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METROPOLITAN POLICE

(COPY)

SPECIAL BRANCH

25 September 1975  
..... day of ..... 1975

Final Report

SUBJECT .....  
Workers .....  
Revolutionary .....  
Party .....

Reference to Papers

David Astor of the Observer newspaper telephoned New Scotland Yard yesterday to say that his newspaper was intending to run an article on the activities of the Workers' Revolutionary Party and that reference had been made by their informant to Special Branch. It was requested that a Special Branch officer arrange to discuss this with David Astor, and the Commissioner directed that I should do so at 10 am this morning.

At the Observer offices I met David Astor, his deputy, and Colin Smith, Observer reporter. They explained to me that they had in recent weeks been looking at the activities of revolutionary groups such as the Workers' Revolutionary Party and that during the last few days they had been approached by a lady, a former girl friend of the WRP activist Corin Redgrave. The reporter Colin Smith declined to name the girl at this stage, saying she was unwilling to be interviewed by police and that she would anyway be named in the Observer article this coming Sunday, but said she claimed she had joined the Workers' Revolutionary Party under the influence of Redgrave and had agreed to join him on a short training course for members of the theatrical profession to be held at the WRP's country premises in Derbyshire a few weeks ago.

The venue of the premises was supposed to be kept secret in advance from those attending and the London contingent were to be conveyed by coach from the WRP headquarters in Clapham; Corin Redgrave had, in fact, told his girl friend details of the venue and she arrived about two days after the main party. On arrival she was treated with great hostility and subjected to strenuous interrogation over a long period of hours about her reasons for joining the WRP and attending the course, and mainly about her alleged activities as an informer for Special Branch. She strenuously denied that she was such an informer (in addition to her association with Redgrave she had then, and still has, some sympathy with the political aims of the organisation), and it was only late in the day when Gerry Healey, leader of the WRP, appeared on the scene that he prevailed upon her interrogators to release her.

In the period which followed, when Gerry Healey and others were attempting to comfort her and redress the situation by assuring her that she was not really under suspicion, Healey passed a remark to the effect that he was fully informed, almost on a weekly basis, of all confidential discussions conducted in Cabinet.

The lady in question has apparently now broken off with the WRP and, in the process of informing the reporter Colin Smith at the Observer of the way she had been treated at the training course in Derbyshire, added that one of the reasons she had arrived late was because she had become frightened following a remark passed to her by Corin Redgrave to the effect that the WRP had a quantity of arms buried

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(or secreted) in the grounds of the Derbyshire establishment.

The Observer representatives explained that they wished to publish this information on Sunday next as part of an article they were preparing on the WRP and they referred especially to the three points which they knew would affect police:-

- (a) That the woman had been interrogated as a suspected Special Branch informer. They added they did not believe this to be true, especially because the woman denied it, but that they intended to make reference to the fact as a fact of the constant security hysteria generated within the WRP in order to condition all members to a constant state of revolutionary vigilance.
- (b) They would refer to the alleged arms dump in Derbyshire and realized fully this would necessitate some reaction from police. I therefore gave it as my view that while we had no collateral to support such an allegation it was extremely unlikely that Derbyshire Police would feel impelled to apply for a warrant to search physically the house and grounds of the training establishment (the grounds cover possibly more than an acre). I added, however, that the allegation would now be investigated and that if any police action was contemplated which might spoil the effect of the Observer article on Sunday, police would feel morally bound to liaise first with the Editor of the Observer.
- (c) They intended also to make some reference to the WRP claim to have access to Cabinet secrets, that reference to be phrased in such a way as to indicate disbelief but to show that such extravagant and conspiratorial claims were part of the tactics of the WRP leadership towards inducing revolutionary fervour and discipline amongst members. They asked for my comments on this point and at my request agreed that I should take appropriate action to ensure that relevant government departments were alerted in advance to this proposed publication. It was implicit in this discussion that the same moral rules would apply to this issue as to the mention of a firearms dump; that is, that whilst the relevant departments of government could be alerted to the report which would appear in the Observer on Sunday, no overt action would be taken by any agency to destroy the impact of that story without prior reference to the Editor of the Observer.

I regarded this meeting as an entirely helpful initiative from the Observer newspaper. For their part they accept it as being untrue that their woman informer was acting as a Special Branch agent in the WRP and hopefully they will write their material accordingly. I made the point but it seemed to be too much to expect the newspapermen to agree to make no mention of Special Branch at all). They agreed also that the references to arms and to access to Cabinet secrets were probably equally unfounded and, again hopefully, will write their article in that vein.

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Arrangements are now in hand for discussions with Derbyshire Police and the Security Service about action in respect to the alleged references to firearms and Cabinet secrets and Home Office are being fully informed.

Against the possibility that numerous Press enquiries will be made of New Scotland Yard following the first publication on Saturday evening of Sunday's Observer, arrangements are now in hand for our Press Bureau to be appropriately briefed on Friday afternoon. That briefing will be dependant upon the outcome of talks with Derbyshire Police and appropriate government departments.

Note:

The full description and address of the WRP training centre is:-

WRP Education Centre  
White Meadows House  
Parwich Lane  
Nr Bradbourne  
Derbyshire

Deputy Assistant Commissioner

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