

THE THREAT OF SUBVERSION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

Report by the Interdepartmental Group on Subversion
in Public LifeINTRODUCTION

The Interdepartmental Group on Subversion in Public Life (SPL) met on 11 July 1977 to review the threat of subversion to the United Kingdom. It based its review on a paper produced by the Security Service up-dating the report considered by the Group at their meeting in November 1976 and providing fuller material, as requested at that meeting, on the financing of subversive organisations and their links with their counterparts abroad.

THE SURVEY

2. The report before the Group has been summarised; a copy is attached. It reviews the threat presented by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) in conjunction with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the international Communist movement, and the threat presented by Trotskyist groups. It draws attention to the continuing presence of substantial subversive influences in the Labour Party.

3. The Group endorsed the paper's conclusions in general and commended it to the Subversion (Home) Committee, asking that their attention be drawn to the points set out below. The Group invited the Security Service to present another general report in a year's time. It also took up the Security Service's offer to

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produce within a shorter period (perhaps six months) separate assessments, for consideration by the Group, on subversion in the public service and in education.

COMMUNIST SUBVERSION (paragraphs 2-11 of the summary).

4. The Group noted the wider perspective on international Communist subversion as it affects the United Kingdom.

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5. The Group noted that there had been no diminution of the level of Communist and Trotskyist activities conducted within or directed towards the Labour Party (paragraphs 9, 10 and 12), and that the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party had decided not to take any action on the findings of the Underhill Report.

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6. Noting that the CPGB had been able to use its influence within the trade union movement to bolster

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opposition to the Social Contract, the Group considered that if the industrial climate were to worsen in the autumn this would give Communists and other subversive elements increased opportunities for exploitation.

THE EXTREME RIGHT AND RACIAL ISSUES (paragraphs 15-16)

7. The Group considered these two topics together and endorsed the close connections stressed in the paper between the fortunes of the National Front and the climate of race relations. Surveying the prospects for greater exploitation of racial tension by subversive groups, the Group noted that attempts by extreme Left-wing organisations to exploit such issues were often not very welcome to coloured people. The Group also recorded its anxiety about the situation in some London schools with high intakes of coloured pupils.

THE PUBLIC SERVICE (paragraph 17)

8. The Security Service is making progress in the review it is currently undertaking in co-operation with CSD into subversive influence, particularly as manifested in the activities of Civil Service unions, in individual government departments. The detailed information available to the Security Service has been passed to the Departments concerned. It was agreed that, in view of the possibility of increased militancy on the part of public service unions after the current phase of wage restraint, the

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threads of this review should be drawn together within the next six months and a report submitted by the Security Service to the Group.

EDUCATION (paragraph 18)

9. Security Service investigations in this field are still incomplete but the Service will provide, with the help of the Department of Education and Science and the Scottish Education Department, a report incorporating interim conclusions for consideration by the Group within six months. It was agreed that while political activity among students appeared to be at a low ebb, growing trade union opposition to limits on expenditure in education might provide subversive elements with increased opportunities for exploitation later in the year.

THE MEDIA (paragraph 19)

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POLITICAL TERRORISM (paragraphs 20-26)

11. The Group found the survey of the present situation provided by the Security Service valuable and noted its continuing commitment to work in this field.

RECOMMENDATION

12. The Subversion (Home) Committee is recommended to take note of this report and of the accompanying annex.

6 September, 1977.