



Lu Bank Trust

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CABINET OFFICE
A 2631
12 JAN 1973
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. ....

12 January 1973

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RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4)  
OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

In his letter of 18 December 1972<sup>A2631</sup> Philip Allen asked for my comments on a memorandum about subversion which Victor Rothschild had sent to the Prime Minister. How to define subversion is a perennial problem on which the memorandum makes a number of interesting points. We do not, however, interpret the Charter in a legalistic manner and I believe that in practice we define subversion more widely than Victor Rothschild supposes.

2. The definition of subversion that I favour is the one contained in paragraph 5 of SPL(72)1(Final) of 11 October 1972, i.e. "activities threatening the safety or well being of the state and intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political, industrial or violent means". I am sure it is the duty of the Security Service to investigate the activities of any group, and not only the Communist Party, whose activities are covered by this definition.

3. It is among groups of similarly minded people that subversive activities are planned. That is why we concentrate on the investigation of subversive groups and organisations. Of course we do not ignore the subversive activities (and opinions) of significant individuals. And we take care to record, as necessary, individual membership or sympathy with subversive groups.

4. At present we are very conscious that there is an area of subversive activity on which it is difficult to fasten precisely, e.g. the activities of some of the New Left groupings. We shall be doing all we can to improve our coverage in this area.

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A.W. Peterson Esq., C.B., M.V.O.,  
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5. I am sending a copy of this letter to  
✓ Burke Trend.

M. B. Hanley

SECRET