise that, outside the core key areas of Private Office and mainframe computer operations, these may vary from time to time.

19. We have also considered whether the vetting arrangements should be extended or other checks should be introduced for staff transferred or recruited to work in Key Areas. Our conclusion is that this would not be practicable. An extension of vetting would be particularly contentious and costly. Positive Vetting (PV) and (unavowed) Normal Vetting (NV) have been developed as methods of protecting classified information. Their extension to unclassified work would not only go against assurances given by Ministers to Parliament over many years, but would be beyond the Security Service's present resources to support. It also seems to us very doubtful whether the substantial additional work involved would be worthwhile in terms of results. Nonetheless, departmental recruiters

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at any level need to be advised that they must beware of potential troublemakers when making their selections. Such advice could not be overt, but seems to us to be sound management sense, and should be explained as such.

20. The primary responsibility for counter-measures must lie with departmental management, in the light of the periodic assessments which we recommend they should make of their own subversive threat, to develop procedures in conjunction with the Security Service and to ensure that any relevant Security Service information is considered before postings are made to work in vulnerable areas. This is already done by some departments, on an ad hoc basis, and should, in our view, be extended to all. It would need to be a covert process, because any systematic barring of known subversives from certain work would be contentious. It must be left to the judgment of each PEO and Permanent Secretary, in consultation with the Security Service, to decide how widely to disseminate the information he has about subversives and how this should be communicated.

21. We recognised that such procedures could only address part of the problem. Many areas of Civil Service work are staffed by non-mobile grades who, once recruited, cannot be dismissed, without serious fault, or transferred elsewhere. This is especially the case with clerical grades, which is the level at which subversive organisations have been most successful in recruiting civil servants. Nevertheless, it seems to us important that persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, should, wherever possible, be identified and distanced from such work, and there might be scope in some departments for achieving this, even for non-mobile grades.

22. For many departments, the numbers involved are so few that each case could be the subject of individual attention. Departments with larger

numbers of subversives listed might find it most effective to concentrate their efforts, at least in the first instance, on the known troublemakers who come to their notice, while continuing for the rest to ensure that they do not have access to sensitive posts or material. Each department will need to make its own assessment and adopt the most practical counter-measures suited to its purpose. It will probably find it necessary and desirable, however, to keep a particularly close eye on all activities of subversive troublemakers and ensure that wherever possible they come under the supervision of a good line manager.

23. One aspect to which we have paid particular attention is the number of known subversives involved in Civil Service trade union activities and the amount of facility time granted to them on that basis. For many departments, this overlap is small, and relatively few are on substantial facility time of 70 per cent or more. For some departments, however, the number is more worrying, and this gives a fresh impetus to the need for action to curb abuses of facility time which the Treasury and individual departments already have in hand, to ensure that known subversives are not allowed to use the position which they have secured to further their political objectives in departmental time. It is obviously desirable, for example, for departments to keep a close eye on the granting of substantial facility time to known subversives. It is even more important that line managers check as far as possible on the way in which facility time is used. We also concluded that good management measures of this kind would be as effective against troublemakers who are not subversives as against subversives.

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24. For most of the grades in which subversives are employed, no regard is paid to security information in the normal promotion procedures; but at the higher levels where problems of postability can arise, one or two departments do have covert systems to enable them if necessary to take these problems into account before promotions are decided. We consider that this action is right.

Recommendations

25. We recommend that SH should:

- (a) take note of our assessment of the size and nature of the current threat of subversion in public life generally, and in the Civil Service in particular;
- (b) agree that no study of other areas of public life is necessary at present, but should invite the SPL Group to reconsider the threat from subversion in public life in twelve months' time, or earlier if the Security Service advises that there has been a significant change in the threat;
- (c) invite departments to review with the Security Service the arrangements necessary to ensure that their list of those subversives who are working in their department is always up-to-date;
- (d) invite departments to review within their departments the arrangements for ensuring that senior officers (principally the PEO and the Permanent Secretary as necessary and in addition to the Departmental Security Officer) receive all information about the subversives working there and in the light of it decide on appropriate counter-measures;

(e) invite departments to identify formally, where they have not already done so, those Key Areas of work which are vulnerable to disruption;

(f) invite departments to develop procedures to ensure that, as far as possible:

(i) subversives are not posted to work in Key Areas; and

(ii) persistent troublemakers, whether members of subversive organisations or not, are identified and removed from work in Key Areas;

(g) invite departments to satisfy themselves that all those who have been granted facility time, whether they are subversives or not, are not abusing it.

CABINET

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

COMPOSITION

1. The Composition of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Mr M J A Partridge, Home Office

Members

Mr D H J Hilary, Home Office
Mr D B Smith, Department of Employment
Mr W O Ulrich, Department of Education and Science
Mr C J S Brearley, Cabinet Office
Mr W K Reid, Scottish Office
Mr C O Shipp, Security Service
Deputy Assistant Commissioner C V Hewett,
Metropolitan Police
Mr R M Hastie-Smith, Ministry of Defence
Mr K F J Ennals, Department of the Environment
Mr N E Clarke, Department of Health and Social
Security

TERMS OF REFERENCE

2. To give guidance on the collection, and to co-ordinate the assessment of, intelligence about threats to the internal security of Great Britain arising from subversive activities and to make periodic reports to the officials concerned.

SECRETARIAT

3. The Secretaries are:

Mr R A Harrington, Home Office
Mr S R Davie, Cabinet Office
Mr J F H Barker, Cabinet Office
Mrs S Rimington, Security Service

The Threat from Subversion: 1985Introduction

Subversion was defined in 1972* as

"activities which threaten the safety or well being of the state and are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means".

That definition was accepted by Ministers in the 1970-74 Conservative administration and in subsequent Labour administrations. It was quoted in both Houses of Parliament by Home Office Ministers in 1975 and defended in its entirety by the Home Secretary in February 1985 before the House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee. Pressure for change to the definition inside and outside Parliament is likely to continue.

Subversive Organizations and Individuals

2. The heart of the definition lies in its reference to the undermining or overthrowing of parliamentary democracy. Those persons judged to be subversive under the definition, are, in consequence, for the most part, those who subscribe to the main anti-democratic philosophies. These are Trotskyism, Fascism, Marxism-Leninism (previously known as Maoism), Anarchism and, despite the protestations of some Eurocommunists to the contrary, Communism. There are currently at least seventy organizations in Great Britain which adhere to those philosophies, varying in size from the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) with about 13,000 members, to a handful of exclusive Anarchist and

* SPL (72)1 of 11 October 1972

Marxist-Leninist groups with only two or three members each. The total membership of all subversive organizations in Britain at present probably does not exceed 35,000 (see Appendix I). However, some of the larger organizations, such as the CPGB, have attracted persons, who, while never actually members, are sympathetic to their aims. Such sympathisers probably number about 15,000. In addition, other individuals, few in number, hold anti-democratic views, but are not members of, or sympathetic towards, any established subversive organization. The total number of subversive individuals in Britain, therefore, is probably currently about 50,000 or a little over .1% of the adult population.

The Current Threat

3. The scope for most of these individuals to pursue actively their subversive political objectives is limited, depending as it does largely on their employment and the opportunities it offers for disruption. To that extent, therefore, the threat posed by most subversives at any one time is potential rather than real. On the extreme right, some of the small Fascist organizations, and groups like the National Front and the British National Party, whose leaders, but not all of whose members, hold subversive views, present public order problems. They have little influence in industry and the public service, however, and do not, in consequence, present a subversive threat of any proportion outside the public order field. Members of some anarchist organizations, and of other groups, such as certain Black racial extremists in London, and Scottish and Welsh nationalist extremists, also present localized or limited public order problems largely resulting from their propensity for violence. On the extreme left, most groups are small and, as organizations, have little impact. At present, therefore, only the largest Communist and Trotskyist parties pose a significant threat on a national scale.

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The Communist Party of Great Britain

4. The CPGB is now a quarter of the size it was in 1940. It is also currently rent with internal policy differences. Three factions within the Party are discernable; first the pro-Soviet hardliners led by Fergus NICHOLSON and numbering approximately 400; second the "Industrials", who emphasize the importance of trade union work, look to the Soviet Union for Communist leadership, comprise about a third of the membership, and enjoy the support of the 'Morning Star' newspaper; and third, the Eurocommunists, whose views are, for the most part, accepted by the Party leadership, and who probably have the support of more than half the membership. The rivalry between these factions came to a head in May 1985 when the Party held its first Special National Congress since the one held in 1957 after the Soviet intervention in Hungary. The Congress reflected and consolidated the control of the Party apparatus by its Eurocommunist wing. Despite these divisions, the CPGB remains the largest subversive organization in Britain and the best established in many areas of public life. Moreover, while its leadership no longer slavishly follows the political line laid down by the Soviet Union, the Party still supports the main aims of Soviet foreign policy and many members continue to see themselves as part of an international movement led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In consequence, Party members are in the forefront of support for the activities of International Communist Front Organizations such as the World Peace Council and the World Federation of Trade Unions, and, domestically, play a leading role in the British "peace" movement, where members of the Party's hard-line pro-Soviet factions, at least, have consistently advanced Soviet views on disarmament.

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Historically the CPGB's greatest influence has been in industry, particularly in heavy industry, and the Party continues to exercise a disproportionate influence within some trade unions. Three Party members sit on the 50 member Trade Union Congress General Council; Ken GILL of the Technical, Administrative and Supervisory Section (TASS) of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW), Mick McGAHEY of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and Ray ALDERSON of the Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA). In addition another four members of the General Council have varying degrees of sympathy with the Party's aims. The Party does not currently control any trade union at national level, but dominates AUEW/TASS and has significant influence in other sections of the AUEW, in the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), the Union of Construction Allied Trades and Technicians, the National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) and in the NUM. It seeks to co-ordinate the activities of Communist trade unionists through a system of national and local industrial organizers, and of trade union or industry "advisory" committees. In practice these arrangements are only partially effective due largely to the indifferent calibre of the full-time Party officials involved. Nevertheless the Party or its members still have the ability on occasions to exploit, for political ends, real or imagined grievances among workers and to exacerbate any industrial unrest to which those give rise, and Communists have played a significant part in, for example, every coal strike since 1970, the 1982 rail strike, and in the industrial action at Grunwick and at the 'Messenger' print-works in Warrington. However, Communist agitation in industry is only effective when and where there are industrial issues which can be exploited. Moreover, the current retrenchment in those heavy industries within which the Party has been most successful in the past, has acted as a brake on militancy, and this has reduced the Party's ability to make trouble.

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6. In recent years the Eurocommunist dominated leadership of the CPGB has encouraged its members to involve themselves in what the Party manifesto 'The British Road to Socialism' (1977) describes as "broad democratic alliances". By this means the leadership has hoped both to increase the Party's influence within the Left in British politics and to shift the Left's policies further leftwards. The Party claims that this policy has had some success. Communists have joined such pressure groups as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (CPBF) in comparatively large numbers, and it is true that some of those bodies espouse causes which are also advocated by the Party. CND, for example, advocates policies on nuclear weapons virtually indistinguishable from those of the Party, and the CPBF's main objective, the acceptance by the media of a "right of reply", was first advanced by the Party, in 1977. However, the significance of these similarities of view should not be over-estimated. The policies of the Left in Britain have always tended to move leftwards during periods when the Labour Party is in opposition, and the CPGB no longer, as it once did with CND, dominates any major pressure group. In most, its members are now greatly outnumbered by campaigners with no subversive affiliations, who, while supporting individual policies also advanced by the Party, do not accept the Party's leadership or ideology.

7. Of all subversive groupings in Britain, the domestic Communists (ie the CPGB and the much smaller New Communist Party which broke from it in 1977), remain the best established in public sector employment. About 45% of the 1800 or more Civil Servants and employees of public corporations identified as having subversive records are Communists or Communist sympathisers, and Communists are the best represented among school teachers and lecturers in higher and further education. The threat posed by these people, however, is

significant in the Civil Service only in certain circumstances; where the individuals are union officials, where there are concentrations of members and the work lends itself to disruptive activity, and where individuals have access to information which could be exploited for political purposes. Similarly, in education their influence is significant only in the few institutions where members are concentrated, in certain disciplines which have attracted Communist teachers, and at Universities where Communist academics hold leading positions or have attracted a student following. Vic ALLEN at Leeds University and Eric HOBBSAWM, formerly of Birkbeck College, for example, have both exerted considerable influence within their own academic disciplines and beyond.

Trotskyist Organizations

8. Britain is the only European country in which Trotskyism has attracted and retained a significant following, but the history of British Trotskyism has been characterized by a succession of divisions, ideological disputes and realignments. For many years it has concentrated round the policies and activities of three men; Gerry HEALY, Tony CLIFF and Ted GRANT, now leading members respectively of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Militant Tendency (MT). Trotskyists adhere to TROTSKY's 'Transitional Programme' of 1938 which envisaged the establishment of a situation of "dual power" between workers' organizations on one side and the state administration on the other, in the expectation that the resulting conflict between the two would lead to revolution. While all British Trotskyists accept this theoretical basis for their activities, they differ over the means necessary to achieve the ends envisaged by TROTSKY. Two different approaches are discernable. Some groups like MT, and the groups formerly

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known as the Socialist League (SL) and the Workers Socialist League (WSL) practise entryism into the Labour Party, that is they seek to further their revolutionary aims by the clandestine penetration of the Labour Party with the aim of influencing, and eventually controlling, its policy. Other groups like the SWP, the WRP, the Revolutionary Communist Group and the Revolutionary Communist Party label entryism as "reformist", and seek in their different ways to undermine the authority of the State and its institutions directly rather than through an established non-subversive political party. Trotskyists have traditionally stressed the importance of international revolution. However no Trotskyist, as opposed to Communist, government has ever been established. British Trotskyist groups, in consequence, do not enjoy the political and occasional financial support that, for example, the CPGB has received from Eastern Europe.

Militant Tendency

9. The largest and most threatening Trotskyist group in Britain is now MT which, with a membership exceeding 6,300, is four times larger than it was at the time of the 1979 General Election. It has ambitious plans for future membership growth and for extending its activities. Its greatest strengths have been the dedication of its members and its strong internal discipline. These have given it an influence out of proportion to the comparatively small size of its membership. Most members are young; the average age of known and fully identified members and sympathisers in Liverpool and Glasgow (some 10% of the total), for example, is 30. Despite its recent growth, however, MT is rarely able to muster sufficient strength on its own within any organization to exert a dominating influence upon it. In consequence it operates by first establishing a well disciplined, if small, group of members within an organization.

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Those members then seek to attract the support of others by disguising their Trotskyist philosophy and instead advocating left-wing or radical policies which they anticipate will attract a wider following. Indeed MT's own political programme, published in the 'Militant' newspaper in 1981, was designed specifically, not to publicise its revolutionary objectives, but to attract recruits by arousing disillusionment with moderate Labour Party policies. It calls, inter alia, for the nationalization of the top 200 companies and the abolition of the monarchy and House of Lords. Once established with a following in an organization, MT is often able, through the assiduous attendance of members and sympathisers at meetings and on committees, to exert considerable influence.

10. MT's activities reflect its aim of infiltrating and eventually controlling the Labour Party. In pursuit of that aim, its principal targets are Constituency Labour Parties, the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), local councils, trade unions and the National Organization of Labour Students (NOLS). In all those areas it has achieved notable successes in recent years. MT now has two MPs* and significant influence in approximately 20 Constituency Labour Parties. At the 1984 Labour Party Conference, ten resolutions were actually proposed by MT members on topics ranging from local government and control of the police to the economy and defence. Five of those resolutions were carried against the wishes of the Party's National Executive Committee (NEC). MT claimed, probably accurately, that 30 of its members spoke during the debates out of an overall total of 80 from Constituency Parties. These successes were achieved despite the fact that during 1984 MT gave trade union activity priority over Constituency Party work. They reflected MT's strength in the Labour Party at local level, a strength derived from the membership of all MT members of the Labour Party itself.

* Terry FIELDS (Liverpool Broadgreen) and Dave NELLIST (Coventry South East)

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1. MT has been engaged during the last eighteen months in a major recruitment drive which has included trade unionists, and has been particularly successful in the white collar unions such as the CPSA and the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU). The Tendency employs in its London Headquarters at least eight full-time industrial organizers and others in the provinces, and has set up "caucuses" (clandestine groups which meet to co-ordinate MT activity) in nearly thirty unions. Numerically too thin on the ground to win great influence within unions unaided, MT generally operates by seeking to establish or take over "Broad Lefts" (loose coalitions of union members with a wide range of left-wing views) in unions. The CPSA and POEU national executive committees were both under the control of "Broad Lefts" set up by MT although the CPSA "Broad Left" has since split in two. In addition MT currently enjoys varying degrees of influence at national level in the TGWU, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades '82, the National Union of Seamen, the Confederation of Health Services Employees and the Fire Brigades Union. Members of NALGO and the National Union of Public Employees are also currently a target for MT.

12. MT members were involved in industrial action during 1984 at DHSS in Newcastle, at British Leyland, in the national docks strike and in the miners' strike. MT as an organization, however, does not foster industrial militancy as an end in itself; rather it sees it as a way of gaining recruits among union members and of raising the political consciousness of the workers with the aim of eventually shifting the policies of the trade unions, and through them the Labour Party, leftwards. MT, therefore, judged their involvement in the DHSS and miners' strikes as particularly beneficial, and in October 1984 claimed to have recruited up to 600 miners. Similarly, despite the eventual collapse of the DHSS strike, MT believes that it is held in high esteem by

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CPSA members in Newcastle and that it is likely to make more recruits to add to the eighteen made during the strike. MT now claims to have 400 members in the CPSA, and while there is no evidence that it has singled out Civil Servants as a particular target, it is clear that it is making a number of recruits within the Civil Service, particularly at clerical officer level. The number of known MT members in the Civil Service increased in 1984 by about 70 to at least 300. On the information currently available Departments most affected are DRSS, the Department of Employment and the Inland Revenue.

13. MT has had successes in other areas. The LPYS, the official youth wing of the Labour Party, is controlled by MT at national level and has been since 1970. This gives it a seat, as of right, on the Labour Party's NEC. MT has also made intermittent progress within NOLS, the student body for Labour Party members and supporters, although its current influence on the NOLS executive is slight. In local government it has been conspicuously successful in Liverpool City Council. This success has resulted from hard work. MT members and sympathisers only represent a minority within the ruling Labour majority on the Council but they have rehearsed their voting tactics carefully in advance and adhered closely to them at meetings. Members have also attended virtually all meetings of the Council and Sub-Committees diligently, gained chairmanships of key Sub-Committees, and tried hard and, with some success, to attract support from other Labour Party Councillors. These tactics have given MT an influence on the Council far greater than its mere voting strength. Attempts by MT to exploit local government issues elsewhere, by encouraging members to stand for election as councillors, are still at an early stage.

14. MT has, however, had its problems, and these have reduced its subversive impact. The five members of the editorial board of 'Militant' were expelled from the Labour Party in 1983 amid considerable press speculation about MT's activities, and the Labour Party leadership is well aware of MT's true Trotskyist character. Press interest continues to have an adverse affect on the organization. MT hopes that in the selection and reselection process of Labour Party Parliamentary candidates for the next general election they will succeed in obtaining more candidacies. The organization has, however, been upset by the publicity which has been focused on their intentions and believe that this has damaged their chances particularly in Central Scotland. Internally the very rapid expansion of membership in the last eighteen months has not been problem free. It has forced MT to relax its very strict requirements for the training and "integration" of recruits. As a result the commitment and ideological understanding of some new members is lacking and the leadership has come to accept that quite a high proportion of new recruits may leave within a few months. Moreover, MT started 1985 in some financial difficulty and found it necessary for a time to postpone the appointment of further full-time staff.

Other Trotskyist Groups

15. Other Trotskyist groups which practise entryism into the Labour Party, such as SL and WSL have not been as successful as MT. Indeed SL is now divided over the effectiveness of that tactic, and despite some limited success in the LPYS and in a few Constituency Parties, may well break up over it. In fact the impact of most of the smaller Trotskyist groups is limited, and, besides MT, only the SWP and WRP present a significant subversive threat. Those two groups have both suffered a decline in membership from peaks in the

mid 1970's, however, and to that extent are less of a threat than they were. In addition, the SWP has had an ambivalent attitude towards the involvement of its members in trade union activity at senior level. During 1983 and 1984 SWP members were forbidden by the Party to take national office in trade unions. However, members were still often involved in picketing, in the sale of their newspaper 'Socialist Worker' at industrial disputes and sometimes in violent work-place confrontations with the police. Moreover, that Party, like MT, claimed to have made successful recruitments among miners during the miners' strike, and during 1983 alone its members were actively, and sometimes violently, involved in industrial troubles at Tilbury Docks, in the October 1983 social workers dispute and, in large numbers, in the 'Messenger' newspaper picketing. Such SWP activity will continue and may increase after the recent SWP decision to resume work within trade unions at national level.

16. In the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the SWP (then known as the International Socialists) attracted large numbers of higher education students to its ranks. That educational background of some of the membership is still reflected in the comparatively large number of SWP members who are employed in the Civil Service and as teachers. After the CPGB, the SWP has, with at least 380 the largest number of known members and sympathisers employed in the Civil Service of any subversive organization. Its members are apparently most numerous in the DHSS. However, they are only likely to have an impact if they are union officials or where a number work together. At educational institutions, however, SWP members, although not as numerous as Communists, are often more conspicuously active among the students, largely because the Party encourages their involvement in public demonstrations. During the spring of 1982 alone, the Party led twenty-one occupations of College buildings

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In protest over alleged education cuts and more recently its members have been involved in the unrest at the Polytechnic of North London and in the numerous protests over cuts in student grants. Such activity is seen by the Party as a good way of attracting recruits, and as a means of undermining what it considers to be "bourgeois" educational institutions. The SWP supports a full-time student organizer from Party funds and an SWP national student committee assists with the co-ordination of Party activity at more than 50 institutions. As a means of extending the Party's influence and attracting new student recruits, Party members organize Socialist Worker Student Societies (SWSS) at colleges and polytechnics. Many SWSS members eventually join the SWP. However, the Party is not the force it once was in the education field. Its student membership was down from about 800 in 1976 to about 450 in 1984, and its school teacher membership from approximately 300 in 1978 to about 200 in 1984. Nearly 100 of those school teacher members, however, work in London where they have been involved in industrial action over the teachers current pay claim.

17. The WRP continues to receive financial assistance from the Palestine Liberation Organization and to benefit from the earnings of Vanessa and Corin REDGRAVE both of whom are WRP Central Committee members. As a result, it is comparatively wealthy, and is able to produce a professional daily newspaper, 'News Line', and to spend lavishly on attempts to recruit young people to its youth section, the Young Socialists (YS). It has, in recent years, concentrated on the establishment of Youth Centres in areas of high unemployment. Those Centres, administered by YS members, ostensibly provide vocational training and recreation for unemployed youth, but are, in fact, effectively venues for Party activity and recruitment among a potentially disaffected section of the

population. Centres have so far been opened in Brixton, Glasgow, Liverpool, Merthyr Tydfil, Nottingham, Newcastle and Manchester. In industry, the WRP is less successful and less conspicuously active than either MT or the SWP, but its front organization, the All Trades Unions Alliance has attracted some trade unionists to WRP policies.

1985: The Vulnerable Areas

18. One area particularly vulnerable to subversive activity is the Civil Service. At the end of 1984 approximately 1400 Civil Servants were identified as having subversive records; the majority were Communists and Trotskyists. 1144 of these were employed in eight Departments (see Appendix II). However, those statistics probably understate the real figures. MT, in particular, is a clandestine organization and details of all its members are not known. The MT members in the CPSA and the Communists in the SCPS in particular will be hoping to exploit Civil Service pay negotiations, and changes in work practices resulting from the introduction of new technology, to recruit new members and disrupt the machinery of government. Vetting and other security procedures have virtually excluded subversives from the Armed Services and the Police and have protected classified information within Departments. The Navy and the RAF vet most of their employees, but the Army vets only those who have access and commissioned officers. Nevertheless the number of soldiers with subversive records is negligible. One effect of vetting procedures, however, has been to concentrate those with subversive records in Departments, whose information is not, in the main, classified.

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19. Other organizations are also at risk. The nationalized industries are a perennial target for subversive attack, particularly from the CPGB via their unions. Dissatisfaction among Health Service employees will continue to offer opportunities for subversive groups, particularly MT. Following the rate capping legislation and MT's success in Liverpool, local government is likely to be a target for subversive groups who will be hoping to secure seats as councillors, and recruits among local authority workers, and to use local grievances to attack government policies. After a period of comparative stability, the education system offers to subversives the opportunity for disruptive action, primarily to Communists and, in London, to SWP teachers, who will continue to try to exploit discontent over salaries. Trotskyist students are also likely to be in the forefront of unrest over grants and the control of student union funds. Finally, the Labour Party is at risk from MT and the small entryist groups, who will continue to seek to exploit the selection and reselection process for Parliamentary candidates, and local government grievances, to increase their influence within that Party.

20. The importance of subversive organizations and the risk they pose, however, should not be over-estimated. Subversive groups are small and are only really effective when they can exploit events, policies or grievances to attract the support of others for their activities. Even then, and this applies particularly to MT's machinations within the Labour Party, such support is volatile and can easily be lost, if, for example, their real intentions are exposed. In some areas, notably within industry and on employment issues, subversive organizations find it comparatively easy to find opportunities that can be exploited. In other areas they find it more difficult. A number of Trotskyist groups, for example, have attempted to use the unrest

in Northern Ireland as a vehicle for attacking successive governments, but support for Irish Republican extremism on the mainland has remained negligible. Nevertheless, subversive organizations remain constantly on the look-out for new opportunities to exploit and for chances to misrepresent government policies for their own political ends.

Summary

21. In sum, there are probably about 50,000 subversives in Britain divided between some seventy organizations. The ability of most of those individuals to make trouble in pursuit of subversive political objectives is limited, but the CPGB and the three largest Trotskyist groups, MT, the SWP and the WRP do currently pose a significant subversive threat on a national scale. The Civil Service, nationalized industries, National Health Service, education system, and local government as well as the Labour Party are the organizations most at risk from their activities.

SECRETSubversive Organizations in Great Britain - December 1984

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Approximate Membership</u>
<u>Domestic Communist Parties</u>	
Communist Party of Great Britain	13,000
Young Communist League	400
New Communist Party	450
Others	60
	<hr/>
Total	13,910
<u>Foreign Communist Parties</u>	
(with significant Great Britain membership)	
AKEL (Cypriot Communist Party)	730
Italian Communist Party	600
Iraqi Communist Party	350
Turkish Communist Party - Leninist	250
Others	360
	<hr/>
Total	2,290
<u>Trotskyist Groups</u>	
Militant Tendency	6,300
Workers Revolutionary Party	4,000
Socialist Workers Party	4,000
Socialist League	700
Revolutionary Communist Group	230
Red Action	200
Revolutionary Communist Party	190
Others	550
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Total	16,170

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Organization

Approximate
Membership

Right Wing Extremist Organizations

National Front*	2,500*
British National Party*	1,500*
Fascist Groups	420

Total (subversives only) c500

Marxist-Leninist (formerly Maoist) Groups

Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)	450
Revolutionary Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist)	120
Revolutionary Communist League of Britain	100
Others	130

Total 800

Anarchist Organizations

Anarchist Federations	300
Big Flame	150
Direct Action Movement	100
Others	300

Total 850

Other Subversive Organizations

Scottish and Welsh Nationalist Extremists	50
Black and Asian Racial Extremists	150
Others	50

Total 250

Overall Total of Subversives

= approximately 35,000

* These organizations attract individuals of a wide range of opinions; not all hold subversive views.

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Appendix II

Government Departments - holders of subversive records on 31 December 1984

The total number of identified holders of subversive records for whom Government Departments had security responsibility was 1420 on 31 December 1984. 733 had Trotskyist records, 607 Communist records and anarchist, nationalist and Fascist records totalled 80. The table below sets out in detail the figures for the 8 Departments with more than 50 such people and gives combined figures for the rest. The table covers individuals with records ranging in significance from 1984 membership of a subversive organisation to old sympathies. (It does not, however, include anyone whose subversive record has been re-assessed and found to be no longer significant.) In line with vetting requirements the figures also include close relatives of members or sympathizers who are not themselves members of a subversive group.

<u>Department</u>	<u>Subversive Total</u>	<u>CPGB/ NCP</u>	<u>SWP</u>	<u>MT</u>	<u>Other Trotskyists</u>	<u>Anarchists/ Nationalists</u>	<u>Fascists</u>
Health and Social Security	360	116	114	86	31	7	6
Employment Group	239	96	58	46	30	6	3
Inland Revenue	169	53	44	50	11	5	6
Defence	111	66	16	13	11	-	5
Environment/Transport	108	56	17	14	13	4	4
Trade and Industry	53	29	4	12	5	1	2
Home Office (including the Prison Service)	52	29	2	5	4	1	11
Customs and Excise	52	24	4	13	4	4	3
	1144	469	259	239	109	28	40
Other Departments	276	138	58	45	23	7	5
	1420	607	317	284	132	35	45

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DEPARTMENTAL ASSESSMENTS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SUBVERSIVES:
MARCH 1985Introduction

In examining their records, Departments found that there were a few discrepancies between their records of the subversives employed and those of the Security Service. The main reasons for this were that the Security Service had not received regular notification of retirements, resignations and transfers from Departments and had not itself always informed Departments of the name of the Trotskyist group to which an employee belonged.

Scottish Office

2. The Departments of the Secretary of State for Scotland employ just over 12,000 staff. In those Departments, 25 persons have come to notice as subversives, seven of whom are Communists, seven SWP members and seven MT members or sympathisers. Three of the 25 are of HEO grade, the remainder being more junior; five are prominent trade union activists, and two of those (in the Department of Registers of Scotland) are CPSA office holders. The Departments' experience is that the targets most vulnerable to disruption are payments made by mainframe computer to such groups as farmers, retired teachers, recipients of student grants and suppliers generally, and the work of the Sheriff Courts and the conveyancing and house sales facilitated by the Department of Registers. In the Scottish Office as a whole, there are about 150 accredited representatives of the Unions, who log about 10 per cent facility time on average. Only 9 people receive 100 per cent facility time.

Department of Education and Science

3. There are some 2,400 staff in DES of whom 15 have come to notice as subversives. The DES also has security responsibility for the Research Councils whose staff are neither Civil Servants nor employed by the Crown, and who total around 12,000 of whom 27 have come to notice as subversives. As regards the DES staff, the majority of subversives employed belong to the CPGB. Most work in London, but two are employed at the computer centre in Darlington. Only one is an active member of the trade union side and he has no facility time. The Department's policy is to keep known subversives away from posts in Ministerial Private Offices and from sections supporting them or the most senior officials, and from Establishments, Finance and Science Branches. The Department has experienced no significant problem caused by the subversives, and has few areas of work vulnerable to disruption.

Department of Employment

4. The Group (ie the Department itself, the Manpower Services Commission, the Health and Safety Executive and ACAS) employs about 54,500 staff, the great majority in regional and local offices. Of the subversive total of around 240, Trotskyists account for over 130 and the Communists for just under 100. Many have been employed for some time and most have not, by their behaviour, known activities or in other ways attracted the adverse attention of management. Although nearly half of the total number of subversives are active in trade union affairs and 71 receive facility time, most - particularly CPGB members - act responsibly whereas there are other activists without any subversive record who are both troublesome and irresponsible. In recent years subversives have not been responsible for disruptive industrial action and there are currently no offices in the Group which appear vulnerable to such action. Management ensures that known subversives are not posted to sensitive HQ areas or to specially vulnerable work.

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Department of Health and Social Security

5. The DHSS has over 93,000 staff, most of whom are employed in social security offices locally or at headquarters in Newcastle and North Fylde. The Department is the largest employer of subversives in the Civil Service, with in excess of 350. About a third are Communists and two-thirds Trotskyists. Most are CPSA members, and 74 are trade union activists receiving significant facility time. The DHSS areas most vulnerable to disruption are the computer centres at Newcastle, Washington, North Fylde, Reading and Livingstone, where industrial action by computer staff has an immediate effect on the payment of benefit to the public and/or related work. Emergency measures had been devised and used successfully to maintain a reduced service during industrial action in 1984, but those were expensive. The local office network generally is not considered to be especially vulnerable, short of a national Civil Service strike, because only a small proportion of the offices would be affected at any one time. However, a disproportionately large number of members of subversive organisations work in local offices in Inner London, which may be more at risk than those in the provinces. The Department takes care to keep subversives away from Ministerial Offices and classified information. In the development of the computer projects within the Social Security Operational Strategy - referred to in the recent Green Paper as the Computerisation of Social Security Administration - careful consideration is being given to their vulnerability to various contingencies, including industrial action and fall-back arrangements are so far as possible being included in the design of the projects.

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Ministry of Defence

6. The MOD has 174,000 staff, of whom 79 have a subversive record (more than 30 having left the Department since their name had been notified by the Security Service). The majority (54) were CPGB members, with much smaller numbers in the various Trotskyist groups. The individuals concerned are scattered across a large number of MOD UK establishments, and the only significant feature is a large concentration in the Rosyth area, where 13 CPGB and 2 MT members are employed. About 20 subversives are trade union activists who receive facility time, about 12 of whom are involved in extra-mural political activity, ranging from standing as a prospective Parliamentary candidate to taking part in demonstrations. The Department has been unable to find any evidence for a pattern of activity among this scattered group and on the evidence available concludes that there do not appear to be any MOD areas of work which are currently particularly vulnerable to disruption.

Department of the Environment/Department of Transport

7. The DOE (which includes PSA) and the DTp have about 48,000 staff of whom about 100 are known subversives. A slim majority are Communists with most of the remainder being members or sympathisers of various Trotskyist groups. Eighteen are trade union activists, of whom eleven are trade union side office holders and three received 100% facility time. Not all the Departments' troublemakers are people with subversive records. The Departments have not experienced any significant industrial action since 1981. The most vulnerable unit within the Departments' responsibility was the DVLC computer centre at Swansea, which was the subject of serious disruption in 1981. There is another major computing centre at Hastings (which is more quiescent) and a number of highly sensitive military and civil establishments which the PSA maintains, but in respect of which the risk of militant action remains low.

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Annex D

Subversive influence in the Civil Service Unions

A. Civil and Public Services Association

The subversive membership of the 1984-85 National Executive Committee (NEC) was 16 out of 29, there being 5 members of MT, 9 Trotskyist sympathisers and 2 members of the CPGB. The subversive membership of the 1985-86 NEC is 2 out of 29, there being 1 member of the CPGB and 1 Trotskyist sympathiser.

B. Society of Civil and Public Servants

The subversive membership of the Executive Council has remained 11 out of 26, 1984-86. There are 8 CPGB members, 1 former member of the New Communist Party assessed as a pro-Soviet Communist, 1 member of the Communist Party of Britain (Marxist-Leninist) and 1 Trotskyist sympathiser.

C. Institution of Professional Civil Servants

There were no known subversives on the 1984-85 National Executive Committee nor are there any currently.

D. Civil Service Union

None of the members of the National Executive Committee 1983-85 has a subversive record.

E. Inland Revenue Staff Federation

The Executive Committee 1984-85 and 1985-86 includes 1 member of MT out of a total of 29.

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Arrangements for providing Departments with Security Service Information

Departments obtain information held by the Security Service in three ways:

- a. from the normal vetting process;
- b. from the positive vetting process; and
- c. through the 'after care' arrangements.

Normal Vetting

2. In general, normal vetting is applied to all persons who are being considered for employment which affords access to information classified CONFIDENTIAL or above. Departments submit details of the candidate being vetted and the Security Service then either -

- a. advise that there is "no security objection" (NSO); or
- b. provide the Department with a summary of the security information and give an assessment of the degree of risk which would attach to the employment of the individual in a post affording access.

Positive Vetting

3. In general, positive vetting is applied to all persons who are being considered for employment which affords constant and regular access to TOP SECRET information. During the positive vetting process Departments submit details (additional to those required in normal vetting) and the Security Service makes checks and provides any information or advice that may be necessary.

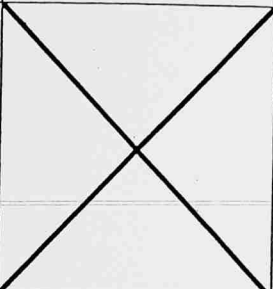
SECRET

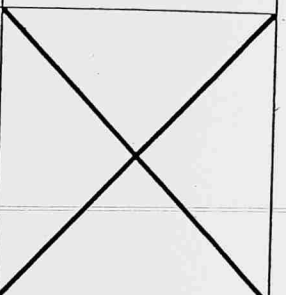
After Care

4. A Security Service reply 'NSO' to a vetting enquiry is necessarily valid only for the moment when it issues. It is not a certificate of reliability. It is, therefore, important that any new information which might affect the reliability of someone occupying a sensitive post is brought promptly to the attention of the responsible authorities. This is met by procedures known collectively as 'after care'. They include a service of information provided by the Security Service.

5. If the Security Service receive significant adverse information about a civil servant, they provide the Department concerned with a summary, whether or not he has currently access to classified information. Similar action is taken in respect of those employed by certain other public bodies for which there is a vetting commitment, and for members of the Armed Forces.

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DEPARTMENT/SERIES <p style="text-align: center;">CAB 301</p> PIECE/ITEM (one piece/item number)	Date and sign
Extract details: LETTER: 8 MARCH 1985 C.O. SHIPP TO SIR BRIAN CUBBON. CCB	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	G Dyer 08/02/2018
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NUMBER NOT USED	
MISSING (TNA USE ONLY)	
DOCUMENT PUT IN PLACE (TNA USE ONLY)	

DEPARTMENT/SERIES <p style="text-align: center;">CAB 301</p> <hr/> PIECE/ITEM (one piece/item number) <p style="text-align: center;">485</p>	Date and sign
Extract details: <p style="text-align: center;">LETTER: 27 FEBRUARY 1985</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ROBERT ARMSTRONG TO SIR BRIAN GUBBON</p>	
CLOSED UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>G. G. G.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">08/02/2018</p>
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SECRET AND PERSONAL



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

SIR BRIAN CUBBON GCB
PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

~~c- H. Davie~~

30 January 1985

CABINET OFFICE
A 854
31 JAN 1985
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

Dear Robert

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Thank you for your letter of 18 January. I am entirely content with the proposal to review the position on the subversive threat of which there have been a number of disturbing examples recently, both within the Civil Service and more generally. I agree that the appropriate way of tackling this is to revive SPL, with the terms of reference and membership which you propose. I also agree that we should invite representatives from MOD, DOE and DHSS, at least for the first review, and I am glad to see that this seems to be generally agreed.

I am sure that the necessary work of producing an up-to-date assessment of the threat and providing a means for the appropriate dissemination of information on it will need to be followed up by action on appropriate counter-measures. It would seem right for SPL to report to the Committee of Permanent Secretaries, who will then want to consider the response to be made to the threat.

As soon as we have received the agreement of all concerned, Michael Partridge will arrange a meeting of SPL as soon as possible.

This is a hand

Copies as per your letter

*Yours ever
Brian*

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SECRET

2751

Correspondence to this address must be under double cover. The outer envelope should be addressed to The Secretary PO Box 500 London SW1P 1XH and not to any individual.



PO Box 500
London SW1P 1XH

Telephone 01-388 3232 ext. 7402
01-491 4488 ext.

c - H. Davie
**THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS
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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT**

CABINET OFFICE	
A	723
25 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTION:	
FILE No.	.....

25 January 1985

A085/175

Dear Robert,

Please refer to your letter to Brian Cubbon of 18 January regarding the revival of the SPL Group.

2. I confirm that we are content with the proposed composition and terms of reference for the reactivated SPL, including our representation at Deputy Director General level and our participation in the Secretariat.

3. I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever,
C O Shipp
C O Shipp

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Secretary of the Cabinet
Cabinet Office

SECRET

SECRET AND PERSONAL



The Permanent Secretary
Sir George Moseley KCB

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Permanent Secretary
Cabinet Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AS

c- H. Davie

Department of the Environment
2 Marsham Street London SW1P 3EB
01-212 8051

CABINET OFFICE	
A	762
28 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

25 January 1985

Dear Robert,

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

You sent me a copy of your letter of 18 January to Brian Cubbon. We welcome the chance to join SPL for the first review. Having consulted Terry Heiser I would suggest that his successor, Ken Ennals should be our representative.

Copies go to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever
George

George Moseley

SECRET AND PERSONAL



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
 MAIN BUILDING WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 01-218 2193 (Direct Dialling)

01-218 9000 (Switchboard)

PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE
 SIR CLIVE WHITMORE KCB CVO

PUS/S85/81
 7/1

~~c. H. Davie~~

CABINET OFFICE	
A	758
28 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	

25 January 1985

See Robert

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Thank you for letting me have a copy of your letter of 18 January to Brian Cubbon on this subject.

I am grateful to you for inviting the MOD to join SPL. Our representative will be Richard Hastie-Smith.

I agree with the Terms of Reference.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours ever,

Steve.

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
 Cabinet Office
 70 Whitehall
 London SW1

SECRET AND PERSONAL

SECRET AND PERSONAL



Sir Antony Acland KCMG KCVO
Permanent Under-Secretary of State

~~c. H. Davie~~

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

25 January 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

CABINET OFFICE

CABINET OFFICE	
A	779
29 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

My dear Robert,

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

1. Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 18 January to Brian Cubbon. This is to record that I am content that the SPL should be reactivated as you propose.
2. My understanding is that the FCO was not closely involved in the proceedings in 1980, although we received reports of meetings. On the assumption that a similar course is adopted this time I can confirm that we are ready to provide a representative from the FCO as necessary for appropriate items. If you agree however, I should prefer to nominate a representative when the agenda for the particular meeting concerned is available.
3. I am copying this letter to Brian Cubbon, Michael Quinlan, David Hancock, Kerr Fraser, Clive Whitmore, George Moseley, Kenneth Stowe and the Director General of the Security Service.

Yours ever
Antony

Antony Acland

SECRET AND PERSONAL

S E C R E T AND PERSONAL

26
2751



~~c-H. Davie~~

SCOTTISH OFFICE
WHITEHALL
LONDON SW1A 2AU
01-233 8229 or 7602

SIR WILLIAM FRASER ~~GCB~~
PERMANENT UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE

24 January 1985

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
Whitehall
London SW1



John Reid
SPL

I write in response to your letter of 18 January to say that William Reid will be happy to serve on the reconstituted SPL. I hope it will be acceptable, if need arises, that he be represented by Bill Baird, the Under Secretary on that side of our work who represented us formerly on SPL in its previous existence.

*Yours ever,
W Reid*



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE

Elizabeth House York Road London SE1 7PH

Telephone 01-928 9222

The Permanent Secretary
D.J.S. Hancock

CABINET OFFICE	
A	725
25 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
LONDON SW1

~~c. H. Davie~~

24 January 1985

Dear Robert *RA*

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 18 January to Brian Cubbon.

2. I am content that the Inter-Departmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) should be revived and agree that Walter Ulrich should represent this Department.

3. Copies go to recipients of yours.

Yours,

David

D J S HANCOCK

SECRET AND PERSONAL



Sir Michael Quinlan KCB
Permanent Secretary

Department of Employment
Caxton House Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NF
Telephone 01-213 3000

CABINET OFFICE	
A	635
23 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No	.....

SECRET AND PERSONAL

22 January 1985

~~c. H. Davie~~

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO
Permanent Secretary
Cabinet Office
Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2AS

See below.

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

I am content that SPL should be reactivated as proposed in your letter of 18 January to Brian Cubbon; and that Douglas Smith should represent my Department.

*Copies go to the recipients of your
Jan 18.*

Michael

M E QUINLAN

SECRET AND PERSONAL

2751



CABINET OFFICE
A 634
23 JAN 1985
FILING INSTRUCTIONS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY


Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522 ext 6981

From the Permanent Secretary

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

c. H. Davie

Sir Robert Armstrong, GCB, CVO,
Cabinet Office, 
Whitehall,
LONDON SW1

22 January, 1985

Mr, dear Robert.

SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

Thank you for your letter of 18 January.

We would certainly wish to be represented on SPL and our Departmental representative will be Mr. Norman Clarke.

I am copying this letter to the recipients of yours.

Yours sincerely,

Ken



c - Mr DH Payne (Cabinet Office)

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

c - Mr Davie

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

Ref. A085/175

18 January 1985

Subversion in Public Life

On a number of occasions recently we have discussed the changing nature of the subversive threat, both within the Civil Service and more generally. A number of developments, which I will not rehearse here, have led us to conclude, after discussion with the Security Service, that it would be worthwhile reviving the Inter-Departmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) to produce an up-to-date assessment of the threat and to provide a means for the appropriate dissemination of information on the threat. It will also be necessary to reactivate the Committee of Permanent Secretaries which was responsible for overseeing the work of SPL and for advising Ministers on appropriate counter-measures that might be considered necessary.

When SPL last met in April 1980, its terms of reference were as follows:

"To give advice on the collection and to co-ordinate the assessment of intelligence about threats to the internal security of Great Britain arising from subversive activities and to make periodic reports to the officials concerned."

I believe that there would be advantage in retaining these broad terms of reference; the immediate task which I propose for the Group falls well within them. I also believe that we should continue the practice of asking the Deputy Secretary in the Home Office responsible for the Police Department to chair the Committee (I recall that a certain Mr Armstrong once performed these duties). I hesitate to propose an addition to Michael Partridge's already heavy workload, but I think it is important

/that the

Sir Brian Cubbon GCB

SECRET AND PERSONAL

that the Committee should be chaired at Deputy Secretary level if it is to secure the right level of representation from all the Departments involved.

In 1980 those represented (in addition to the Home Office) were:

Cabinet Office
Department of Employment
Department of Education and Science
Civil Service Department
Scottish Office
Security Service
New Scotland Yard

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office were also invited to attend as necessary for appropriate items. I think that a basically similar membership would be appropriate now, although I think that it would be a good idea to bring in the Ministry of Defence, the Department of the Environment and the Department of Health and Social Security at least for the first review: I should be grateful if Clive Whitmore, George Moseley and Ken Stowe would let me know whom we should invite to attend for this review.

--- I attach a draft composition and terms of reference for a reactivated SPL on the lines suggested above (and taking into account changes within the Cabinet Office since the abolition of the Civil Service Department). I should be grateful for your comments, and those to whom this letter is copied, so that we can promulgate revised composition and terms of reference in time for a first meeting of the Committee in about a month's time.

I am sending copies of this letter and attachment to Michael Quinlan, David Hancock, Kerr Fraser, Clive Whitmore, George Moseley, Ken Stowe, Antony Acland and the Director General of the Security Service.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

DRAFT COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SPL

CABINET

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION IN PUBLIC LIFE

REVISED COMPOSITION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Note by the Secretary of the Cabinet

COMPOSITION

1. The Composition of the Committee is as follows:

Chairman

Mr M J A Partridge, Home Office

Members

Mr D H J Hilary, Home Office
Mr D B Smith, Department of Employment
Mr W O Ulrich, Department of Education and Science
Mr C J S Brearley, Cabinet Office
Mr W K Reid, Scottish Office
Deputy Director General, Security Service
Deputy Assistant Commissioner C V Hewett, Metropolitan
Police

TERMS OF REFERENCE

2. To give guidance on the collection and to co-ordinate the assessment of intelligence about threats to the internal security of Great Britain arising from subversive activities and to make periodic reports to the officials concerned.

SECRETARIAT

3. The Secretaries are:

Mr R A Harrington, Home Office
Mr S R Davie, Cabinet Office
Mr D H Payne, Cabinet Office
Mrs S Rimington, Security Service

Ref. A085/149

NOTE FOR RECORD

cc - Sir B. Cubbon
Miss Nicholson
Mr. Barker

c - Mr. Davie

Militant Tendency

Sir Robert Armstrong held a meeting on 15 January to discuss the activities of Militant Tendency. Those present were Sir Brian Cubbon, Sir John Jones, Mr Barker and Mrs Rimington.

2. Introducing the discussion, Sir Robert Armstrong drew attention to a number of disturbing examples of the disruption activity of Militant Tendency both inside the Civil Service and outside. Such activity represented a new form of subversion and it was necessary to consider whether more effective counter measures could be taken. The first priority was to form an overall picture of the threat: the policy, intentions and tactics of MT. This might be carried out under the aegis of a revived Committee on Subversion in Public Life (SPL). The response to the threat might subsequently be considered in the Committee on Subversion (Home) (SH).

3. The Director General said that the Security Service would be very ready to agree to this and to provide the material for the assessment. A considerable amount of information was already available but the difficulty was of disseminating to those who would be able to make use of it. For example, departments were informed of MT members identified in the course of existing security checks but in most cases at present this information was not used for management purposes.

4. In discussion it was noted that it was important to separate the threat assessment from the response to it. The response was a matter for those concerned with personnel security but to a considerable extent the response was likely to be through management action. Although the threat assessment would need to pay particular attention to the activities of MT in the Civil Service, it would also be necessary to consider its wider impact.

5. In further discussion the following points were made:

(a) There were a number of limitations in the intelligence available on MT which was a clandestine organisation. It was important that the assessment should make clear what these limitations were. It would also be helpful for the Security Service to receive feed-back on the usefulness of the intelligence provided.

(b) When SPL had met previously it had been chaired by the Home Office Deputy Secretary responsible for the police department and it was accepted in principle that the Home Office should also provide the Chairman of the revived committee. Although it was recognised that this might create workload difficulties for the Deputy Secretary concerned and it was suggested that the task might be given to the Under Secretary who was also Chairman of TO(P), it was thought that this might not secure the appropriate level of representation from other Departments.

(c) Membership of SPL should be confined to Departments. The Industrial Assessment Group should be associated with the work on the threat assessment. An initial draft by the Security Service drawing on current information would take about a month to prepare.

6. Summing up, Sir Robert Armstrong said that they had agreed that SPL should be revived to produce a comprehensive assessment of the threat from MT; he would commission this. Subsequently, SPL would probably need to update this at intervals and also to consider more particular areas of threat.

7. Once the initial threat assessment had been prepared he would chair a meeting of SH to consider how work on a response should be taken forward. Ultimately it would be necessary to consult Ministers with recommendations for measures to be taken to counter the threat.


R P HATFIELD

16 January 1985

CONFIDENTIAL — NO COPIES TO BE TAKEN

GABINET OFFICE	
A	439
16 JAN 1985	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

Sir Robert Armstrong ^{RA} GCB CVO
 Permanent Secretary
 Cabinet Office
 Whitehall
 LONDON
 SW1A 2AS

15 January 1985

Dear Robert,

I thought you might be interested in the postscript to the meeting you held the other day on industrial relations.

I happened to meet Alfred Stocks last evening. He tells me that Liverpool have decided to establish a force of uniformed security guards for their offices. The General and Municipal Workers Union have been given an assurance that the force will be manned by people nominated by the Union. The Union in turn have let it be known that acceptable candidates will need to include amongst their accomplishments a willingness to sell the newspaper Militant.

I am ensuring that this piece of intelligence reaches our contacts in the Security Service. But Alfred made it clear that this would be one of a number of pieces of information on this broad topic that he would wish to place before the forthcoming inquiry.

Yours ever

George

George Moseley

CONFIDENTIAL

SECRET AND PERSONAL

bc. ~~H. Royd Barker~~ *me*

2751



~~c. H. Davie~~

70 WHITEHALL, LONDON SW1A 2AS

01-233 8319

From the Secretary of the Cabinet and Head of the Home Civil Service

Sir Robert Armstrong GCB CVO

~~Ref. A085/88~~

10 January 1985

Industrial Relations in the Civil Service

I attach a record of the meeting in Sir Robert Armstrong's room on 7 January to discuss certain aspects of industrial relations in the Civil Service. In view of the sensitivity of some of the matters discussed, I would be grateful if you would ensure that this record is carefully protected.

I am sending copies of this letter and of the record to the Private Secretaries to those who attended the meeting.

+ Sir L. Airey was invited but unable to attend.

(R P Hatfield)
Private Secretary

H S Webber Esq

SECRET AND PERSONAL

Ref. A085/77

Partridge

NOTE FOR RECORD

Industrial Relations

Sir Robert Armstrong held a meeting on 7 January to discuss the effects of Militant Tendency (MT) on industrial relations within the Civil Service. Those present were Sir Kenneth Stowe, Sir Brian Cubbon, Sir Clive Whitmore, Sir Michael Quinlan, ~~Sir Lawrence Airey~~, Sir George Moseley ^{Heslop} and Mr Angus Fraser. Introducing the discussion, Sir Robert Armstrong said that the meeting had been prompted largely by events during the Department of Health and Social Security computer strike in Newcastle but there had also been reports about the way in which MT operated in other areas, for example in local government and in some schools, which had disturbing implications.

2. Sir Kenneth Stowe said that it had become apparent during negotiations in the Newcastle dispute that the strikers' negotiators were being dominated behind the scenes by a small group of MT members whose object was to undermine any progress towards a settlement. As a result, DHSS had sought and received, on a highly restricted basis, a very helpful brief from the Security Service on MT methods. As a result of the briefing he had also discovered that nearly one-third of DHSS 'facility timers' were identified as probable MT activists and there had proved to be a close correlation between their location and offices where there had been particular industrial relations difficulties. He had subsequently discovered that there was also a close connection between MT in Newcastle and in Liverpool where they controlled the local authority. MT appeared to be an expanding force, well financed and highly motivated, and targetted specifically on white collar unions. The implications of the disruptive activity of MT were not

confined to the DHSS and would be of great concern to Ministers but the tactics employed would be very difficult to counter.

3. In discussion it was noted that MT presented a different type of threat to that of 'established' subversive organisations such as the Communist Party. The MT threat was not to the security of classified information but the creation of the maximum disruption to the effective operation of government. The tactics employed were also novel: MT worked by exploiting and abusing the democratic processes within the unions and facilities provided for union officials. Similar tactics were being employed by MT in local government and it was possible that the enquiry into local government abuses would lead to some exposure of the MT role although there would be a number of difficulties in handling the evidence.

4. Although it appeared that MT had made comparatively little penetration of Departments which employed widespread security vetting, there could be no certainty that this would last. Moreover, although vetting might reduce the risk of penetration it was primarily designed to protect classified information: even if vetting led to the identification of MT members it was often difficult to take action. Membership of MT would not justify the use of the purge procedure and while it might sometimes be possible covertly to move individuals to posts where they would have less potential for disruption, even this could be very difficult in the absence of convincing normal management reasons for the move. The purge procedure and the restrictions on the employment of Communists and Fascists were designed to cope with an external threat and were generally accepted but it might prove very difficult to extend these sort of arrangements to this very different threat.

5. An alternative approach would be to limit the opportunities to create damage through management means. This would involve both looking at the industrial relations institutions in the

Civil Service and attempting to avoid industrial relations problems which could be exploited. One of the difficulties in the Newcastle dispute was that management had not realised the potential for deliberate disruption arising from what was a local and comparatively minor issue. To some extent, exposure of the way in which MT manipulated industrial relations issues for its own ends might weaken its influence.

6. As a first step it was important to know more about the threat and it would be useful if large employing Departments in particular could be briefed on what the Security Service knew of MT activity in the Civil Service and, if possible, the names of individual activists within the Department. Even where no direct action was possible this knowledge could be useful, for example in interpreting the behaviour of union negotiators. In order to help disseminate information about the nature of the threat it would be useful to revive the Official Committee on Subversion in Public Life (SPL).

7. Summing up, Sir Robert Armstrong said that the growth of MT represented a new and disturbing form of subversion. It was particularly worrying that MT were able to exploit institutions and facilities intended to improve industrial relations within the Civil Service. Ministers were already aware of the broad nature of MT activity and were separately concerned about the general question of the extent and use of facility time. The next step was to produce a more detailed picture of the threat within the Civil Service. Accordingly, Sir Brian Cubbon and himself would discuss with the Director General of the Security Service the question of reviving SPL (and perhaps the associated group of Permanent Secretaries, SG) to produce and disseminate a periodic threat assessment, and whether it would be possible to provide Departments with lists of those associated with MT. In the light of further information on the threat, those concerned with personnel security would need to consider what measures could be taken in response, particularly what new



techniques or variations in present techniques were necessary to meet new tactics, at which stage it would be necessary to consult Ministers. It would also be necessary to consider, perhaps in SPL, how the MT issue should be handled in relation to the enquiry into local government abuses.

R P HATFIELD

10 January 1985

CONFIDENTIAL

2751



HOME OFFICE
QUEEN ANNE'S GATE
LONDON SW1H 9AT

SIR BRIAN CUBBON GCB
PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

19 December 1984

*Sir R. [unclear] - to see
This is useful background to
our industrial relations work
in January.*

c. H. Davie

CABINET OFFICE	
A	9976
20 DEC 1984	
FILING INSTRUCTIONS	
FILE No.	.....

Dear Cyril

.... David Hancock and George Moseley, PUSSS at DES and Environment, came to see me yesterday at David Hancock's suggestion. He wished to pass on the concern of HM Schools Inspectorate at militant (both with a small and a large "M") teacher action in schools in Greater London. He left the attached document with me.

The Inspectorate are worried that there is a small group of such teachers - not backed by the union as such, but in many cases active within it - who are deliberately disrupting pupils' education. David Hancock believes that the Inspectorate's concern is well founded. He does not propose to put the matter to Ministers until he has something more concrete to report. You will see that the attached paper deals in anecdote more than hard fact. The Inspectorate hope to make shortly a full-scale inspection of one of the schools where such teachers are most active.

I said that I would pass this to you for your information, and for any comments you could usefully give to David Hancock at this stage.

This links in with the point I made at last week's HOW about the way Militant seems to have replaced the Communist Party as the established focus for subversion within the country. I should like to have a more general discussion about the implications of this when you are ready: eg is the threat adequately publicised?

I am copying this letter and enclosure to Robert Armstrong.

Brian

C O Shipp Esq OBE

CONFIDENTIAL

MILITANT TEACHER ACTION IN SCHOOLS IN GREATER LONDON

In recent months there has been an increase in the amount of evidence coming to HMI about the action of militant teachers in some schools in ILEA and Haringey. Much of this evidence is indirect and cannot easily be confirmed. Most schools in these authorities, as elsewhere, appear to be largely unaffected, but in certain schools there has been a noticeable impact on the standard of teaching and learning.

Similar problems may exist in various parts of the country, but if they do they have not been brought to the notice of HMI. The current evidence, presented below, arises at least in part because of increased inspection work in recent months in ILEA and Haringey.

2. There are worrying indications that a small group of teachers in a relatively small number of schools in the ILEA and Haringey are, by their actions, posing a threat to the quality of education in their schools. The activities of these teachers contribute to a lowering of morale within the schools' teaching staffs; undermine the leadership of the heads; and have adverse effects on pupils' learning. The unprofessional conduct that has come to light appears to be without union support, though it cannot entirely be disentangled from official union-backed industrial action.

3. Morale is generally low in many schools in these authorities, partly as a consequence of the uncertainties engendered by falling rolls and teacher redeployment and by the recent pay settlement that many teachers perceived as inadequate. In some schools a combination of these factors has contributed to a deterioration in the relations between heads and senior management on the one hand and the rest of the teaching staff on the other. Where this kind of situation applies it appears to make it possible for militant teachers to exploit it for their own ends. Teacher absence in some of these schools is high: 13 teachers absent out of a staff of 43 on one day in a Haringey school.

4. Undoubtedly, weak leadership in some schools is largely responsible for low morale and a lack of professionalism. However, even some strong and able heads have lost confidence as a result of the combined effects of official and unofficial teacher action. An able and usually enthusiastic Wandsworth head is downcast and disillusioned by the regression he sees in his school caused first by official industrial action and later exacerbated by its unofficial continuation. An experienced head in Deptford is considering resignation because of the attitudes and behaviour of active militant teachers in her school.

5. There is no clear dividing line between different forms of teacher action. At the moderate end of the scale are those teachers who do no more than obey union instructions; a more militant group have prolonged the industrial action into this term, refusing to cover for absent teachers or to be involved in extra-curricular activities. Groups of politically conscious teachers have taken days off to support such causes as the miners' and caretakers'

strikes and some have allegedly taken pupils with them, thus disrupting their normal learning. On the other hand, some of these politically conscious teachers are known to be committed and effective in the classroom and gaining good results. The most worrying group are those extremists who, having gained influential positions in school staffrooms, use the threat of non-cooperation (for example, over completing school records) and militant action to further their cause by such means as threatening strikes; pressing for the appointment of like minded teachers to the staff; or pressurising newly appointed teachers to support their views and actions.

6. In general, action is on a small scale but cumulatively it can cause considerable disruption in the work of a school. The following examples illustrate the nature and scale of militant action. In one Haringey school the head of CDT, on being asked to join a one-day inservice course, agreed to go only if all 8 members of his department were also released. On supposedly similar egalitarian grounds one head of humanities felt unable to ask his department for records and schemes of work. One teacher, a health and safety representative, told his head that he would take off as many days as he wished to inspect the school for safety; called to explain his absence from school to the CEO, he declined to go. Elected members on occasion overturn officers' decisions in favour of teacher action; thus 18 women teachers, after refusals by heads and officials, were granted leave of absence by elected members to support the Greenham women. Lengthy meetings held in school time to discuss conditions of work, eg low temperatures or the presence of asbestos, have resulted in pupils being kept outside and missing work. In one South East London school in the ILEA, militant teachers threatened a strike if the head co-operated with the Authority about teacher redeployment and further threatened to picket an ILEA inspector visiting the school to discuss redeployment.

7. The examples cited above disrupt the day-to-day running of schools, take time away from teaching and caring for pupils and break the continuity of their learning. Less obviously disruptive but in the long run equally insidious in their effects on school life and work are the 'work to rule' attitudes of some teachers. These include minimal lesson preparation and planning, excessive use of teacher discussion time outside the classroom on anti-racist, equal opportunity issues, failure to implement school policies on discipline and behaviour, loss of continuity for pupils through frequent teacher absence and loss of lessons through a refusal to cover for absent colleagues. The effects of these attitudes and actions can be seen in reduced pupil motivation, low attendance rates and, in combination with other factors, low standards of work and poor examination results.

8. Most schools were affected by the summer term official industrial action; a small minority are affected by its continuation. Known extreme militancy is limited to a handful of schools but may well be more widespread. Up to half the Haringey secondary heads are restricted in what they want to do in their schools to a greater or lesser extent by teacher attitudes. The proportion

is probably lower in ILEA as a whole, but comparable in some areas. Questions about teacher activism have not been addressed to ILEA senior and divisional officers directly by HMI, but comments have been volunteered by some ILEA officers which suggest that they regard the problems as quite widespread and serious. The overall effect of teacher militancy cannot be judged with certainty as it tends to flourish in schools where other difficulties and tensions already exist. Nevertheless, it is clear that it compounds the difficulties and further reduces the quality of education in these particular schools, which is often already less than satisfactory.

HM Inspectorate

November 1984

SECRET

2751

FOR MRG 7 JAN.



We had better have a meeting. I'm in with Sir I

CABINET OFFICE
A 9097
23 NOV 1984
FILING INSTRUCTION
FILE No

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SECURITY

Alexander Fleming House, Elephant & Castle, London SE1 6BY

Telephone 01-407 5522 ext 6981

From the Permanent Secretary

Sir Kenneth Stowe KCB CVO

want to make this
let us by we want to
have a real discussion
of industrial relations in the
Civil Service during the GMA
decision. RWA 24
23 November, 1984

c- Mr Davie

Sir Robert Armstrong, GCB, CVO,
Cabinet Office,
WHITEHALL,
LONDON SW1

My dear Robert.

Ministers are currently considering the steps we need to take to resolve our strike at Newcastle Central Office. As your office will know, Geoffrey Otton, Norman Clarke and I have had some advice from the Security Service, which has emphasised for us the extent to which this dispute is being planned and executed by the Militant Tendency influence at Newcastle. As we have long suspected, our real problem in this intractable dispute is that the people at the heart of it do not want any kind of settlement - it suits their strategy to have the strike running indefinitely. They seem to have a sufficient hold at Newcastle to have secured this so far: we are exploring the possibility of taking some radical action to try to bring matters to a head.

The extent of infiltration of the CPSA must be a serious problem for a number of Departments. (I note, for example, that the Post Office are currently having comparable problems at the National Girobank centre at Bootle.) We have been in touch with Michael Quinlan, whose Department is of course very well aware of the situation. From our discussions there emerged the thought that it would be helpful if you could bring together the heads of a few of the major employing departments in the Civil Service to take stock of this threat, and to consider whether there was any approach we should all be following, or any ways in which we could reinforce one another's activities. The difficulties in the way of effective action are all too apparent: on the other hand, we may be unduly vulnerable if each department is going it alone - some exchange of views could possibly help us all. It may well be, for example, that Ministers should be made more aware of the current threat - which on one reading could be said to be an indirect result of their losing the

SECRET

Contd.....

loyalty and commitment of the moderate centre in Civil Service unionism through the policies they have pursued towards the Civil Service since 1979. With a difficult pay round ahead, possibly we should be thinking about this without much further delay.

I am also aware that infiltration of other white-collar unions is an MT objective; and I have a very real interest in NALGO and NUPE in the NHS - not to mention local government. They all feed each other.

I am not copying this to colleagues for the present. If you thought it sensible to have a meeting, I would not mind your passing this on to explain the basis for it: I should think that Michael Quinlan, Lawrence Airey, Angus Fraser, Clive Whitmore, George Moseley, and Brian Cubbon ought to be involved in any discussion.

Yours ever
Ken

P.S. I learned only this week that there is a direct connection between MT in Liverpool City Council and Newcastle.

KRS

SECRET AND PERSONAL



FOUO
Z

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Principal Private Secretary

SIR ROBERT ARMSSTRONG

CABINET OFFICE
A 767
22 FEB 1982
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No.

The Prime Minister was very interested to read the report by the Security Service on exploitation by subversive groups of last year's civil disturbances which you sent me with your minute A07560 of 19 February 1982.

I am returning the report with this minute.

AW.

22 February 1982

SECRET AND PERSONAL

POLF53-8-288-1F7/0

Ref: A07560
A
19 FEB 1982
MR. WHITMORE

SECRET AND PERSONAL



SW

I think that the Prime Minister may like to see
the attached report by the Security Service, which
assesses the expenditure to which subversive groups
have exploited the aftermath of last summer's civil
disturbances.

2. I should be grateful if you would let me have the
report back when the Prime Minister has read it.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Robert Armstrong

19th February 1982

SECRET AND PERSONAL

POLF 53-8-288-1F7/0