

Special Branch

MEMORANDUM


13 March 1978

Commander 'Operations'

SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION SQUAD 1977

INTRODUCTION

1. Formed in 1968, during the height of the Anti Vietnam War demonstrations, the Special Demonstration Squad has continued since then, with increasing effectiveness, its objective of gathering intelligence among ultra left, revolutionary and anarchist organisations; in particular, it has directed its efforts towards thwarting the avowed aims of those organisations of disrupting public order in the Metropolis. With the high quality of intelligence gathered by the SDS, unavailable from other sources, it has been possible for accurate assessments to be supplied to the uniformed branch of the police, in London and elsewhere, of the number of persons likely to take part in forthcoming demonstrations and of the degree of planned or likely violence ensuing therefrom. In addition, valuable information is obtained of those subversive organisations which might provide a safe base for international terrorists carrying out their operations in this country - intelligence which is passed to the relevant sections of Special Branch in London and the Provinces and to the Security Service.



COVERAGE

2. The following organisations currently penetrated or to which access has been gained by the SDS are:

Pro Irish

A

B

Trades Union Committee Against Prevention of Terrorism Act

1

Trotskyist

Socialist Workers Party

Womens Voice

International Marxist Group

Workers League

Socialist Unity

Right to Work Campaign

National Organisation of International Socialist Students

Rank and File Movement

South Africa Solidarity Campaign

Maoist

Communist Party of England (M-L)

Progressive Cultural Association

## East London Peoples Front

## Indian Workers Movement

Indian Defence Committee

**Irish Support and Friendship Committee**

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Freedom Collective

## Anarchist Workers Association now Libertarian

**Black Aid**

## Zero Collective

**Federation of London Anarchist Groups**

### Other Groups

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3G

3H

3I

National Abortion Campaign

Anti-Fascist (infiltrated or controlled by revolutionaries)

Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

Haringey Campaign Against Racism

All Lewisham Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

Hackney Committee Against Racism and Fascism

Southwark Campaign Against Racism and Fascism

Anti Nazi League

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3.

4. Of the 'ultra-left' the Trotskyist, Socialist Workers Party, with its relatively small nucleus of committed and disciplined members, has emerged with an image in the eyes of the uninformed public as the main and best known group in the field of public disorder through its willingness to take up any platform i.e. hotel

and hospital closures, anti-abortion and industrial disputes and anti-Fascist activity, and to have the ability to attract and commit to the streets large numbers of 'rent-a-mob' demonstrators; whilst the Trotskyist movement has overtly united in their opposition to the above issues and in particular to Fascism the schisms remain as deep as ever with the IMG and SWP competing to be given the credit for attracting the uncommitted to 'broad based' organisations such as Socialist Unity and the Anti Nazi League.

5. The main Maoist group, the CPE(M-L), secretive and numerically small but disciplined and fanatical, continues to represent a major threat to public order on any occasion that it takes to the streets in confrontation with the extreme right and the police. With this organisation's various Indian and West Indian Defence Committees the past year has seen the formation of People's Fronts committed to a policy of immediate physical 'tit-for-tat' retaliation to any attack on the immigrant population.

6. Anarchist activity, albeit consisting of numerous and fragmented organisations, has remained a constant source of possible eruption to violence both on demonstrations attended by its followers and in pursuance of the aims of international terrorists. The Campaign Against Repression in West Germany and Black Aid organisations, which came to prominence in the latter half of the year, are both supporters of the West German 'Baader Meinhoff Group' which has received its major support in this country from anarchist groups.

7. The organisations portrayed above are all of the type committed to non-co-operation with the authorities (i.e. the police) and to causing the maximum disorder possible at public demonstrations. Rarely will they inform police officially of their intentions and the intelligence obtained by the SDS therefore, is of paramount importance in the provision of effective public order policing, such information being passed with the necessary safeguards to 'A' Department. Chief Constables of Provincial Forces are similarly informed of numbers and intent of extremists when demonstrations are held outside London. Copies of all reports are of course passed to the Security Service and their gratitude for the value of such information this year is on record.

PERSONNEL

8. The numerical strength of the Special Demonstration Squad now stands at fifteen officers. Eleven are operational in the field (2 Sergeants and nine Constables) while supervisory and administrative duties are carried out by four officers based at CO (1 Inspector and 3 Sergeants). As the SDS is part of 'S' Squad, which co-ordinates the various Special Branch technical and support functions, further supervision is exercised by a Chief Superintendent and a Superintendent.

9. During the year under review five experienced operational officers completed their tour in the field, 4 returning to normal SB duties and one resigning voluntarily and in the office one Detective Sergeant was replaced on promotion. During 1977 two Constables passed

the Sergeants' Competitive Examination and were promoted remaining in Special Branch under the special arrangements approved by the Commissioner under the "exceptional retention" clause provided by PO 8(h) of 25.11.75. An active weekly promotion instruction class for DCs was run under difficult circumstances, by the Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeant during 1977 and eight officers sat as competitors in January of this year. Unfortunately due to operational reasons a high number of "field" officers returned to normal duties during the past year and the Squad was reduced for short periods to eight officers operational instead of the 12 on establishment. Only one operational officer is due to return to normal duties on completion of his tour during the course of the next 12 months.

SECURITY

10. The question of security of the SDS is and always has been one of paramount importance both for the personal protection of the "field" officers and to prevent any embarrassment to the Commissioner should any knowledge of its operation become public. To this end close supervision has always been exercised which incorporates daily contact with the Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeant based at CO, plus twice weekly Squad meetings by the Superintendent at one of the headquarters flats. Overall responsibility is borne by the Chief Superintendent with visits during the year having been made by Commander 'Ops', DAC(SB) and the Commissioner. Allied to this, extreme care and consideration is taken by supervisory and

field officers alike in the establishment and maintenance of correct 'cover' lives and individual addresses, with 'safe' flats provided for regular Squad meetings. Similar careful precautions are also taken during the withdrawal of officers from the field to ensure that they should not be recognised in a police context by former 'comrades' and to this end the exercise of the "exceptional retention" clause mentioned in Para 9 has proved of invaluable assistance. All these stringent security measures do of course place a considerable strain on the lives of operational officers and their families and recognition of this has always been accepted as one of the prime concerns of senior officers involved in the control of the SDS.

#### ACCOMMODATION

11. One of the two headquarters flats was changed during 1977, on normal security grounds, in order to avoid any formation of local suspicion and three individual "cover" flats have been changed for operational reasons. The problem of obtaining unfurnished rented accommodation in London remains as difficult as ever and it is only through a long standing and well maintained contact with one large firm of agents that the SDS has retained the facility to obtain securely, quickly and cheaply alternative "headquarters" flats in large, anonymous blocks; should the law on the Rent Act change owners of flats will of course be able to rent at a far higher rate and whilst it is hoped the facility to obtain such property will remain, the cost of course must increase. The problem of suitable,



cheap, furnished accommodation meeting the various security requirements for "cover" flats remains a perennial one of shortage and increasing costs in the areas of London where such property is required.

TRANSPORT

12. The provision of second-hand cars and vans for the use of SDS officers remains a most important asset both financially and operationally and without the willing co-operation and unstinting assistance of those in 'B', 'G' and 'T' Departments the availability and maintenance of this fleet would be severely curtailed. A full report on SDS transport has been submitted separately on TR 14/73/10.

13. FINANCE

Expenditure for the period 1.1.1977 to 31.3.1977.		Final expenditure A/C for the year 1.4.1976 to 31.3.1977.
Rent	£2090.87	£5867.81 (including £28 rebate)
Gas & Electricity	33.47	223.94
Telephone	142.92	432.96
Rates	26.09	779.98
Operational Expenses	288.29	1078.08
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TOTAL	£2581.64	£8382.77


Expenditure for the first nine months of the current financial year was as follows:

Rent	£5005.72
Gas & Electricity	308.17
Telephone	479.46
Rates	413.96
Operational Expenses	638.06
	<hr/>
TOTAL	£6845.37

14. At this stage, it is estimated that the expenditure for the final quarter of the financial year will be in the region of £2,500 and, if so, the total outlay for the year will be about £500 less than the approved budget of £9,800. This possible surplus would be due to the fact that, for operational reasons, the Squad had been an average of one under strength in the field throughout the year.


15. Despite strict control, the cost of running the SDS has risen significantly during the first nine months of the current financial year. The main expenditure continues to be in rent paid for 'cover' flats, which, as already mentioned, are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain, and the maintenance of headquarters flats. Once again the necessity to change one of the HQ flats incurred substantial additional costs. Furthermore, the effects of inflation on the cost of living has been responsible for the increased charges for domestic services and escalation of incidental operational expenses.

16. When these factors, together with the strong possibility of a full complement of officers in the field for the majority of the



coming year, are taken into account, it is apparent that the projected budgetary figures for next year must allow for an appreciable rise in expenditure. It is felt, however, that the necessary increase can be restricted to £1,400 over last year's grant and authorisation is therefore sought for £11,200 as the budget for the financial year 1978/1979, an increase of just over 13% above the budget approved for the current year.


8

17. The SDS accounts for 1976/1977 were audited by   
F3 Branch, on 5.4.1977 and found correct.

REVIEW

18. Any review of public disorder during the past year must be dominated by two major events, i.e. the Grunwick dispute and the confrontation between the extreme left and right at Lewisham in August.

19. The history of the "Grunwick dispute" began in August 1976, when 80 predominantly Asian employees of Grunwick Film Processing Laboratories Ltd., Chapter Road, NW2, were dismissed after stopping work, in support of demands for higher pay and better working conditions. Supported and organised by the Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staff (APEX), the TUC and various Trades Councils, the Grunwick factory was peacefully picketed until June 1977. Following a poorly attended demonstration



in April 1977 the dispute was taken up by the "ultra left" and throughout June, July and August Trotskyist inspired violence escalated in the streets surrounding the Grunwick factory and especially at the two entrances to Grunwick's where mobs inspired by the "ultra left" attempted to prevent the employees' coaches from entering the factory.

20. The withdrawal of APEX from the dispute in September and the Trades Unions' decision not to "black" Grunwick's with postal services and public utilities began to take the steam out of the dispute although the final Mass Picket on 7.11.1977 was attended by about 8,000 persons and 111 arrests were made.

21. Throughout this dispute invaluable information was supplied by the SDS of last minute tactics and of the numbers attending and degree of violence anticipated which enabled the Uniform Branch to effectively police one of the most violent and long standing dispute for many years.

8A

"An example given"

22. This information was immediately passed to Commander A8 and the presence of a small number of uniform police at this location prevented an embarrassing and effective tactic.

23. 1977 also saw the escalation of violence and street fighting on an unprecedented scale caused by confrontations between the National Front and the "ultra left" which reached its peak in London in the Lewisham street battle in August.

24. Starting in January with the annual, "extreme left"-organised Bloody Sunday Anniversary Demonstration, at which two National Front supporters were arrested following an egg throwing attack by about forty of their supporters, these events of relatively minor public disorder progressed through February and March on a retaliation basis until April 1977.

25. On 23 April 1977 the National Front held a St George's Day Rally and March in Wood Green to publicise the local authority election campaign and were opposed by a united ultra-left under the auspices of the April 23 Committee; 1,000 members of the National Front marched and were opposed by 1,500 of the revolutionary left which led to a violent confrontation, the day's violence ending with a brief picket of Wood Green Police Station by the ultra-left.

8B

On this occasion [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] this was immediately passed, with the necessary safeguards, to Uniform Police at the scene and an organised attempt at violence at the commencement of this march was effectively prevented.

26. From June onwards meetings and demonstrations in Lewisham to support a group of 24 coloured persons arrested for theft and

conspiracy to steal were held by the extreme left "Lewisham 24 Defence Committee". All these gatherings were opposed by the National Front which led to disorder and some violent clashes and set the scene for the afternoon of 13 August 1977 when the National Front march through Lewisham resulted in extreme public disorder and street violence. Amongst the information regarding numbers and tactics obtained from penetrated extremist groups on this occasion was the fact that an empty house at the junction of New Cross Road and Laurie Grove opposite Clifton Rise would be occupied on the night of 12 August by members of the Socialist Workers Party, armed with missiles, intent on attacking the National Front march as it passed that location; as a result this house was searched and cleared by Uniform Police on the morning of 13.8.1977 thereby preventing a planned and premeditated act of violence.

27. The months of August, September and October saw further large confrontations between the extreme left and right in Birmingham and Manchester. On 16 October in East London, 2,500 persons marched through Hackney under the auspices of the Hackney Committee Against Racism, and were harassed by members of the National Front; ten arrests were made.

28. Once again invaluable prior information regarding numbers, tactics and intent of the Trotskyist, Maoist and Anarchist groups involved in these demonstrations was obtained by the SDS and passed to the Metropolitan Uniform Branch and Provincial Forces' Special Branches.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES

29. It is forecast that the public order problem arising out of political demonstrations in 1978 will be similar to those of 1977. The oppositions in the street between extreme right and left has already started, over such minor issues as the occupation of Saturday morning paper sales pitches, and both sides are only awaiting a large national well publicised issue to commit their full forces; the attempted confrontation on 26.2.1978 during the Ilford bye-election being a good example.

30. Should a General Election materialize, this could well provide the national focus for such large scale confrontation. The National Front has already stated its intention of fielding 318 candidates whilst Trotskyist opposition both at the polls and in the streets will undoubtedly come from a variety of broad based organisations plus Socialist Unity and the Anti Nazi League.


31. The ultra-left also remains committed to infiltration of Trades Unions and will attempt to exacerbate any industrial dispute whether caused by Government policies or internal dissent, and to use such situations as propaganda platforms through the causing of large scale public disorder situations.

32. Last year saw massive demonstrations in France and Germany against the increasing use of nuclear power and its attendant activities such as the mining of 'yellowcake' ore and the disposal of nuclear waste. Protests by such anti nuclear organisations in

this country have not yet reached the state of mass public disorder but the latter half of 1977 saw some resurgence of this activity with such organisations as "Greenpeace" picketing Australia House re the shipping of ore to this country, 1,000 CND demonstrators at US Navy Base Holy Loch and 700 members of ENERGY 2000 lobbying Parliament. Whilst these activities were peaceful, it is felt that should this emotive issue catch public attention it would undoubtedly receive European support and lead to large scale demonstrations in this country, which once again would be aggravated by the ultra-left.

33. Anarchist activity remains as sinister and potentially dangerous as before with a high potential for creating disorder at demonstrations. With political kidnapping on the Continent and the suicides of Baader Meinhof members featuring in the events of the past year, the anarchist supported Campaign Against Repression in West Germany and the Black Aid organisations have emerged as a contact point with German revolutionaries and it is felt that support for and any perpetration of such violent crime in this country would come from the small and intense Anarchist cells that exist.

34. Overriding every demonstration and example of public disorder quoted above is the wish of the revolutionary parties to demolish the established order using any available tactic, foremost amongst which must remain confrontation with police, and to counteract this the SDS will remain committed to its primary objective, that of the supply of intelligence unavailable from other sources.

  
K Pryde  
Superintendent



MEMORANDUM

Chief Superintendent 'S' Squad

Special Demonstration Squad Transport

1. The Special Demonstration Squad has, for the past twelve months, operated fourteen vehicles: twelve for the use of field officers and two for supervisory purposes.
2. During this time, six vehicles were obtained: four, for officers entering the field (including one supplied by 'B' Dept.); one to replace a vehicle which proved economically unviable and one changed for security reasons.
3. As will be seen from the figures accompanying this report, there was only a small increase in running costs compared with 1976. The large increase, generally, in garage repair costs seems to have been offset by an improvement in the mechanical reliability of the Fleet. Despite an increase in Fleet mileage of approximately 15,000 miles in 1977, the rise in fuel costs was relatively low; probably due to lower petrol prices in the latter part of the year.
4. Fleet administration remains in the hands of SDS supervisory officers, assisted by [9] G.9; Inspector [10] B.10. and [11] T.6. The transfer of certain documents from B.10. to SDS, which was suggested last year, has, after agreement with Commander B.10., now taken place.
5. Attached to this memorandum is a breakdown of the running costs of the SDS Fleet for the last quarter of the financial year 1976/77 and the first three quarters of the current financial year.

[11A]

R. WALKER  
Sergeant

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CHANGES-DATES	MILEAGE	FUEL	REPAIRS	TOTAL COST
	3315	£90.30	£88.19	£178.49
	9956	£282.91	£36.77	£319.68
	1999	£148.70	£26.99	£175.69
	806	£35.90	£100.67	£136.57
	6799	£259.78	£235.95	£495.73
	8169	£309.79½	£85.93	£395.72½
	8978	£238.00	£117.07	£355.07
	16132	£636.66	£500.26	£1136.92
	8871	£322.07	£132.86	£454.93
	19720	£378.78	£750.57	£1129.35
	8168	£252.97	£280.48	£533.45
	3290	£105.91	£458.95	£564.86
	606	£26.44	£3.70	£30.14
	4568	£153.86	£58.05	£211.91
	3713	£138.16	£143.52	£281.68
	4449	£213.14	£76.22	£289.36
	1771	£72.31	£44.57	£116.88
	111310	£3665.68½	£3140.75	£6806.43½

DETAILS OF MILEAGE & RUNNING COSTS OF SDS FLEET - 1.1.77 TO 31.3.77

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12A

CHANGES-DATES	MILEAGE	FUEL	REPAIRS	TOTAL COST
	1700	£57.50	£19.60	£77.10
	2599	£72.88	£19.44	£92.32
	2935	£107.44	£31.49	£138.93
	1884	£79.98	£32.68	£112.66
	755	£25.50	-----	£25.50
	3024	£92.98	£6.23	£99.21
	5478	£216.68	£224.46	£441.14
	2146	£71.02	£81.88	£152.90
	1220	£26.13	£2.48	£28.61
	123	£2.24	£16.20	£18.44
	453	£10.78	-----	£10.78
	625	£26.53	£199.66	£226.19
	2135	£47.56	£36.08	£83.64
	1948	£65.36	£24.23	£89.59
	2902	£109.23	£8.64	£117.87
	29897	£1011.81	£703.07	£1714.88

71A

METROPOLITAN POLICE

No. 143

MEM INDUM

From Commander 'Ops'

To 19th January  
Commander 'Admin'

1978

M.P.-68-

1. It is requested that, if possible, the following officer  
be made available for posting to the S.D.S. with effect from  
[redacted] 78 :-

13

[redacted]

*[Signature]*

Commander.

A/Ch. Capt S Squad

*The transfer will be arranged.*

*Sos. 19/1/78*

14

**G.T.M. Craft**  
*[Signature]*