

State Research

An independent group of investigators collecting and publishing information from public sources on developments in state policy, particularly in the fields of the law, policing, internal security, espionage and the military. It also examines the links between the agencies in these fields and business, the Right and paramilitary organisations.

State Research Bulletin

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The Review of Security and the State

Volume 2 of the Review will be published in autumn 1979. This will contain our year's work in hardback form, i.e. issues 8-13 of State Research Bulletin (October 1978-September 1979), an introductory overview of the year and an index. Hardback (jacketed) £12.00. It can be ordered in advance for £10, direct from Julian Friedmann Books, 4 Perrins Lane, Hampstead, London NW3.

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STATE RESEARCH

BULLETIN No. 13

SPECIAL PATROL GROUPS IN BRITAIN – NATO GOES TO SCHOOLS – LAW AND ORDER IN EUROPE – THE SEVEN DAY BILLS – ANDERTON'S LABOUR CAMPS

NEWS & DEVELOPMENTS

SPECIAL BRANCH FIGURES

For the first time, more than half of the Chief Constables in England and Wales have included a section in their annual reports on the Special Branch. Home Office officials deny any prompting, but 23 out of 41 annual reports for 1978 published so far (two have yet to be issued) contain sections on their Special Branches.

In May 1978 the then Home Secretary, Mr Rees, disclosed, for the first time, the total number of Special Branch officers in England and Wales — a total of 1,259 (**Hansard**, 24.5.78). He told the Commons, during a debate requested by Robin Cook MP, that if little information was available to people 'it is not surprising that misconceptions arise'. Rees defended the Special Branch as he 'attached great

importance to this sphere of police work' and regarded it as a 'normal part of police duty' (a theme taken up by several Chief Constables).

What this new 'openness' by the Home Secretary, and now the Chief Constables, signals is a concerted attempt to legitimate the activities of the Special Branch. This comes at a time when the Special Branch has increased on a scale, in size and deployment, unprecedented in its history.

Legitimizing political surveillance

Amongst the most contentious of the Special Branch's activities is the surveillance of political and trade union activity on grounds of 'public order' (demonstrations and pickets) and 'subversion'. In 1978 Rees confirmed that the brief of the Special Branch had been widened to include the monitoring of 'subversive' activities (see **Bulletin** no 6). He said that 'subversive' activities were 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' (Hansard, 6.4.78). The 1978 annual report of the Chief Inspector of Constabulary (covering all forces except London in England and Wales), which also for the first time contains a section on the Special Branch, states that one of its main duties is 'with terrorist or subversive organisations'.

'Subversion' and/or terrorism is a theme raised in many of the reports. Mr Ken Oxford, Chief Constable of Merseyside, opens his short, three paragraph, report as follows: 'The Branch maintain a close liaison with the Security Service, the Armed Forces and all police forces throughout the UK, endeavouring at all times to keep in touch with the current climate in respect of subversive activities'. Mr Anderton, Chief Constable for Greater Manchester, is

equally forthright. The work of the Branch, he writes, is concerned with 'security matters, investigating or assisting in the investigation of "Offences against the State" and subversion'. In practice, he goes on to say, this means it acts as an 'intelligence gathering agency' for 'terrorist activities' and 'public order situations' (a euphemism to justify the surveillance of political and trade union activity). West Yorkshire ('subversive actions'), South Wales ('terrorist or subversive organisations'), and Warwickshire ('terrorist and other criminally subversive groups') also refer to this work. The juxtaposition of 'terrorism' (implying violent means) and 'subversion' (which by the official definition can be taken to include all political and trade union activity) is made, or implied, in many of the reports.

SURVEY OF THE SIZE OF THE SPECIAL BRANCH IN ENGLAND, WALES, SCOTLAND AND NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE YEAR 1978

This survey covers the Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police and 39 of the 41 provincial forces in England and Wales. It covers all eight forces in Scotland and the Royal Ulster Constabulary. A total of 51 out of 53 annual reports form the basis of the survey.

Col A indicates whether or not a section on the Special Branch was included in the annual report. Col B shows the size of the Special Branch given in an annual report. Col C gives the estimated number of Special Branch officers in each force. For England and Wales these figures are based on Mr Rees' statement that there are 850 officers engaged on Special Branch work, excluding the Metropolitan Police. (Hansard, 24.5.78). These have been distributed in proportion to the total strength of each police force. For Scotland the estimated figures are based on the statement in the 1977 Inspector of Constabulary Report for Scotland that the Special Branch is 'less than one per cent of authorised establishments'. Figures in brackets refer to notes at the end of the table.

Force	A	B	C
England			
Metropolitan Police	Yes	409 (1)	—
City of London Police	No	—	8
Avon & Somerset	No	22 (2)	28
Bedfordshire	No	—	9
Cambridgeshire	No	—	10
Cheshire	Yes	13	17
Cleveland	Yes	—	13
Cumbria	No	—	10
Derbyshire	—	—	15
Devon & Cornwall	No	—	26
Dorset	No	—	11
Durham	Yes	14	13
Essex	Yes	20 (3)	23
Gloucestershire	Yes	5	11
Greater Manchester	Yes	52 (4)	64
Hampshire	No	—	28
Hertfordshire	No	—	15
Humberside	No	—	18
Kent	No	—	26
Lancashire	Yes	—	30
Leicestershire	No	20 (5)	17
Lincolnshire	Yes	5	10
Merseyside	Yes	—	43
Norfolk	Yes	—	12
Northamptonshire	—	—	8
Northumbria	Yes	—	32
North Yorkshire	Yes	—	12
Nottinghamshire	Yes	19	20
South Yorkshire	Yes	27	25

Aliens, immigrants and the PTAs

The information given in the sections in the reports on the Special Branch varies from four lines to a page and a half (Mr Anderton) and reflects the individual, and relatively autonomous, approaches of the Chief Constables. Amongst the most consistent themes mentioned are 'aliens' (including immigrants) and work related to the Prevention of Terrorism Acts.

Ever since the passing of the first Act to limit entry to Britain, the 1905 Aliens Immigration Act, the Special Branch has maintained a central register of aliens resident within each police force area (aliens are required to give their address to the local police). The Cleveland, Northumbria and Greater Manchester Special Branches also include EEC nationals on this register. Another long-

Staffordshire	No	—	20
Suffolk	No	—	10
Surrey	No	—	15
Sussex	No	—	17
Thames Valley	Yes	—	27
Warwickshire	Yes	—	8
West Mercia	Yes	12	16
West Midlands	No	65 (6)	59
West Yorkshire	Yes	—	47
Wiltshire	Yes	8	9
Wales			
Dyfed-Powys	Yes	—	9
Gwent	No	—	9
North Wales	Yes	23	12
South Wales	Yes	33	29
Scotland (7)			
Central Scotland	No	—	4
Dumfries & Galloway	No	—	3
Fife	No	—	6
Grampian	No	—	8
Lothian & Borders	No	—	21
Northern Constabulary	No	—	6
Strathclyde	No	60 (8)	62
Tayside	No	—	9
Northern Ireland			
RUC	No	279 (9)	—

NOTES: 1. Figure given by the Home Secretary (Hansard, 24.5.78).

2. Under the force deployment figures, those for 'Aliens and Immigration' are given as 15 officers plus 7 others in a Port Unit. This is

standing Special Branch job mentioned is the vetting on behalf of the Home Office of applications for naturalisation by aliens.

The reports also confirm that the Special Branch works with the Immigration Service and the Illegal Immigrants Intelligence Unit at Scotland Yard in relation to enforcing deportation orders and arresting illegal immigrants. The reports from Lancashire (nine arrests), Cleveland (three), and Avon and Somerset (seven) are explicit on this point.

Many of the provincial Special Branches have a Ports/Airports Unit engaged in monitoring passengers, especially at ports and airports 'designated' under the Prevention of Terrorism Acts. Although few details are given, the Dyfed-Powys Port Unit of the Special Branch, which includes Fishguard, a main point of arrival and departure for Ireland, 'submitted 3,964

probably the strength of the Special Branch. 3. The Essex Special Branch section states that 20 officers are employed in a Port Unit alone, leaving the implication that its total strength is higher.

4. Greater Manchester Special Branch also employed an unstated number of civilian clerical staff.

5. No report on the Special Branch is given. But under the section headed 'Nationality Department' it states that a total of 20 officers are employed at HQ and in an Airport Unit. This is probably the strength of the Special Branch.

6. This figure appears in the annual report under HQ staff. In addition to the 65 officers the West Midlands Special Branch also has 15 civilian staff.

7. None of the police forces in Scotland carried a section on the Special Branch in their annual reports. From the statement by the Inspector of Constabulary it is estimated that there are just under 120 officers engaged on Special Branch work. This conflicts with the information provided by the Secretary of State for Scotland that 'there are about 70 officers engaged in Special Branch work' (written answer, 13.6.78). Other evidence suggests that this is an underestimate (see below).

8. This figure was reliably reported in the Evening Times (Glasgow), 7.2.78.

9. Figure given by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in a written answer (13.6.78).

reports on persons of criminal and security interest' last year. However, the Unit made only 5 arrests under the PTAs.

Size and organisation

Eleven of the 23 sections on the Special Branch in the reports give details of its size (see chart). Three others give some figures under other headings (such as the 'Nationality Department'). By and large these figures correspond to the estimated Special Branch strength in these areas, although forces with large Ports Units or in industrial areas tend to be larger and rural ones smaller. The significant change since the period between its formation in 1883 to the beginning of the 1960s (when there were only 200 Special branch officers all based at Scotland Yard) is the recent growth of the Special Branch and its deployment. Every force now has a permanent Special Branch.

The larger Special Branches, particularly in industrial areas, not only maintain a Headquarters staff (with additional civilian clerical staff) and a Port Unit, but also have offices in different part of the local community. West Mercia has a Special Branch officer assigned to each of its eight divisions; North Wales an officer for each of its four divisions; Durham six officers in its four divisions; and South Yorkshire (HQ in Sheffield) has divisional offices in Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley.

Only one report, Merseyside, admits that the Special Branch liaises with MI5 (the Security Service). In practice it has been standard procedure, since the 1920s, for the Special Branch to forward regular 'intelligence' reports to MI5 HQ in London, or to one of its regional offices.

The inclusion of sections on the Special Branch in the Chief Constables' annual reports is a move to gain acceptance of their existence and activities. As Mr Anderton put it, 'an unnecessarily defensive and reticent attitude on the part of the police', has existed which has led to 'unwarranted suspicion'. At the same time, the appearance of sections on the Special Branch may be expected to create public pressure for much more than the skimpy

information presented in most of the reports. While part of the recent growth of the Special Branch can be attributed to measures to counter the Provisional IRA's bombing campaign and other terrorist threats, the main impetus has come from the state's need to increase its surveillance of political and trade union activities when Britain entered a long-term recession at the beginning of the 1970s.

POLICE COMPLAINTS BOARD

The Police Complaints Board (PCB) endorsed the police's own handling of complaints in all but 15 — 0.1 per cent — of the 11,940 cases it looked at in 1978. (See Bulletin nos 1 and 6 for history, and first annual report, of PCB).

Cases are referred to the PCB for scrutiny only after the completion of the police's investigation of a complaint and after a deputy chief constable has decided whether disciplinary action should be taken against the officer complained against. The PCB does not itself have the power to investigate complaints or to impose disciplinary actions. It can only ask for further information or it can refer the case back to the deputy chief constable with a counter-recommendation for his consideration.

In 59 of the 11,940 cases, the police decided on disciplinary charges. The PCB has the power to direct such cases to be heard by a disciplinary tribunal. But in none of the 59 cases did it invoke this power.

In all the remaining 11,881 cases, the police decided against disciplinary charges. In 15 of these cases the PCB disagreed, recommending that charges should be brought. But in all 15 cases the PCB and the police 'were able to reach agreement with the deputy chief constable concerned, either that charges should be preferred or that other action should be taken in pursuance of the complaint'. (Report of the Police Complaints Board 1978, HMSO, 80p, par 29). In all remaining cases the PCB endorsed police action. However in 1,096

cases 'advice' was given to the officer concerned.

A grand total of 13,079 matters of complaint were dealt with under various powers (one 'case' may contain more than one 'complaint'). The following table gives a breakdown of the various types of complaint:

Complaint type	Number	% of total
Incivility	2233	17.8
Assault	2483	19
Irregularity in procedure	2523	19.3
Traffic irregularity	663	5.1
Neglect of duty	1966	15
Corruption	116	0.9
Mishandling property	619	4.7
Irregularity in relation to evidence	416	3.2
Oppressive conduct or harassment	1495	11.4
Other	565	4.3
TOTAL	13079	100

The largest two categories were therefore assault and procedural irregularities such as breaches of the Judges' Rules. The board reports that, when it started work two year ago, 25 per cent of complaints were being withdrawn. They now estimate that the proportion has increased to 40 per cent — even though there has been no falling off in the number of original complaints.

It is now beginning to seem that the police — who were initially very opposed to the setting up of the board — are becoming reconciled to it. James Jardine of the Police Federation has said 'the Complaints Board seems to have come down on our side'. The Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Colin Woods, says in his 1978 report: 'a good many of the fears expressed within the Service about the possible effects of the operation of the Police Complaints Board proved unfounded; ... there is increasing recognition of the potential value of an independent review of what is done by the police in this important area.'

The reason for this change of heart is clear from the figures. The board as presently constituted, and with its limited powers, represents no threat at all to the police. On the other hand, the board, which was established to introduce an independent element into the police's own complaints procedures, will be unlikely to convince the public, on the evidence of its first two annual reports, that it represents an adequate independent complaints procedures.

ANDERTON'S LABOUR CAMPS

James Anderton, Chief Constable of Greater Manchester, has called for the introduction of labour camps for young people. Anderton is already widely known for his demands for greater police powers and his handling for such events as the National Front solo march by Martin Webster. He told the Manchester Luncheon Club on June 14 that young offenders 'should be arrested, convicted, and placed in penal work camps where through hard labour and unrelenting discipline they should be made to sweat as they have never sweated before and remain until their violence has been vanquished by penitent humiliation and unqualified repentance'. The people who, according to Anderton, should be subjected to this treatment are football fans, and members of teenage gangs who were involved in public order and vandalism offences.

Anderton's suggestion has aroused hostility from legal and social work organisations. The Howard League for Penal Reform criticised him for creating an atmosphere of fear by distorting crime statistics to imply that a high percentage of crime is violent; in fact only ten per cent of known crime is violent. The British Association of Social Workers and the National Association of Probation Officers both attacked the suggestion for provocative, easily abusable statements about young people, and on the grounds that the labour camp type punishment were not proved effective as deterrent or reform.

In his speech Anderton made critical reference to the current debate within the police about different methods of policing. Such debate distracts officers from 'the simple issue' of police work, and 'from concentrating on what they had to do in the public interest'. (**Daily Telegraph, 15.6.79**). Alderson, Chief Constable of Devon and of other police officers, notably John Anderson, Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, who argue that it is essential to re-direct policing from the current 'reactive policing', which reduces contact between police and public to conflict, especially where the young are concerned. They aim to re-focus police methods on 'proactive policing' where the police deliberately study their local communities, build links with social agencies and attempt to re-build a consensus policing.

COUNTING ARRESTS

For the first time it is possible to make an accurate estimate of the number of people arrested (as opposed to charged or convicted) by the police in one year. Our estimate shows an approximate total of 1,295,000 arrests in 1978 in England and Wales, or one arrest each year for every 38 members of the population. In the Metropolitan Police District (MPD) the ratio is one arrest for every 24 members of the population, the highest in the country.

The figures come from the latest annual reports of the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the Chief Inspector of Constabulary (the latter reports on the 42 forces in England and Wales outside the MPD). The reports were published in June and July, and contain details of the implementation of section 62 of the 1977 Criminal Law Act. This section gave the police discretion in fulfilling a suspect's right to have someone notified when s/he has been arrested. Section 62 came into force on June 19, 1978 and all police forces were required to monitor how many arrested people were not being allowed access to a solicitor or friend.

But in the course of collecting this

information the police have had to present totals — never before made available — of the numbers of people they arrest. Although the published statistics only cover the period from June 19 to December 31 — a period of 195 days — by projecting these figures over the whole year an approximate yearly total can be achieved with some degree of accuracy. Thus the 525,529 arrests in England and Wales (outside the Met) gives a full year estimate of 983,682 and the 166,364 arrests in the MPD give a total of 311,399. These figures together give an estimated total of 1,295,082.

Outside the MPD, the highest numbers of arrests per head of population are in Merseyside and Northumbria, both with one arrest per year for every 27 members of the population, and the lowest are in Norfolk (1 : 91) and Dyfed-Powys and Warwickshire (both 1 : 84).

Political comments

Sir David McNee's report, his second since taking office, continues the recent tradition of going beyond the mere reporting of developments in police administration and practice and attempting to argue the police's objectives in a political framework.

In February 1978 McNee, with the Home Secretary's consent, obtained a ban on demonstrations in the London area. By law such a ban can only be invoked on strictly public order grounds. The police have to be convinced that they cannot prevent serious disorder by the use of their other existing powers. McNee, however, justifies the ban in wider terms: 'The purpose was to restrain those extremists who were deliberately seeking confrontation to further their political ends'.

Rather than simply report the occasions when the police had to fulfil a public order function, McNee's report offers political conclusions about the events concerned. Of the Anti-Nazi League Carnival in Victoria Park, east London on April 30, 1978, he writes: 'Among the many teenagers attending the rally was an element of those

described a "punk rockers" who had not hitherto been regarded as opponents of the extreme right ... The significance of the occasion was the alliance of so many apparently non-politically-minded youths with political activists by the introduction of popular music.'

Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for the year 1978, Cmnd 7580. HMSO. £2.50.

Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary 1978, HC 135. HMSO. £2.25

A WARNING ABOUT TRUEMID

The Labour Party's National Executive Committee has warned Constituency Labour Parties (CLP) about Truemid, a right-wing trade union pressure group. A circular in June said: 'Having considered all the material, the National Executive Committee advises constituency labour parties to consider whether or not the activities of persons associated with Truemid are contrary to the programme, principles and policy of the Labour Party in the constituency.'

This advice — rather than outright proscription — was the result of inquiries made following a query from the Aldershot CLP which discovered that one of its members was also a member of Truemid. The Labour Party's organisation committee 'decided there was no doubt that the National Executive would regard Truemid as unsuitable for affiliation to the party — but because of the wording of the constitution it could not be clearly ruled ineligible.' (**Labour Weekly, 8.12.78**). The operations of Truemid inside the trade union movement have already led the clerical workers' union APEX to proscribe it. The origins of Truemid, however, do not lie entirely within the labour movement in which it has chosen to operate.

When it was set up in 1975, Truemid was backed by Colonel David Stirling, founder of the Special Air Services (SAS). Stirling had in 1974 founded GB75 as a volunteer force to run the country in the event of a general strike. GB75 was wound up in April

1975 and Stirling urged its supporters to back a new body, Truemid — the 'movement for true industrial democracy' — an 'anti-extremist counterforce' (**Morning Star, 9.4.75**). The founding aims of Truemid, launched at a press conference given by John Adams (GMWU), Ron McLaughlin (AUEW), Syd Davies (AUEW) and John Fraser (NALGO), with Stirling in attendance, stated: 'Truemid is in no way an alternative to the trade union movement. It is concerned with re-establishing participation by members within their own organisations and the renewing of genuine democratic rules and procedures' (**Trueline, June 1975**).

A trade union body?

Truemid's original council consisted not just of union members but also Major Tom Adams, a retired Gordon Highlander, who had stood as a candidate for both Tory and Liberal parties, and also John Ogier, a wartime aide-de-camp to Churchill, a motor racing enthusiast and founder of the Buxted Chicken Company. Ogier died in 1977. Major Adams disclosed that Truemid had already established links with Industrial Research and Information Services (IRIS) and the Economic League (**Time Out, 24.10.75**). The anti-union activities of the Economic League are well-known (see Labour Research Sept. 1977, Sept 1978, and Bulletin no 7).

Apart from publishing **Trueline**, Truemid has also appeared to be active in intervening more directly in union affairs. A Truemid document entitled "Taking over a union branch", relates how Truemid members formed a nucleus within an APEX branch to 'take-over' the branch from the elected 'extremist' officers. It describes how this group obtained names and addresses of all branch members and visited them at home to assess 'the political leanings etc of the members and to find a number willing to stand for election. Truemid advises members to hire a coach on the day of election to collect and return home branch members. Throughout this

line of action employers should show a willingness to accept their responsibilities and play a positive role. They must identify and encourage responsible employees to become trade union activists ... they should encourage and arrange inter-factory visits for moderate activists so that a liaison is established between moderates.' Truemid has also been active promoting certain candidates in Union elections.

Business backing

When the full-time chairman of Truemid, Syd Davies, left that post last year he took the organisation to an industrial tribunal claiming constructive dismissal. He said: 'Truemid organisation is not the organisation I set out to create. It has become extremely right-wing. It is a Frankenstein monster' (*Glasgow Herald*, 7.3.78). Before the tribunal, Davies said he would publish documents about Truemid including its financial backers. The threat of legal proceedings from Truemid stopped him doing this.

However, some details about donations were disclosed. 'Most of the cash from the City appears to have been raised during the first two years. Banks that subscribed in that period included Kleinwort Benson and Morgan Grenfell, the second of which agreed to give £900 a year over a period. Mr John Henderson of the stockbroking firm of Cazenove helped to raise more than £10,000 for Truemid in the period up to February 1977' (*Times*, 21.3.78). The Littlewoods Organisation also gave £2,000 to Truemid in 1977 and had agreed to give annual contributions, subject to review, for five years (*Glasgow Herald*, 7.3.78). These contributions have not been disclosed in Littlewoods' annual report, showing once again the limitations of that section of the Companies Act requiring companies to disclose donations for political purposes. However, insurance group Alexander Howden paid £432 to Truemid, according to their 1976 annual report.

The July 1978 issue of *The Leveller* published further information about Truemid's backers: 'Documents made

available to *The Leveller* show that the city and big business were the only targets for Truemid's fund-raising campaign and that the organisation had considerable success with the same firms who cough up for Aims for Freedom and Enterprise, National Association for Freedom and other bosses' groups'.

LAW AND ORDER IN EUROPE

On May 10, senior police officers from 17 European countries assembled in London for a two-day conference to discuss the problems of policing large cities, and develop more co-operation over these matters. The conference was opened by William Whitelaw, the Home Secretary, and chaired by Sir David McNee, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police.

The conference follows several years of increasing co-operation between European countries over policing and related issues. Direct agency-to-agency co-operation over technology, training, information and personnel exchange has been taking place since the mid-1970s (see Bulletin No 5). Annual meetings over policing and security at the ministerial level began in 1975, and it seems likely that the May conference of police officers will become another annual event. The venue for next year's meeting, Vienna, is already fixed.

Among the topics discussed by the officers were crowd control techniques and police riot equipment. Several European police officers held the view that water cannon and tear gas were more humane than the traditional British police truncheon; however several British officers held the view that European methods would be unacceptable here, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Helm, of the Metropolitan Police's A Department, (with responsibility for demonstrations) said: 'Truncheons are only used by our police as a very last resort' (*Daily Mail*, 11.5.79). It is however hard to see how this statement relates to police practice in crowd control as seen at such events as the April 23 demonstration in Southall (see Bulletin no 12).

Another point of discussion was the arming of police officers. Here again although the British police expressed the view that it would be unacceptable, their practice is somewhat different. Increasing numbers of British police carry arms; the numbers of times that weapons are issued mounts steadily, and in the past ten years seven people have been shot dead by the police. Other topics discussed ranged from co-operation over the growing numbers of cheque and bank card frauds, to computerised crime and traffic problems.

THE SEVEN-DAY BILLS

A series of local government Bills now passing through Parliament will outlaw spontaneous demonstrations and fine their organisers £200 for failing to give the police seven days' notice. The Bills, which are private, and whose provisions are not debated by local councils give local authorities a wide range of powers which they must renew and consolidate periodically. If the local authority requires it, these powers can include control of 'circuses and processions' along with public order provisions.

Police pressure for a statutory seven-day notice period for demonstrations has been mounting since Lord Justice Scarman's Inquiry rejected the proposal after the 1974 Red Lion Square demonstration. The 1977-8 Home Office Review on Public Order Powers set up in the wake of the Lewisham, Notting Hill, Tameside and Ladywood demonstrations, also declined to recommend it. Several other European countries do have similar statutory provisions, but the practice was recently declared unconstitutional in the United States.

Despite rejection by the Labour Government, a House of Lords Select Committee last year drew up a model clause specifying seven days' notice for demonstrations which is the basis of the proposals in Bills at present in committee stage in Parliament from the West Midlands, Merseyside and Cheshire. Local

opposition from MPs and trade unionists was successful in getting this clause dropped from West Yorkshire's and South Yorkshire's Bills, but the NCCL failed in its petition against West Midland's clause. Future Bills from East Sussex and Humberside will specify 48 hours and three days respectively.

The last Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees, also 'saw no reason for this requirement in London', but the NCCL quotes Home Office sources indicating that his successor, William Whitelaw, is 'more open-minded'. The NCCL regards effective local opposition, especially from local labour movements, as essential to stop what it terms 'a serious limitation on the freedom of association and expression'.

POLICE COMPUTER MISUSED

A police officer has been suspended after misuse of the Police National Computer (PNC) was revealed in the recent casino licence hearing involving Ladbroke's, the gambling chain.

Information from the computer was supplied to a subsidiary of Ladbroke's, Ladup, who wanted the names and addresses of clients of rival casinos. They collected the numbers of cars seen in the car parks of these places, passed them on to a police officer, who then used the PNC to discover the owners' names and addresses. Ladup are alleged to have paid 50p per address, with a figure of 10,000 addresses mentioned for 1978.

Although the police officer concerned has been suspended, there is no evidence either that security around the PNC has been tightened, nor that the wisdom or justice of maintaining such extensive records on computer is being questioned. Widespread fears that the increasing centralisation and computerisation of police records has opened the door for misuse of these records on an unprecedented scale seem to have proved well-founded.

NATO GOES TO SCHOOLS

Unknown to most members of the last Labour government, including the former Education Secretary Shirley Williams, the Foreign and Commonwealth Committee made a grant of £500 in the 1979/80 financial year to a NATO-backed political education project for 17 to 19 year-olds. The project is jointly sponsored by The European Atlantic Movement (TEAM, a small group funded partly by the Foreign Office and partly by the US government) and by Lord Hill-Norton, recently-retired chairman of the NATO military committee and Admiral of the Fleet.

Details of the programme are given by its founder, John Sewell, who is also founder-chairman of TEAM, in the July issue of NATO Review. Sewell describes how former Foreign Secretary David Owen gave his sanction to the project in late 1976 after discussions between Lord Hill-Norton and other senior NATO officials and consultations with civil servants in the Department of Education and Science.

Sewell's framework for the project is 'the threat to Western democracies' from supporters of 'authoritarian regimes'. He proposed an organised state response to the 'indoctrination of young people', by introducing 'real politics (with necessary and adequate treatment given to defence)' into the school curriculum. In late 1977, a Working Party was set up to draw up the programme. It consisted of a Staff Inspector from the Department of

Education and Science, the Chief Examiner of a major examining board, teachers and a NATO observer. In 1978, its Drafting Commission produced a paper, 'Towards Political Competence in an Open Society', which specified the Project's aims as giving 17-19 year-old students 'The interpretations and contemporary practices of democracy in Western society, the major alternatives of communism and fascism together with the associated drawbacks, hazards, risks and choices in a world of conflicting ideologies and aims.'

In a written Reply on July 12 this year to Frank Allaun MP, the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Douglas Hurd, confirmed that six educational institutions were taking part in the project: Eltham Green Comprehensive School, Sidcup and Chislehurst Grammar School, Gordonstoun, Exeter School, Reading College of Technology and Teignmouth Grammar School. He added that TEAM had given no advice to the heads of these institutions about consulting local councillors and parents. The Schools Council, the Inner London Education Authority, senior NUT and NAFTE officials and the TUC Education Committee knew nothing about it until reports appeared in the press recently. Hurd also stated that the £500 grant for the Project to organise a conference would be the last 'in view of the current restraints on public expenditure'. Frank Allaun believes that in fact it is public pressure which has led to the decision against giving further funding.

SPECIAL PATROL GROUPS IN BRITAIN

BACKGROUND PAPER

'A myth has been fostered by some elements of the news media that the Special Patrol Group is a specially trained

and equipped riot squad. This is without foundation' (Commissioner David McNee's Report for 1977).

'If you keep off the streets of London and behave yourself you won't have the SPG to worry about' (Commissioner David McNee, at a press conference on June 14, 1979, introducing his Report for 1978).

The Special Patrol Group (SPG) of the Metropolitan Police has again been in the news following the death of Blair Peach at Southall in April as a result of a blow to the head with a cosh. Peach, who was attending an anti-National Front demonstration, was, according to eye-witnesses, attacked by members of the SPG (*Evening Standard* and *Evening News*, 24.4.79). They were also in the news in 1977 as a result of their violent assaults on pickets at Grunwicks. And again in 1973, when two young Pakistanis were shot dead by SPG officers inside India House in London. This Background Paper looks at the origins and practice of the London SPG and at the other police forces, particularly in urban areas, who have followed suit and formed SPG-type units. Today, 24 out of 52 police forces in the UK have units of this kind.

SPGs, however, cannot be viewed in isolation from other long-term changes in British policing in the 1970s. The creation of SPGs has been, in large part, a response to two factors. First, the development in major cities of what is termed 'fire-brigade' policing (where the police rush to troublespots) as distinct from providing regular street patrols, and secondly, the rejection of the idea that Britain should have a 'third force' (like the paramilitary French CRS) to stand between the police and the army. These two factors have not only led to the creation of SPGs but have also fundamentally changed the role and image of the police as a whole.

'Fire-brigade' policing

The traditional ideology of British policing has rested on the assumption that the police act with the consent of the community they are policing. T.A. Critchley, a police historian, wrote that 'the British idea of police' has always depended on public approval. 'So long as the police are unarmed and have few powers not available to the ordinary citizen, they are compelled to rely not on the exercise of oppressive authority, but

on public support' (*A History of Police in England and Wales*, 1978 revised edition). This view of policing is one that has slowly but surely been fading away in the 1970s. More and more police go about their business with arms. They not only have demonstrably more powers than the ordinary citizen but are now demanding increased powers over the citizen. And it can be argued that in certain of their practices they no longer have the consent of those they are policing.

One of the few police chiefs to recognise the full implication of these trends is Mr John Alderson, the Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall. In a paper delivered to a conference at the Cranfield Institute of Technology last year, Mr Alderson said that the traditional conception of the police as a preventive and civil (as opposed to military) force was under attack in police ideology:

'Social pressures tend more and more to seduce police thinking and public awareness away from this (the traditional role) towards a quasi-military reactive concept . . . The modern generation of police officers are beginning to see themselves as mobile responders to incidents. Technology is seductive. The car, radio and the computer dominate the police scene. The era of preventive policing is phasing out in favour of a responsive or reactive police' (*The Cranfield Papers: The Proceedings of the 1978 Cranfield Conference on the Prevention of Crime in Europe*, Peel Press).

The main casualty, Alderson goes on to say, is the confidence and trust the community places in the police, as the police and the people are increasingly only likely to meet in a conflict situation. This development, which Sir Robert Mark termed 'fire-brigade' policing in Britain's major cities, could lead, Alderson concludes, to a style of policing 'more akin to that of an occupying army' if it is not reversed.

The creation of the SPG

The creation of the first SPG in London

in 1965 was one example of the police's response to the problems of policing, especially in cities. Drawing on the experience of the New York Police's 'Tactical Force' the Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Mr Douglas Webb, put forward a proposal in 1964 that a special squad should be formed for: 'preventive patrolling of estates subject to hooliganism and housebreaking' (**Scotland Yard press release**, May 1973). The plan was to create a large, centrally-controlled, force split into a number of units strategically situated around London which could carry out two functions: (i) to mount preventive patrols in specific areas and (ii) to act as a force that could be brought together to 'provide saturation policing' (op.cit.). The original conception of the SPG was thus to create a police support **anti-crime** unit which could aid local divisional forces within London. An increased police presence on the ground would, it was thought, 'maintain public confidence in the police' (op.cit.). This proposal to set up the SPG was accepted by the Commissioner, the Home Office and the Home Secretary and, by April 26, 1965, it was fully operational.

The SPG today (and many of its provincial counterparts) is a very different beast. The SPG now also plays a prominent role in industrial disputes and demonstrations, and is fully trained and equipped for anti-terrorist work. It is, in short, a para-military force. The development of the SPG from an **anti-crime** unit to a **para-military** one has led to one very obvious contradiction, namely, that having been trained (and used) in its para-military role it still continues to be used in the community as an anti-crime unit (the consequences of which are examined later). The decision to give the SPG a para-military role occurred in 1972 as the result of a decision not to create a 'third force' in Britain.

The 'third force' debate

The idea of creating a third force in Britain has been considered and rejected

on several occasions. A third force consists of para-military police who are trained to deal with pickets during strikes, political demonstrations and terrorism. They are usually equipped with sophisticated riot control equipment like water cannon, CS gas, armoured personnel carriers as well as being trained marksmen with pistols, rifles and sub-machine guns. On the continent they are the rule rather than the exception – in France the CRS, in Holland the Marechaussee and, in West Germany the Bereitschaftspolizei.

In 1961 a Home Office working party was set up to investigate the need for a 'third separate policing force' (**Time Out**, 23.3.73). When the working party reported, secretly, ten years later it concluded that the British public would not support the creation of a para-military force and that the existing police forces should be re-trained and re-equipped to fill the gaps that existed. Although the idea was seriously considered in 1968 when mass demonstration over Vietnam stretched police resources, it was rejected. The need for a third force again became an issue after the mass confrontation between the police and strikers at the Saltley coal depot in the miners' strike of 1972. Faced by vastly superior numbers the police capitulated and the strikers succeeded in stopping the supply of fuel to power stations (on this occasion army units, armed with shields and truncheons, were available but not committed).

The strongest argument in favour of a third force was that it would relieve the conventional police of their aggressive role and enable them to maintain friendly relations with the public. Against this, the continental experience demonstrated that riot police generated more hatred and counter-violence than the ordinary police. 'Unlike the policeman on the beat, they have little chance to mend their fences by being seen as friends and protectors, because they seldom meet people until they become rioters' (Major R Clutterbuck, *Army Quarterly*, October, 1973).

In 1972, the Tory government set up the National Security Committee which included representatives from the police, the military, and key ministries. This Committee reached the same conclusions as the Home Office working party, largely because the police argued vociferously against the creation of a new force. Although the police again won the day this time, there was a price to pay. The National Security Committee recommendations went beyond those of the working party: the police should revamp training in riot control and firearms, and clear lines should be laid down about when the army was to be called in (see, **Bulletin No 8**), joint police-military exercises should be held regularly, and plainclothes units of the Special Air Service (SAS) should be on permanent stand-by for any situation the police could not handle.

In theory the distinctive roles of the army and police were to be maintained, and there was to be no third force. As one military expert, Brig W.F.K. Thompson expressed it at the time, the police 'must be acceptable to the majority of citizens', while the army 'the final repository of arbitrary force... needs no acceptance' (**D. Telegraph**, 28.8.72). In practice the police, from this point, became committed to a particular path which was to greatly change their role.

The consequences for the police

The changes in training and ideology affected the whole of the police force in Britain. Firearms training increased and the weapons available were reviewed. Riot training (or 'crowd control' as it is sometimes called) with riot shields and batons and the use of CS gas and water cannon is now a part of training in most police forces. Even rural police forces have been affected by these changes because under a long-standing arrangement (since the last century) every force is committed to giving 'mutual aid' to neighbouring forces. Most forces specially trained a percentage of officers in more advanced techniques so that, if called on, they are prepared for all eventualities. For example, the Greater

Manchester force trains selected officers from a number of surrounding forces in riot control (see later). In addition, regular police-military exercises are conducted, and the first test of their co-operation came during the firemen's strike in 1977 when the army relied heavily on the police's local knowledge, headquarters and communications system (see **Bulletin No 10**).

One of the leaders in adapting to the new roles given to the police were, as usual, the Metropolitan Police whose practices have historically been the most advanced and therefore most likely to be adopted by other forces. The new Commissioner appointed in April 1972 was Robert Mark. It is said that he was impressed by the techniques used by the Royal Ulster Constabulary which he saw at first hand when he visited Northern Ireland as a member in 1969 of the Hunt inquiry (into the RUC and the B Specials). He had also accompanied Major General Deane-Drummond on a tour in 1970 organised by the Ministry of Defence to America, the Far East and West Europe to look at riot control techniques (see **Riot Control** by A. Deane-Drummond, Royal United Services Institute, 1975). Another key figure was Deputy Assistant Commissioner John Gerrard, who then was in charge of public order in London and of the SPG. In 1971 Gerrard went to the US Police National Academy in Atlanta, Georgia where, with other police chiefs, the use of riot squads and paramilitary forces was the topic under discussion.

In 1972, Gerrard organised the new training and equipment for the London SPG. Some of the tactics adopted by the London police, and later by other forces, were those developed and used by the army and the RUC SPG (formed in 1970 after the B Specials had been disbanded and replaced by the Ulster Defence Regiment) in Northern Ireland. The introduction of 'snatch squads' and 'wedges' in demonstrations, and random stop and searches and roadblocks on the streets were 'based on the Army's experience in Ulster' (**Sunday Times**, 3.2.74). The Provisional IRA bombing campaign, which began in

1973 on the mainland, and international terrorism gave strength to the new directions already determined for the police.

Fifteen of the 24 SPG-type units which now exist were formed in 1972 or after. Every major city now has its own SPG, many of them playing the dual role of anti-crime and para-military units. The SPG in London, and those in the provinces, are involved more and more in industrial disputes and political demonstrations, and finally by having an anti-terrorist capacity they are developing the ability to take on some of the functions that had previously been the preserve of the army — the ability to kill.

The Special Patrol Group in London

This SPG, formed in April 1965, was initially comprised of 100 officers drawn from the uniformed police. It was divided into four units based in different parts of London, each equipped with Blue Bedford vans, with 3 Sergeants and 20 PCs under the command of an Inspector. The number of officers had grown to 130 by 1967 and in November 1969 a fifth unit was formed. In April 1972, the sixth and final unit was created. Today, the SPG consists of 204 officers, divided into six units, with each unit having 3 sergeants, 28 male PCs and 2 female PCs under the command of an Inspector. A Chief Superintendent is in overall charge of the SPG. The SPG thus has its own independent command structure — the A:9 Branch at Scotland Yard — for this reason they wear the letters 'CO' (Commissioners Office) on their shoulders.

Since its formation SPG recruits have been drawn from volunteers from the 23 London police divisions. Their average age is 31, and many have ten years service or more. The turnover rate however is high — currently around 25 per cent a year. This is partly due to the unsocial hours the work entails (they are always on call 24 hours a day for an emergency), and partly because service in the group is limited to two years.

Each of the units has three blue Ford

Transit vans and a number of unmarked cars for surveillance. The Transits carry 12 officers, one of these being the driver and another the radio operator. The vans have two radio channels, one the general Metropolitan police wavelength the other a specific SPG one. The driver and the radio operator are responsible for issuing arms or other equipment.

The role developed by the London SPG falls into two distinct phases. The first from 1965 when their prime role was to give support to local forces and help in major CID investigations. The second phase started in 1972 when, as we have seen, new roles were taken on by the police. Robert Mark's first annual report as Commissioner made explicit the expanded role of the SPG. Two units were sent to Heathrow airport for two months as part of anti-terrorist measures; one unit was permanently assigned, from October 1972, to guarding embassies in the centre of London; special attention was given to drugs; and units of the group were present at demonstrations 'at which militant elements were thought likely to cause disorder', in particular in 'the protracted industrial disputes involving dockers and building workers' (**Commissioner's Report, 1972**).

The same report announced that the SPG were conducting massive random 'stops-and-searches' of pedestrians and cars. During 1972, the SPG stopped 16,430 people in the streets and a further 25,640 stop and searches of vehicles and their passengers were carried out. Mark sought to legitimate the introduction of random checks and roadblocks by pointing out that the Metropolitan Police (unlike most other forces) has the power, under Section 66 of the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act to stop and search anyone where there is reason to suspect that goods stolen or unlawfully obtained may be found. The introduction of these practices, which have continued ever since, cannot be justified by the number of arrests made (the number actually convicted is not given). As the table shows, at the highest level, one in 10 (in 1973) were arrested and at the lowest

one in 16 (1976); why the remaining tens of thousands should have been stopped and searched for no good reason remains unexplained.

	Total Stops	Arrests
1965	—	396
1966	—	727
1967	—	1,057
1968	—	1,318
1969	—	—
1970	—	not known
1971	—	—
1972	41,980	3,142
1973	34,534	3,339
1974	41,304	3,262
1975	65,628	4,125
1976	60,898	3,773
1977*	(14,018)	2,990
1978	—	4,166

*Note: The figure for stops in 1977 is only for those stopped as pedestrians. McNee states that the low arrest figures for 1977 were due to anti-terrorist deployment; no figures are given for stops in 1978 but the arrest figure is the highest on record which suggests stops in the region of 60,000 plus.

The London SPG's record

Since 1972 the SPG have been concerned in so many situations which have led to violent confrontations that it is impossible to cover them all in this paper. A few perhaps should be singled out. As already mentioned in October 1972 one unit was permanently assigned to guard London embassies. On February 20, 1973 two armed SPG officers entered the Indian High Commission in the Aldwych, London, and shot dead two young Pakistanis, who were armed with a sword and toy pistols (the SPG were withdrawn from this duty in 1974 when the Diplomatic Protection Squad was formed). The SPG were sent into the June 1974 Red Lion Square demonstration against the National Front — when Kevin Gateley died. One SPG officer told the Scarman inquiry into the killing that his unit had cut through the demonstrators 'like knife through butter'. The behaviour of the SPG during the long strike at

Grunwick led the 1978 TUC Annual Conference to pass a resolution calling for a public inquiry into their activities.

The role of the SPG at Southall this April where they were introduced literally to teach the anti-National Front demonstrators a lesson has already been documented (see **Evening Standard** and **Evening News** 24.4.79 and **Bulletin** No 12). Calls for the SPG to be disbanded, in parliament and outside, have been rejected by the Commissioner David McNee and the Home Secretary, although it has already been admitted that as a result of the internal inquiry being carried out into the death of Blair Peach five members of the SPG have been disciplined and transferred to other duties (**Guardian**, 15.6.79).

Probably the most objectionable use of the SPG in London has been their employment in 'saturation policing' (their anti-crime role) for periods between three and four weeks in areas with so-called 'high crime rates'. These 'high crime' areas are dominantly the the working class areas of the city including those with large black communities. Areas like Brixton, Lewisham, Hackney, Peckham and Notting Hill appear year after year on the list of areas the SPG have been sent into.

Stops and searches

A high proportion of the stop and searches carried out occur when the SPG is on 'assignment' in a 'high crime area'. For example, in Lewisham in 1975 the SPG were called in. In the course of their operations in the area, the SPG stopped 14,000 people and made over 400 arrests (20 per cent of the stops and 10 per cent of the arrests made by the whole SPG in 1975). Such experiences are now so common in London that a detailed look at one of these operations in 'saturation policing', in Lambeth in 1978, is the most productive means of conveying their full impact.

In November last year, over half the total strength of the SPG, 120 officers, plus 30 CID officers from Scotland Yard were sent into Lambeth because of its 'high crime'

rate. For a month they carried out mass stop and searches, set up roadblocks, conducted drugs swoops resulting in 430 arrests for obstruction, alleged theft and drug offences, 'sus' (being suspected of being about to cause an offence), and assault on police officers. The **Daily Telegraph** reported after the operation that 'Three-fifths of those arrested were white, the rest coloured. A high percentage of black people live in the area' (6.12.78). In effect 40 per cent of those arrested were black, more than double the estimated black proportion of the local community. After the operation Assistant Commissioner Kelland of Scotland Yard declared that it had been a highly successful operation leading to a drastic reduction in crime. The experience of the local community was somewhat different.

This SPG operation in Lambeth, the latest of many, led the Lambeth Borough Council to set up its own public inquiry into the relations between the police and the community in the area (see **Bulletin** No 11. For other examples of SPG activities in London see **News Release**, November 1978; **Socialist Worker** 19 and 25 May 1979; **Leveller**, January 1978; **CARF**, March 1979; '**Black People Against the Police**', IRR; '**Racism Who Profits**', CIS).

The activities of the London SPG have led to numerous demands either for a full public inquiry into its function, its exclusion from areas with a large black population, or for its total disbandment. To claim as Commissioner David McNea does that the SPG are just ordinary police officers and not a riot squad is open to contradiction every time they set foot in the community, appear at demonstrations and picket lines. To deny also that they are a para-military force (in public order and anti-terrorist training) also flies in the face of the evidence. A Southern Television hour-long documentary put out in 1976, called 'The Man in the Middle', showed SPG training exercises and equipment. At their main training centre, near the river Lea in East London, they were shown practising the 'wedge' (to break up demonstrations) unarmed combat, and the use of

riot shields and CS gas. The programme also showed the equipment carried by a fully-equipped SPG Transit. These included riot shields, pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, smoke grenades, truncheons and visors.

SPGs outside London

Our survey of all 52 Chief Constables' annual reports in the UK showed that 24 police forces now have SPG-type units. The first two to be formed were the London SPG and the Tactical Patrol Group in Hertfordshire in 1965, followed by Thames Valley (1969), the RUC (1970), Birmingham (1970, now West Midlands), and Derbyshire (1970) who set up similar groups. The big expansion however came after 1972, following the nationally agreed new roles for the police, when 15 more SPGs were created. As SPG-type units have different titles in different forces — Task Force in Avon and Somerset, Tactical Aid Group in Greater Manchester and Support Groups in Strathclyde — and some annual reports are more informative than others, it is important to identify their main characteristics by looking at the roles they play and the training they receive.

The key feature that distinguishes SPGs is that they operate over the whole area covered by a police force, are controlled centrally and have an independent chain of command. [A number of forces do have what they call 'support units' that operate at local divisional level (each police force is divided into a number of divisions), which do not satisfy this criteria.] Like the London SPG, they are drawn from the ranks of the uniformed branch, although some have CID officers attached to them. The SPG units surveyed are generally described as 'mobile support units' and much emphasis is laid on their **anti-crime** role (e.g. backing-up divisional forces, helping in major incidents, and murder hunts). However, nearly all of them are used in public order situations (strikes, demonstrations and football matches) and most of them have an anti-terrorist capacity (at ports and airports and training in the

use of firearms). Training varies from force to force but most include the use of firearms, riot control (use of batons and shields) and protective clothing (special helmets for example). Finally, it should be said some of the units are still more akin to the original concept of a police support anti-crime unit (like those in Norfolk and Lancashire), while others are a carbon-copy of the London para-military model (in Manchester and Strathclyde).

The differences between SPGs is best illustrated by looking at some examples. In Essex, the Force Support Unit was established in May 1973 with 32 officers. The Unit is concerned with local patrolling, 'public order duties', 'all firearms operations' (82 in 1978), surveillance courses for the whole force, and 'has developed crowd control training to include the use of riot shields (1976 Report). In 1976 the unit was involved in 'hi-jacking exercises at Stansted and Debden' airfields. A total of 194 arrests were made by the Unit in 1978. By contrast, Hertfordshire's Tactical Patrol Group, formed in 1965, is used for random stop and searches in a major way. The figures for those stop and searched and arrested in recent years are:

	Total stops	Arrests
1973	11,439	614
1974	19,582	1,034
1975	21,323	967
1976	20,733	414
1977	17,611	522
1978	12,025	472

The 28-strong Group is split into three units and their duties include 'crime and public order patrols'. They are trained in the use of firearms, crowd control and the use of riot shields (1978 Report).

Nottinghamshire's Special Operations Unit tends, like other groups, to concentrate on certain target groups like the arrest of alleged prostitutes (224 in 1977) and football fans (187 in 1977). All the officers are qualified in the use of firearms (1976 Report). The use of the Unit is not without its contradictions. The Assistant Chief Constable, Mr. Dear, said

of its work: 'They might apparently solve one problem, but in its wake create another of aggravated relationships between minority groups and the police in general. It is then in this atmosphere that the permanent beat officer is expected to continue his work — often finding that his task, which was always difficult and delicate, has now been made almost impossible' (quoted in **The Role of the Police**, by Ben Whittaker).

Greater Manchester and Merseyside

The role played Mr. Anderton's Tactical Aid Group in Manchester provides a strong contrast with the similar unit in Merseyside which was totally re-organised after a strong public campaign about their use of violence and harrassment. Greater Manchester's TAG, as it is popularly known, closely parallels the London model in being a para-military force also carrying out crime-prevention roles. While on the one hand it is used for 'preventative patrols in areas where serious crime is prevalent', it is also used for 'hi-jack and hostage situations', all of its members are 'fully trained in the use of firearms' and have undertaken 'many training exercises' (1976 Report). The 70 officers in TAG are divided into three units based in different parts of the force's area, and each have their own special transport. TAG is used wherever 'public order situations are anticipated ... from crowd control at football matches to politically oriented meetings'. They also run special training programmes in 'all aspects of crowd control' for local divisional support units. These courses are also attended by officers from neighbouring forces — Lancashire, Cheshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire (1977 and 1978 Reports). This latter aspect proved particularly useful when the Greater Manchester force needed outside help during the National Front demonstrations in 1977 and 1978.

The public order and anti-terrorist role played by TAG is quite overt. When the Group was formed in 1976 the Assistant Chief Constable, Mr Peter Collins said:

'They are out front line troops who are raring to go at a minute's notice' (**Stretford & Urmston Journal**, 29.12.76). TAG have taken part in several anti-terrorist exercises. Some of these have been at Manchester Airport where they would be the first force on the spot if trouble occurred. In March 1978 the **New Manchester Review** reported that because of this responsibility the force had acquired sub-machine guns and Armalite rifles (24.3.78). Despite strenuous denials, the fact that the SAS unit that, in an emergency at the airport, would take over from TAG could take up to three hours to arrive lends credence to this report. TAG also took part in a joint police-military exercise organised with the Home Office in October 1977, when 500 armed police and soldiers sealed off the Collyhurst area of Manchester, diverted buses, and searched cars and pedestrians during a 12 hour 'mock' seige (**Manchester Evening News**, 1.11.77).

The Merseyside SPG-type unit is the only known case where officers were disciplined, two prosecuted and all the personnel re-assigned after a public campaign over the violence and harrasing tactics used by the unit. The Merseyside Task Force was formed in April 1974 as a 'mobile reserve' for 'disorder, vandalism and crime' (1974 **Report**). Particular attention was paid by the Force to the Liverpool city centre area and in the first year they made 3,905 arrests. The following year 5,329 arrests were recorded (1975 **Report**). No mention was made of the growing criticisms of the Force's activities in the annual reports. The general arrest rate was higher in Liverpool by comparison with other cities, particularly for drunkenness — although there was no hard evidence (**Sunday Times**, 16.2.75) that Liverpool was a more drunken or violent city than any other. More disturbing still was the very high number of arrests for assaults on the police, which was two to three times higher than that in Leeds or Birmingham. Local citizens said that the aggressive practices of Task Force officers was the major contributing factor.

In 1976 Mr. Ken Oxford, previously

Deputy Chief Constable, took over as Chief Constable and one of his first acts was to disband the Task Force. 'This rather forceful type of policing wasn't doing the image much good', Mr Oxford commented (**Guardian** 20.2.79). His annual report for 1976 blandly reported the formation of a new unit called the Operational Support Division 'following the redistribution of the establishment of the former Task Force'.

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland

Two of the four police forces in Wales have SPG-style units, South Wales and Gwent. The South Wales Special Patrol Group, set up in October 1975, has a total strength of 54 officers. It is split into nine units, one for each division, which come together as a group for public order and other situations. Twenty per cent of the officers are trained marksmen, and all officers are trained in crowd control and the use of riot shields. The Group also runs training courses in crowd control for other officers in the force. The Gwent unit is called the Support Group and has 20 officers assigned to it. Its role is defined as providing local support, help in major crimes, mass searches, surveillance and public order.

Mr George Richards, Assistant Chief Constable (Operations) who runs the South Wales SPG denies that they are an elite force or heavy-handed. This image he says is inevitable because 'they are in a reinforcing role which is often in a public disorder situation where they will be faced with violence' (**Western Mail**), 26.6.79). Inspector B. Griffiths, Vice-Chairman of the Police Federation and Chairman of the Federation's South Wales branch takes a different view. He looks forward to a return to traditional policing methods and sees SPG-style policing as a reaction to changes in society 'particularly as far as political activities are concerned'. If the laws were changed and properly enforced by the courts then he thought 'we could do away with this semi-military style of policing that is associated with the SPG' (op. cit.).

In Scotland two forces out of eight have

SPG groups — Strathclyde and Central Scotland. The Strathclyde Support Units are based in five different areas with two units assigned to Glasgow, and a total strength of 145 officers. Each of the six units are equipped with special personnel carriers, and are trained in the use of firearms and crowd control.

In May 1975 the Support Unit (SU) was used to break up a demonstration blocking the entrance to a hall booked for a National Front meeting. Over 100 people were arrested, including several prominent trade unionists — half of whom were eventually acquitted. A call for a public enquiry into the police action, supported by the Scottish TUC, was refused. In June this year a sergeant attached to the SU was acquitted of culpable homicide following a direction

from the trial judge that there was insufficient evidence to convict. The case followed the death of a 22-year-old man, who was taken to a police station by a SU unit of 8 men. A former police constable, who was in the SU at the time, and witnessed the death left the force afterwards because he was 'so sickened by the experience'. The constable, the main prosecution witness, told of how he saw the dead man punched and kicked and beaten by several officers. The man died because a blow to the body had split his liver in two (**Glasgow Herald, Scotsman** 19,20,21 June, 1979).

The Central Scotland Support Unit is much smaller and is used largely in a support role to local divisions and for 'various contingencies' (1978 **Report**).

SPECIAL PATROL GROUPS IN THE UK

Force	Name of Group	Date established	Size*
England			
Avon & Somerset	Task Force	1973	55
City of London	Special Operations Group	1977	16
Derbyshire	Special Operations Unit	1970	11 (1976)
Essex	Force Support Unit	1973	32 (1974)
Gloucestershire	Task Force	—	—
Greater Manchester	Tactical Aid Group	1976	70 (1977)
Hertfordshire	Tactical Patrol Group	1965	28
Humberside	Support Group	1978	47
Lancashire	Police Support Unit	1978	—
Merseyside	Task Force	1974 — 76	68 (1975)
	Operational Support Division	1976	—
Metropolitan Police	Special Patrol Group	1965	204
Norfolk	Police Support Unit	—	—
Northumbria	Special Patrol Group	1974	46 (1977)
North Yorkshire	Task Force	1974	—
Nottinghamshire	Special Operations Unit	—	34 (1976)
Staffordshire	Force Support Unit	1976	23
Thames Valley	Support Group	1969	41
West Midlands	Special Patrol Group	1970	85
West Yorkshire	Task Forces	1974	—
Wales			
Gwent	Support Group	1972	20
South Wales	Special Patrol Group	1975	54
Scotland			
Central Scotland	Support Group	—	—
Strathclyde	Support Units	1973	145 (1975)
N. Ireland			
Royal Ulster			
Constabulary	Special Patrol Group	1970	368

* 1978 figures except where stated

REVIEWS

CAMBODIA DESTROYED

Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia, by William Shawcross. London, André Deutsch, 1979, 467pp, £6.95.

Richard Nixon was elected President of the United States in November 1968, on a promise to extricate the nation from the Vietnam war. He promptly appointed Dr Kissinger his National Security Assistant. Within a month of his inauguration, Nixon had received favourably a request from his commander in Vietnam to authorise the bombing of neutral Cambodia. On March 18, 1969 such bombing began in conditions of utmost secrecy explicitly imposed by the White House. The Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force were not informed, nor were any of the Congressional committees which constitutionally enable Congress to authorise and fund warfare. The official computerised military record-keeping system, recording bombing raids, targets, destruction and flying times, was beaten by an elaborate system of false 'dual reporting'. All military personnel involved violated Article 107 of the Military Code of Justice, which provides that anyone 'who, with intent to deceive, signs any false record, return, regulation, order or other official document, knowing that same to be false ... shall be punished as a court martial may direct.'

When the conspiracy was not immediately detected, the bombing continued, codenamed operation MENU, after the breakfast briefing that launched it. The Joint Chiefs informed the White House in April that many of the target areas for saturation bombing were populated by Cambodians, mostly peasants. By June 1969, 3,630 B52 raids had flown into

The Royal Ulster Constabulary's Special Patrol Group was set up in 1970. It had a similar structure to the London SPG but because of the political situation in the province, its practices were different, including the use of roadblocks, snatch squads and wedges in demonstrations. As we have seen these tactics influenced Robert Mark when he reorganised the London SPG in 1972.

The RUC SPG now has ten units with a total of 368 officers (17 of whom are seconded Royal Military Police officers). Although as the 1973 Report remarks the SPG was formed to reinforce 'conventional policework', it is the most clear cut example of a paramilitary force going about its work permanently armed. Its three primary uses are for setting up roadblocks and manning checkpoints, transporting prisoners to and from court, and riot control. In 1978 the SPG made a total of 6,802 'detections' (arrests/charges brought), 5,506 for motoring offences, 845 for public order, 264 for 'ordinary crime', and 187 others. The role played by the RUC's SPG is clearly different to those in the rest of the UK as its 'policing' functions, like the RUC itself, are subordinate to those of the army.

Conclusion

The underlying ambiguity in the development of SPG groups is the dual function the most advanced ones undertake. A combination of an anti-crime function in support of local divisions and a para-military one, which is a combination of an aggressive public order role and an armed anti-terrorist capacity. The SPGs that fall into this category tend to be all the more aggressive and violent when called on to undertake normal policing roles in local communities at strikes and demonstrations. Another problem, where the para-military role is underdeveloped or non-existent, is that as an elite group they have no connections with the localities they are sent into and therefore no need to establish and maintain a relationship with the local people.

Cambodia all along the South Vietnam border.

Thus began the destruction of Cambodia, later completed by invasion and, (after the Paris agreements in early 1973 to end the war), some of the heaviest carpet bombing in history. The invasion in April 1970 totally ignored Congress, although the US Constitution reserves to it the power to declare war, in order (as Abraham Lincoln put it) that 'no man should hold the power of bringing this oppression upon us.' Nobody knows the casualty figures. Already by February 1972 a Senate sub-committee found that two million Cambodians had been made homeless by the war, in a population of only seven millions.

Nixon's secret bombing of Cambodia was in fact soon reported briefly in the May 9, 1969 issue of the *New York Times*, but this provoked no public outcry. Kissinger immediately asked FBI Director Hoover to find the source of the leak and promised to 'destroy whoever did this.' That day the FBI illegally violated Fourth Amendment rights by putting a wiretap on the home of Kissinger's assistant on the National Security Council staff. This attempted cover-up of foreign policy crimes marked the beginning of the domestic abuses of power later known as Watergate. (Kissinger went on to have many others wiretapped, including Henry Brandon of the *Sunday Times*).

In July 1974, just before Nixon's enforced resignation, the House of Representatives' Judiciary Committee approved changes on the Watergate cover-up and on wiretaps in the impeachment of Nixon, but rejected the accusation of Nixon waging secret illegal war in Cambodia. It is clear that both Congress and the large sections of the American public eventually disturbed by the Watergate revelations were unwilling to insist on Executive legality and accountability in the field of the greatest potential crimes of the state, namely war. Shawcross praises US democracy and raises no question about this, retreating into the untenable thesis that the 'sideshow' of Cambodia merely revealed the responsibility of the madman and his

ambitious henchman; whereas it was part of an Indochina and global strategy which involved many other accomplices and criminals.

Nixon's reputation was irretrievably destroyed, but Kissinger's was elevated. He was confirmed as Secretary of State in September 1973. All those who seek legality and accountability in public life will study with reward Kissinger's response to this devastating book, which if facts alone mattered would mark his permanent disgrace. They will do well also to note how quickly the 'main show' of Vietnam has been transformed by the US political establishment and media from a crime into a regrettable mistake.

ON FASCISTS

FASCISM IN BRITAIN. An Annotated Bibliography. Philip Rees. Harvester Press [Sussex] & Humanities Press [New Jersey], £15.

Philip Rees, the head of acquisitions at York university library, has compiled a list of 893 publications by and about 'fascists in Britain', characterised most of them in entries ranging from a few to 300 words, put an introductory essay in the front and an index on the back. That's enough to save any researcher £15 worth of time. Beyond that, however, its value is limited. The essay on 'What is fascism?' is much too ambitious for its fourteen pages, and could helpfully have been an essay limited to fascism in Britain; a problematic enough notion. 'Only two fascist or fascistic movements have attained any real importance in British politics, the BUF (British Union of Fascists) and the National Front', Rees states. And unexplained distinctions like fascist/fascistic abound.

The essay flits from an early Twenties article by a French fascist on the theatricality of life after World War I to Guy Debord's Situationist views on 'the society of the spectacle' and 'the Angry Brigade who acted in the name of Situationism'. According to Rees, 'the

Baader-Meinhof gang', Rose Dugdale, Che Guevara and 'many New Left groups' (whatever they might be, in 1979), 'all these have obvious echoes in fascist theory or practice'. 'Echoes' are hardly substantial enough connections to support such a grouping.

Unfortunately the essay's pretentious scholasticism permeates the short accounts of the the items in the bibliography. The items go back to the British Fascists in 1923 and a large proportion of them relate to Sir Oswald Mosley and his BUF. Just under 200 of the 893 items relate to the postwar year. Without explanation, Rees divides these into those on 'British fascism and the radical right' until 1967, the year the National Front was formed, but only 'the radical right' since 1967. Certainly if the intention was to cover the radical right since 1967 the neglect of radical right groups other than the Front is indefensible. The bibliography nonetheless contains useful sources for anti-fascists.

SOURCES

NEW BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

This listing does not preclude a future review.

Criminal Justice Reform, Scottish Council For Civil Liberties, 146, Holland Street, Glasgow, 20p. Briefing paper on plans to reform police powers north of the border.

Terrorism And The European Community, Charles Fletcher-Cooke QC, European Conservative Group. Calls for 'closest co-operation between national police forces perhaps on an institutionalised basis'.

Legality And The Community, edited by Paul D. Brown and Terry Bloomfield, Aberdeen Peoples Press, £1.75. Examination of the politics of juvenile justice in Scotland.

Under Observation: The Computer And Political Control, Campaign Against The Model West Germany, c/o Evangelische Studentengemeinde

(ESG) Querenburger Hohe 287, 4630 Bochum 1, West Germany. The technology of repression in W. Germany.

Disclosure Of Official Information: A Report On Overseas Practice, HMSO £4. Detailed review covering nine countries.

ADIU Report, June 1979. First issue of a new bulletin produced by the Armament and Disarmament Information Unit, Social Policy Research Unit, Sussex University, Brighton. This independent unit gathers information on defence, disarmament and arms control. Recommended.

Region 1 Supplementary, Martin Spence, Black Jake Collective, 20p, 115, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. How the Northern Home Defence Region (HQ: Ouston Barracks, near Newcastle) would be run in a state of emergency.

Home Defence: Region Two, 5p, York Free Press, Box 2, 73 Walmgate, York. How Yorkshire and Humberside would be run in a state of emergency.

What Everyone Should Know About State Repression, by Victor Serge, £1, New Park Publications, 21b, Old Town, London SW4.

Crime And The Community, Home Office Research Study No 50, HMSO 65p.

Confidential: Computers, Records And The Right To Privacy, edited by Patricia Hewitt, NCCL. Record of a conference in January 1979 organised by the Institute of Data Processing Management, the National Computing Centre Ltd and the NCCL.

Espionage, Terrorism And Subversion In An Industrial Society, by Peter Hamilton, Peter A. Heims Ltd, hard 275pp, £9.50. An ex-British spy looks at the 'unpleasant facts of modern industrial life' and calls on everyone to safeguard civilisation as we know it.

The Invisible Air Force, Christopher Robbins, Macmillan, hard pp 319, £6.95. Fascinating account of the CIA's use of civil American airlines since World War Two.

World Armaments And Disarmament: SIPRI Yearbook 1979, Taylor and Francis, London, hard 698pp. £21.50. Excellently produced, definitive volume by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Alternative Employment For Naval Shipbuilding Workers, 20p. Benwell CDP (see above). Case study of the resources devoted to the production of the ASW cruiser at Vickers Ltd., Barrow-in-Furness.

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Ways Of Making You Talk, Jeremy Smith, *New Statesman*, May 4, 1979.

Jury-Vetting: A Challenging Task? Jeremy Smith, *New Law Journal*, May 17, 1979.

Emergency Planning

Even In A Democracy Some Erosion Of Civil Rights May Be Necessary To Deal With A State Of Emergency. Inspector John Hogan, *Police College Magazine*, Spring 1979. (Bramshill House, Basingstoke, Hants.)

Could It Happen Here? A Postscript. William Gutteridge, *Police Journal*, July-September 1979. On the possibilities of a coup d'etat.

Extradition

The Exile Of Astrid Proll, Karen Margolis, *Time Out*, June 29, 1979.

Political Crimes And Extradition, Editorial, *New Law Journal*, May 17, 1979.

Intelligence

Cuban Crises (two articles) Victor Flintham, *Air Pictorial*, June 1979/July 1979, (50p, Surridge Dawson & Co, 136-142 New Kent Road, London SE1).

Law And Order

Restore The Death Penalty, Editorial, *Police*, June 1979.

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Freedom Under The Law, William Whitelaw, *Security Gazette*, June 1979.

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At Ease At Last, News Release, June-August 1979, (1 Elgin Avenue, London W9). On Deserters and AWOLS.

The Armed Forces And Industrial Disputes In The United Kingdom, Geoffrey Marshall, *Armed Forces and Society*, February 1979.????

Britain's Nuclear Deterrent: The Impending Decisions. John Simpson, *ADIU Report*, June

1979, (Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex, Brighton).

Northern Ireland

The Secret War For Ireland, Stephen Scott/Duncan Campbell, *New Statesman*, July 13, 1979.

A Terrorist Trial In Crumlin Road, Tom Hadden/Stephen Wright, *New Society*, June 28, 1979.

Official Secrecy

Remaining In The United Kingdom: Examining The Passport, Lawrence Grant, *Legal Action Group Bulletin*, July 1979. (£1.55, 28a Highgate Road, London NW5). Detailed exposure of secret notation system used by immigration officers.

Police

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Mangrove Wins 'Return Match', Duncan Campbell, *Time Out*, June 29, 1979. On police harassment of West Indian activists in Notting Hill Gate, London.

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How The Metro Plans For The Big Ones, J.A. Dellow, *Police*, June 1979. Police planning for marches and demonstrations in London.

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