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SPL(77) 1st Meeting

CABINET

INTER-DEPARTMENTAL GROUP ON SUBVERSION
IN PUBLIC LIFE

MINUTES of a Meeting held in Room 215,
Cabinet Office, on MONDAY, 11 JULY 1977,
at 3 p.m.

PRESENT

Mr. R. T. Armstrong
Home Office (In the Chair)

[Redacted]
Civil Service Department

Mr. A. S. Baker
Home Office

[Redacted]
Department of Education and
Science

[Redacted]
Scottish Office

[Redacted]
Department of Employment

Sir Michael Hanley
Security Service

Deputy Assistant Commissioner
R. P. Bryan

Mr. J. S. Elliott
Cabinet Office

THE FOLLOWING WERE ALSO PRESENT

Mr. R. Andrew
Home Office

Mr. R. W. Whitney
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

[Redacted]
Security Service

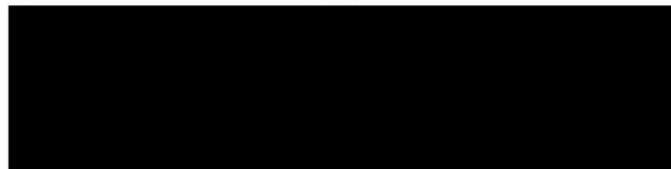
[Redacted]
Security Service

SECRETARIAT

Mr. H. Doyne-Ditmas
[Redacted]

Subject

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION TO THE
UNITED KINGDOM.



[REDACTED]

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. The Group had before it SPL(77)1, a report by the Security Service on this subject.
 2. THE CHAIRMAN, summing up a general discussion, said that the report represented the result of a request for an up-dating paper made to the Security Service at the last meeting of the Group. The Security Service were to be congratulated on the thoroughness of the paper which, as before, highlighted the importance of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in a subversive context and brought out the significance of its international links, especially those with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).
 3. As on the previous occasion it would be appropriate for a report to be made to the Subversion Home (SH) Committee. This should be in two parts: a short paper for which the summary of the present paper would serve as a basis and which the Security Service were invited to draft in the light of the comments made in discussion; and a covering note, taking up the points made in discussion, which the Secretariat were instructed to prepare. It was hoped that these documents could be cleared out of Committee and it was the intention that these papers should be available to SH early in September.
 4. A further up-dating paper covering similar ground to
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

the one before the Group would be required in about a year's time.

The Group -

Took note, with approval, of the Chairman's summing up.

5. The Group then turned to individual sections of the report. THE CHAIRMAN summed up a discussion of these as follows:-

Communist Subversion (paragraphs 5-20). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Trotskyist Subversion (paragraphs 21-26). Since the paper was written the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) had come into more prominence, especially on account of its activities in the Grunwick dispute. It was for consideration whether the paper for SH should make specific mention of this organisation. It was noted that there were a number of wealthy people in the entertainment world who gave financial support to the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). An offer from the Security Service to circulate for information a note on the nature of Trotskyism with particular reference to the United Kingdom was accepted.

The Extreme Right and Racial Issues (paragraphs 27-32).

In seeking to exacerbate racial tensions the National Front (NF) had the advantage that its members are of the same race; Left-wing subversive groups found their attempts to manipulate groups of coloured racial extremists were often resented. While the paper highlighted NF electoral successes in the East End of London, it had also been successful in Lancashire and the Midlands and indeed wherever there is a large coloured population. Racial tension leading to public order problems was likely to continue; disturbances were likely in connection with the Islington 18 and the Nottingham Gate Carnival.

The Public Service (paragraphs 33-36). This section

of the paper was by way of being a progress report. Information necessary to the Security Service in order for them to be able to assess the threat in this area was being provided by Departments, but Departments had to be circumspect, and this took time. While the figures quoted for subversives, and for those with access, might appear to show that the problem of subversion in the Public Service was not serious, the situation was complex and the existence of concentrations in certain areas gave cause for concern. The Security Service would continue with their investigation with the object of reporting comprehensively with an assessment of the threat in about six months' time.

Education (paragraphs 37-40). As with the section on the Public Service, this was a progress report, though the situation here was probably more complicated. While student interest in politics (extreme or otherwise) was less than in the 30s or the 60s, this lack of interest aided activists within political organisations. In the autumn subversive elements might be

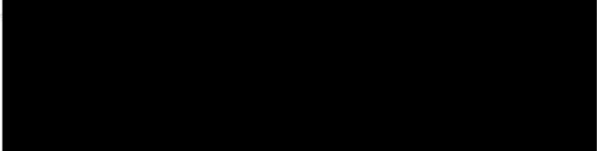
[REDACTED]

expected to exploit increased opposition among teaching unions to 'education cuts'. The Security Service would continue their investigations into subversion in educational establishments with the aid of [REDACTED], although the information which the latter could provide was of necessity sporadic. The Security Service would aim to produce a paper setting out interim conclusions for the Group to consider in about six months' time.

The Media (paragraphs 41-44). [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Political Terrorism (paragraphs 45-55). It was agreed that this section was a useful summary of the current situation.



6. Summing up this part of the discussion, THE CHAIRMAN observed that notes on Trotskyism and developments in the CPGH had been offered and that papers on subversion in the Public Service and in education had been commissioned. After circulation of the papers a meeting would be desirable.

The Group -

Took note, with approval, of the Chairman's summing up.

Cabinet Office

5 August, 1977.