



BOX No. 500,
PARLIAMENT STREET B.O.,
LONDON, S.W.1.

25 September, 1968.

Dear Jimmy

As promised, I send you two copies of the text of the talk I intend to give tomorrow at Bramshill. I may enlarge a bit in paragraph 6 on the organisations involved, but this depends on how much subsequent speakers are going to devote to this. I shall finish by making a reference to the last two Malcolm Muggeridge programmes which showed that Muggeridge, who was at one time very close to the Communists, was totally at sea as regards this particular problem. One of the best contributions to the first of these programmes was made by the Chief Constable of Hampshire who is Chairman of tomorrow's meeting.

Yours ever

Dick.

R. Thistlethwaite.

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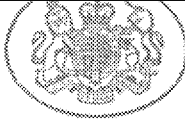
Talk to Association of Chief Police Officers
of England and Wales - 26 September 1968

Mr. Chairman,

I much appreciate the honour which has been paid me by your Association in asking me to open this day's session on the important subject of "Public Order". I think I am correct in assuming that participation in your discussions by the Security Service implies that there are certain aspects of the subject on which you wish to concentrate today. We are not for instance concerned with keeping order at football matches, even if certain fixtures in Glasgow and Liverpool have political and religious undertones. Our task is rather to deal with the problem of the violence which has been introduced into protest demonstrations during the last twelve months. Our eyes are inevitably fixed on the large demonstration planned for 27 October next, but we should not forget that other equally difficult if not equally large demonstrations involving violence have occurred in various parts of the country and that we can therefore all learn from each other.

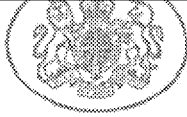
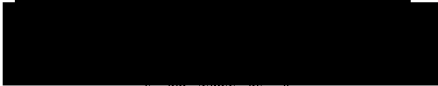
2. Mr. Chairman, this phenomenon has had something of the characteristics of foot and mouth

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disease. It has spread across the Western world and indeed into Eastern Europe with remarkable speed, assisted, but not caused, by mass communications, notably television. Somehow one has to try to separate the virus, but this is far from easy because the characteristics are much less common than is supposed. Let us take the students who are such an important factor in the situation but by no means the only factor. It is said that they revolt in America because they are becoming cogs in the "knowledge factories" constituted by the enormous lecture halls of Berkeley University in California. But in Berlin they revolt because they wish to break out of small seminars. There is a revolt at Columbia University, New York, as at Essex University, as a result of too much "permissive education", but in Hamburg and Frankfurt the attack is against the authoritarian nature of the German educational system. In Italy the complaint is that professors do not teach whereas in Germany professors who teach are forced by their students to resign. Overcrowded lecture halls in Paris and Rome cause riots but these occur in the ample accommodation of Columbia. Essex is palatial compared with the London School of Economics but disturbances have occurred at each.



3. I think we must look deeper for our virus than at bricks and mortar and the deficiencies of certain institutions, important factors though these may be. Insofar as there is a philosophy behind the present wave of political violence it may be said to have been formulated by the German-American neo-Marxist Herbert Marcuse, but it is four years since his principal work "One Dimensional Man" first appeared in this country and the thinking behind it has only just "taken on", more often than not subconsciously.

4. Broadly what it comes down to is this. Modern industrial society is oppressive. The workman cannot see the end-product of his hands. If the product is a Ford car it goes to some buyer whose next-door neighbour then wants a Ford car. But in order to keep production going Ford cars have to be thrown on the scrap heap and so the consumer has to be made to want a new design. This goes on ad infinitum so that everybody, the worker and the boss included, is a slave to the established system. Things are marginally better in Communist countries where the State owns the means of production but fundamentally the position is the same under Communism and Capitalism.



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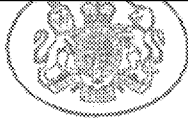


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The only way to break out is to smash the system. But those enmeshed in it cannot do so. Therefore it is for the outcasts of society, the unemployed and the negroes, led by the students who are not yet in the system but can understand it, to do the job for us, the prisoners of the Establishment. It is no matter that we cannot foresee what will happen afterwards. Pragmatic reform of the universities or any other institutions is only tinkering. The first priority is to destroy society.

5. This is of course anarchism in Marxist dress, but just as it has proved foolish for people to underestimate Marx it would be wrong to scorn the emotional appeal of Marcuse's thinking, however arid his style. One almost reactionary colleague of mine recently commented "if this means destroying Detroit, count me in". I know of one highly respectable elderly Frenchwoman from an eminently bourgeois neighbourhood, who nightly went to the barricades last May and tried to persuade a friend to do the same because "it takes years off your life to throw a paving-stone at a policeman".

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6. All of which brings me to the way in which this doctrine is put into practice. As it is fundamentally anarchist it is difficult to get its adherents to adhere. Hence the device of an ad hoc Committee operating under some umbrella organisation like the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign (V.S.C.) which cares and knows little about Vietnam but is anti-American. How illogical this position can be was shown recently when Tariq Ali led the V.S.C., which supports North Vietnam, in a demonstration outside the Soviet Embassy against the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia when one of the few Communist countries which supported that invasion was North Vietnam.

7. The tactics are familiar. Provoke the Police as the symbol of repression. On the Continent this has been done by provoking the University authorities to invite the Police to intervene which in turn has led to an escalation of violence. The next step is occupation of university buildings or of other buildings of repressive significance as well as the streets, either by sit-downs or the building of barricades.

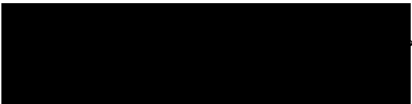
8. All this happened in May in France, and when the Communist Party, beaten to the post by its



rivals on the Left whom it had originally attacked, organised sit-in strikes in the factories the Regime almost collapsed. I was there at the time and discussed this May revolution, as it is now called, only last week with one of my opposite numbers who having done his own post-mortem considers that the main factor in the explosion was surprise.

9. This factor of course no longer obtains in France, although they are not out of the wood yet, and I like to think it has never obtained in this country where our joint efforts at penetrating and assessing Trotakyist and Anarchist groups just - and I emphasise the word just - paid off in enabling us to cope with disturbances at Cambridge, Sheffield, Grosvenor Square and elsewhere.

10. There is more to this intelligence factor than meets the eye. Good intelligence translated by Special Branches into Police language not only alerts the Uniformed Police of disturbances ahead but enables them to provide sufficient Police to protect but not excessive Police to provide the very provocation the opposition seeks. This delicate balance which we have so far been able to achieve has never even been sought on the Continent or in America.



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A foreign official

needed a great deal of convincing by me that we were taking seriously the demonstration planned for 27 October because he had read in a British newspaper that there would be 6,000 police in the streets, a number he considered to be derisory.

11. Mr. Chairman, I am in danger of speaking beyond my allotted time and I therefore now hand over to my colleague, [REDACTED], who has had the difficult task of penetrating Anarchist organisations and who is in a much better position than I am to tell you what makes their members, particularly the young ones, tick.

24 September 1968.

