

MEMORANDUMCommander Cunningham

1. The current strength of the Special Operations Squad (S.O.S) is one Detective Chief Inspector, one Detective Inspector, one 1st Class Sergeant, two 2nd Class Sergeants, seven Detective Constables and one Woman Detective Constable, an increase of two officers since the Squad was last reviewed in November 1969; there has also been a slight alteration in the rank structure.

2. The Squad is just over two years old and continues to fulfil the purposes for which it was formed, ie the gathering of advance information of demonstrations by left wing extremists and identifying the organisers and participants, particularly those engaging or likely to engage in acts leading to public disorder. The culling of intelligence of interest to Special Branch and the Security Service by Squad officers either entrenched in extremist organisations or acceptable associates of them is a bi-product of increasing value.

3. A natural consequence of the Squad's continued presence has been that more members both of Special Branch and other departments of the Force are becoming aware of its activities which obviously is a mixed blessing.

Coverage

4. Organisations penetrated by the S.O.S are:-

Irish Solidarity Campaign (formerly Irish Civil Rights Solidarity Campaign)

Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association

Independent Labour Party

New Socialists

Agitprop

Peace Action (an amalgam of Action Committee Against NATO and Chemical and Biological Warfare Action Group - CABWAG)

Friends of Korea

Britain Vietnam Solidarity Front

Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist League

} Maoists

Vietnam Solidarity Committee

International Socialism

International Marxist Group

Spartacus League

Red Circle

Anti-Apartheid Movement

Dambusters Mobilising Committee

Womens Liberation Front

Action Committee Against Racism

5. Information less full but of value is also obtained on peripheral organisations including [REDACTED] [2]
the Black Defence Committee, students and anarchists as a result of the Squad officers affiliations and contacts, informants and technical aids. For a variety of reasons officers have been withdrawn from the Tricontinental Committee (now defunct), Revolutionary Socialist Students Federation (moribund), Group 68 [REDACTED] [2]

6. Coverage by the Squad is inevitably a compromise dictated by circumstances; any organisation which is considered a threat to public order is obviously a target for penetration, but some present difficulties not easily overcome - "Black Power", anarchists, [REDACTED], foreign organisations and small, potentially violent groups which adopt a "commune" existence cannot yet be said to have been mastered by our current techniques. [4]

7. Others, which do not always represent an obvious threat to order, provide "cover" for S.O.S officers and sometimes a vehicle for the penetration of ad hoc "umbrella" organisations.

8. The surveillance of established organisations, once penetration has been achieved, depends mainly on the skill of the officer but those groups which mushroom in response to topical matters often present but brief opportunities for infiltration which can only be seized if a suitably "qualified" officer is available - this, of course, is a problem in recruitment and administration. It is accepted that the longer an officer serves in this field the greater is his product but it is a fact that only one of the original officers on the Squad remains - due to the progress of the others in their careers and the influences of their domestic responsibilities. Their replacements are in various stages of assimilation which must now perhaps be accepted as the normal state of operations.

9. Officers who have served on the Squad have undoubtedly gained a unique insight into a wide range of political extremism and have come to know personally many of the leading activists. This will prove invaluable to the officers in their careers and they may provide a reservoir of trained officers should circumstances require their recall to such work.

10. In reviewing the activity of left wing extremists in the public order field during the past year it is fair to say that they went largely as predicted in November 1969. In addition, a clear pattern of cause and effect was observed which underlined the basic reasons for the formation of the S.O.S. When there was a sufficiently emotive issue - such as the "Stop the Seventy Tour" campaign which guaranteed broad based support and the attention of the mass media the extremists were able seriously to threaten the maintenance of order, making it imperative that advance information of their plans was available. The S.T.S.T organisers flexed their muscles during the Springbok Rugby Tour from November to January and their spectacular demonstrations tended to hide the fact that in London they were well contained by police. In this connection the S.O.S had one officer privy to the militants most closely guarded plans and four others on the periphery. Their penetration was being developed as the cricket tour approached and there is no reason to think that the quality and immediacy of their information would have been less.

11. In the event, of course, the MCC were persuaded to cancel the tour which was hailed as a victory for the campaign. The benefit of the cancellation on the public order scene was, however, most marked; instead of a series of confrontations between police and large crowds of demonstrators which, however efficiently handled, tend to escalate and feed the militants enthusiasm, there has been a relative dearth of public disorder.

12. The unsettled situation in Northern Ireland continues to fascinate interested extremist groups here, both Irish and others, and numerous attempts were made by the various factions to exploit emotive occurrences in Ireland. What soon became obvious even to these characteristically egocentric groups was that small, unco-ordinated protests did nothing to further the cause of the "repressed" Irish people and, what was perhaps more to the point, exposed the paucity of support the individual groups could command. Sensitive to the presence of TV and the press some extremists apparently felt obliged to attempt to cover their smallness of numbers by engaging in militant action. On every occasion this was well contained by police, usually primed with advance information, and the militants were further disheartened.

13. Their frustrations led them to attempt to join forces in one organisation and in October a conference of 75 representatives of most of the extremist organisations preoccupied with Ireland formed the Irish Solidarity Campaign. Two officers of the S.O.S were able to obtain a detailed record of what transpired at the conference, to identify 80% of the delegates with their political affiliations and to establish which political group emerged as the dominating influence.

14. There is ample evidence that this sense of frustration has pervaded the whole of the extreme left. The VSC recently attempted to organise demonstrations outside the MPD, one in the City of London on the grounds, inter alia, that police there were less experienced in handling militant demonstrations, a sincere compliment to the Metropolitan Police. In the event it was postponed, but if and when it is resurrected it is likely that full information of their intentions will be available.

15. A "Red Europe" conference scheduled to take place in November in Brussels is a further manifestation of the extremists desire for united action but the difficulties inherent to even national amalgamations will inevitably occur, magnified by the international character of the conference and it remains to be seen whether the British contingent will be infected by the much more virulent strains of extremism which have been witnessed on the Continent or whether it will merely result in lip service being paid to the principles of solidarity.

Accommodation

16. The need for a detached office where undercover officers can meet for the interchange of information and ideas, for briefings and for the camaraderie necessary for officers performing their unorthodox duties, has proved essential. The present accommodation has fulfilled all the requirements necessary for an operation of this nature but security limits the number of officers who can use it at any one period. Steps are therefore being taken to secure an additional office suitable for the use of about four or five officers and it is expected that this accommodation will be available in the early part of December 1970.

17. The individual officers' accommodation, so necessary for the security of their individual cover stories, has not been found to pose any hazard to the security of the operations.

Cars

18. Nondescript hire cars continue to be a necessary and sufficiently secure method of assisting officers to carry out their duties. Home Office approval was given for the hire of two cars on a 'permanent' basis and a third on 'short term' hire as and when necessary. In practice it was found that the three cars were almost in constant use and, in May this year Home Office approval was sought and obtained for the hire of a fourth vehicle as and when necessary. The fourth car was in fact hired from 6 May to 29 June and on four subsequent occasions for periods varying from two to nine days. This allocation appears satisfactorily to meet the current needs of the Squad. (Secret file No. TR 19/1968/1 refers).

Finance

19. Statements of accounts are attached. The imprest of £400 which was drawn during December 1969 and January 1970 and repaid in February 1970 was required to cover expenses prior to the allocation of a budget of £3,500 for the current financial year. By the beginning of October 1970 £2,800 had been drawn from the account of which there is a current cash balance of £271. It is anticipated that approximately £3,000 will have been spent by the end of the year but the expenditure could well be in excess of this if the rent of about £60 per month has to be met in advance for the proposed additional detached office (mentioned in para 16).

20. Total current expenditure is running at a figure slightly below £250 per month and it is anticipated that with the additional commitment of a second detached office, all expenses could be met from a budget of about £3,500 for the next financial year.

Future activities

21. Whilst almost any topic, industrial strife, racialism, student affairs etc, could escalate into issues attractive to troublemakers, it is possible to say that most of them need a catalyst.

22. Ireland will obviously continue to preoccupy extremists both in that country and here, making it imperative that surveillance of their activities is maintained. The expected conviction and imprisonment of IRA members currently awaiting trial for possessing explosives in London will inevitably produce a reaction from their supporters.

23. A deterioration in the economic situation or 'anti-trade union legislation' would draw the revolutionaries to the scenes of trouble and, perhaps less important, the expulsion from this country of Rudi DEUTSCHKE would probably cause his student adherents to fulminate.

24. Many of the elements, particularly students who supported the S.T.S.T are being drawn back to the Anti-Apartheid cause by the possibility of this country supplying arms to South Africa; there is potentially a large, liberal opposition to such a policy, ripe for exploitation by the militants. Any demonstrations under the aegis of the AAM are unlikely to be intentionally disorderly but they can, of course, provide cover for the more nefarious actions of others.

25. The lack of a real, home-based, casus belli makes the extremists more sensitive to outside influences: the jibes of foreign counterparts for their failure to advance the "revolution", the spectacular riots, kidnappings, hijackings, and bomb outrages abroad and the comparative ease with which police here are handling their demonstrations add to their frustrations. There are signs that the extremists are seeking an outlet in small, isolated acts such as the recent petrol bomb incidents in London. The danger is that, being planned and executed by small cliques, advance information or evidence after the event cannot be guaranteed without resorting to more sophisticated methods of penetration by the S.O.S than are necessary for coverage of the large scale demonstration.

SB
18.11.70

Hauman
Chief Inspector

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT

	£	s	d		£	s	d
Cash Received	3,084	17	10	To: Rent	2,700	13	6
Imprest	400	0	0	Electricity	23	4	9
				Telephone	86	16	6
				Incidentals	2	17	0
					<hr/>		
					2,813	11	9
				Imprest refunded	400	0	0
				Cash in Hand	271	6	1
					<hr/>		
	<hr/>				£3,484	17	10
	£3,484	17	10		<hr/>		
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18.11.70

Handwritten Signature
Chief Inspector

	<u>MONTH</u>	<u>RENT</u>			<u>ELECTRICITY</u>			<u>TELEPHONE</u>			<u>INCIDENTALS</u>		
1969	NOVEMBER	54	0	0	4	11	0						
	DECEMBER	211	0	0									
1970	JANUARY	194	10	0									
	FEBRUARY	183	10	0	4	7	1	28	5	6			
	MARCH	237	10	0									
	APRIL	248	0	0									
	MAY	294	10	0	4	14	5	24	4	8			
	JUNE	229	10	0									
	JULY	244	10	0	4	15	3						
	AUGUST	171	0	9							2	17	0
	SEPTEMBER	248	10	0									
	OCTOBER	236	0	0				36	6	4			
	NOVEMBER	148	2	9	4	17	0						
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		2,700	13	6	23	4	9	86	16	6	2	17	0
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IMPREST REFUNDED: 400 0 0

GRAND TOTAL: 2,813 11 9

BALANCE IN HAND 271 6 1

£3,484 17 10
