

S.B. No. 1 (Plain)

Special Report

METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

5th day of March 1971

SUBJECT

Angry Brigade

Reference to Papers

400/71/51

1. This report sets out what has been discovered about the Angry Brigade, the persons who compose it and the ideas which motivate them. A fully comprehensive picture will not be available for some time but the information which has so far emerged from enquiries by Special Branch officers in liaison with C.I.D. officers at Barnet has provided a basis for the following interim assessment of the Angry Brigade.

2. The Angry Brigade has three components. First a circle of anarchists in Scotland, secondly a circle of London based anarchists and thirdly a circle grouped round a commune in North London. The general political ideas of the Angry Brigade are drawn from anarchism and from a commitment to the Cuban style of revolution.

3. The Scottish anarchists are Ian PURDIE and Christopher David ALLEN. It is thought at the present time that the explosion at the home of Mr. Robert Carr of 12.1.71 was planned on or about New Year's day at ALLEN's address in Scotland.

4. The London based anarchists are [Privacy] and Christopher BOTT. They are regarded as an integral part of the Angry Brigade for the supply of explosive materials and expertise although it is not envisaged that they took part in placing the bombs.

5. The commune at [Privacy] comes into the picture because that is where Jack Leonard PRESCOTT was living at the time of his arrest on 11.2.71 for placing the bomb at Mr. Carr's home. The persons in the commune on whom most suspicion falls are [Privacy].

[Privacy] It is not thought that the male element in the commune was very closely implicated in Angry Brigade activities.

6. The central figure in enquiries at the present time is Ian Donald PURDIE. He shared a cell at the Albany Prison, I.O.W. with PRESCOTT in the early months of 1970 and also introduced him into the Commune. PURDIE spent the New Year (1971) in Scotland with [Privacy] and these two have provided each other with alibis for the night of the Carr bomb incident of 12th January. PURDIE has also lived at the [Privacy] commune and he is currently living at the address of [Privacy].

7. The Angry Brigade have claimed responsibility (even if only inferentially) for the following sequence of explosions:-

Commissioner of Police	(home)	30.8.70
Attorney General	(home)	8.9.70
B.B.C. Van (Miss World Contest)		20.11.70
Dept. of Productivity and Employment		9.12.70
Mr. Robert Carr	(home)	12.1.71

They have also claimed some share in responsibility for the so-called machine gunning of the Spanish Embassy in London on 3.12.70 although this particular incident does not fit into the sequence of explosions. It may well be that the Angry Brigade have exchanged confidences with certain anarchists who are known to be hostile to the Spanish regime.

8. The above sequence of explosions carry a hallmark in respect of the device used. The bombs were made up to the same formula using a particular type of explosive. Expert evidence is available to show that they were all made by the same person(s). This type of device has also been used in another sequence of explosions affecting the property of the Italian and Spanish governments in [redacted] and which can be attributed directly to anarchist supporters of the 1st May Group.

9. Communiques issued by the Angry Brigade have distinguishing features in respect of the paper and some of the printing. They were not all made by the same hand and in most cases the handwriting is disguised. In the case of communique No.4 delivered to newspaper offices on the day following the Carr bomb incident there is evidence to show that the envelope for this was written by Jack Leonard PRESCOTT. He is now in custody and the preparation of the full case against him is being made by C.I.D. officers at Barnet under the direction of Chief Superintendent Habershon.

10. PRESCOTT's connection with the commune at [redacted] Privacy has been mentioned. The following persons are resident at the commune or have been living there at some time in recent months:-

[redacted] Privacy

PURDIE
Jack PRESCOTT

Jane GRANT
Sarah Jane WILSON
Susan Hastings FINCH
[redacted] Privacy
Jo ROBINSON
Catherine McLEAN

Most of these people come from middle class backgrounds and have been University students. They are all highly politically minded. At the very minimum they subscribe to a set of beliefs which favours a Castro type revolution and reveres the image of Che Guevarra. Four of the above visited Cuba in a party which left London in July 1968 under the auspices of the Cuban government. They are Sarah Jane WILSON, Jane GRANT, Susan FINCH and [redacted] Privacy To this consensus individuals within the commune brought their own individual political standpoint. Jane GRANT and Sarah WILSON are ardent supporters of Women's Liberation - whose slogan, "We are not beautiful, we are not ugly, we are angry" might well have prompted the title "Angry Brigade". Susan FINCH runs a somewhat anarchist venture known as the North London Claimants Union which is intended to provide assistance to the unemployed enabling them to claim maximum state aid. In effect it aims to politicise the down and outs. PRESCOTT may have been a willing victim of such politicisation having been softened up by PURDIE. It is also worth pointing out

that PRESCOTT's criminal convictions are for drug taking, which in the permissive atmosphere of the commune would not be regarded as anti-social.

11. In the same party which travelled to Cuba in July 1968 there were two others who feature in Angry Brigade enquiries, namely Christopher BOTT and Christopher ALLEN. It will be appreciated that this is more than just a chance connection. Those who visited Cuba were there to pay homage to the revolution. They worked in the sugar plantations and lived at the frugal level of a Cuban worker. Mostly they were students who hoped to find a middle way between communism and anarchism. Those who were not disillusioned by the Cuban experience came away somewhat brainwashed. Back at home they channelled their feelings into such organisations as the Tri-Continental Committee of the Britain Cuba Association or the Barnsbury Road commune in North London. It will be recalled that following the arrest of Ian PURDIE and Chris ALLEN for throwing a petrol bomb at the Ulster Office in August 1969 the Barnsbury Road commune held a meeting on 21.8.69 at which some 30 persons were present, mainly anarchists and the Cuba inspired revolutionaries. There was a great show of solidarity with the two prisoners, though apart from distributing a very anti-police leaflet, no further action was taken. That particular commune at [redacted] Privacy is not used at the present time as a meeting place, although the spirit of it lives on in the Grosvenor Avenue commune. BOTT became a leading figure in the Tri-Continental Committee of which he was secretary for a short period after his return from Cuba. In political outlook BOTT is somewhat trotskyist though he currently occupies a position half-way between the trotskyists and anarchists as a member of the Solidarity Group. At this stage he cannot be fitted into the Angry Brigade although it is expected that suspicion will continue to fall in his direction because of his long association with ALLEN and PURDIE.

12. Christopher ALLEN is at present living at [redacted] Privacy Scotland. Both he and PURDIE are well known as anarchists and there is no need to elaborate on their political views.

13. There are difficulties in explaining how the anarchist explosive devices came to be used by the Angry Brigade. It can only be surmised that PURDIE and ALLEN are linked to the suppliers through personal friendship with the [redacted] Privacy and [redacted] Privacy. There are no leads in this particular area of the enquiry at the present time.

14. Another aspect of the enquiry which is being explored is the role played by [redacted] Privacy of Agitprop, who appears to be in league with the people in the commune. He was not in England at the time of the Carr bomb incident and the view is taken that he had been forewarned and went abroad to make sure of his alibi.

15. It may be said by way of assessment of the Angry Brigade that the resort to bombings as a means of protest need not be attributed to any escalation of political feeling on the extremist left, and even less to any implicit incitement by the Trade Union Movement or the Marxist and Communist groups. Such political feeling as may be claimed as a pretext by the

[REDACTED]

Angry Brigade can be regarded as due to psychological causes within a small group rather than to any action by the establishment. The activities of the Angry Brigade may be seen as evidence of a growing contempt by the anarchist minded revolutionaries not only for established authority but also for the orthodox Marxist left which in recent months has been comparatively quiet.

16. In any prosecution of the persons held to be responsible for the Carr bomb incident most of the persons above are likely to feature either as defendants or defence witnesses. Included in the appendix to this report are personal particulars of those who are not well known. A further report on the Angry Brigade will be submitted when more information comes to light.

[REDACTED]

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(R. Creamer)
Sergeant.

Submitted

~~Chief Inspector.~~

Conrad Dixon
CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT.

Christopher David ALLEN

Christopher Michael George BOTT

Privacy

Susan Hastings FINCH

Privacy

Jane GRANT

Catherine Judith McLEAN (b. Privacy)

Privacy

Jack Leonard PRESCOTT

Ian Donald PURDIE

Privacy

Sarah Jane WILSON

- RF 405 Privacy

- RF 402 Privacy

Privacy

- RF 405 Privacy

- RF Privacy

- RF 408 Privacy

- RF 405 Privacy

- RF Privacy

- RF Privacy

- mentions on 371

- RF 405 Privacy

- mentions

- RF Privacy

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- RF Privacy

- RF 405 Privacy

Notes: Privacy - b. Privacy attended Privacy School, then Cambridge University to July 1970. Member of Cambridge University Soc. Soc. and of Privacy Commune

Privacy - b. Privacy attended Privacy School then Privacy Cambridge to study classics. Student rebel refused to take finals in 1969.

Privacy - b. Privacy Attended Privacy College, Cambridge. Member of R.S.S.F. in 1969 and of Privacy Commune. Was in Greece from Feb 66 to Dec. 67.