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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

POLICING SERIOUS PUBLIC DISORDER: THE SEARCH FOR  
PRINCIPLES, POLICIES AND OPERATIONAL LESSONS

VOLUME 2 of 2 VOLUMES

by

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APPENDIX 'A'

CAUSES AND TYPES OF DISORDER

*Introduction*

The reasons why people have rioted in Great Britain(1) during the last 160 years, and, indeed, continue to do so, can be divided into eight broad categories, viz:

- (a) Protest meetings or processions where people are
  - (i) demanding economic, social or political reform, or
  - (ii) protesting against actions either proposed or taken by the United Kingdom government, or
  - (iii) protesting against the actions of a foreign regime.
- (b) Industrial disputes where
  - (i) employees are in dispute with their employer(s), or
  - (ii) some employees are working but others are on strike, or
  - (iii) employees, having gone on strike, have been permanently replaced by workers from another union, or
  - (iv) non-Trade Union labour has been used during the dispute in an attempt to keep an industry functioning or deliberately to 'break' a strike.
- (c) Political meetings or processions where one group of people are opposed by a group with contrary views.

- (d) Community disorder where a section of the community confronts the forces of law and order.
- (e) Race riots where people from one or more of the ethnic communities are confronted by a section of the indigenous population.
- (f) Religious riots where people of one religious persuasion are confronted by those of another religious persuasion.
- (g) Associated with sporting events where groups of supporters from opposing teams confront each other.
- (h) Associated with different sects where people from one sect confront those from another, or confront the police.

There have been a number of occasions when serious disorder has broken out at events which can broadly be described as meeting the criteria for each of these categories but there is insufficient space to mention them all. Therefore, only a few examples have been selected to illustrate each category.

#### (a) PROTEST MEETINGS OR PROCESSIONS

The most common form of meeting or procession has been that at which people have been (i) demanding economic, social or political reform, or (ii) protesting against actions either proposed or taken by the United Kingdom government, or (iii) protesting against the actions of a foreign regime.

##### *(i) Demonstrations for Economic, Social or Political Reform*

There are many examples where people, meeting or taking part in processions demanding economic, social or political reform, have become involved in outbreaks of serious disorder. Immediately after its formation, the Metropolitan Police were required to deal with disorderly

crowds during the demands for political reform that were paramount at that time. On 30 October 1830, there was "a pitched battle with the police at Hyde Park Corner" (2) over Parliamentary reform. The rejection of the second Reform Bill by the House of Lords in 1831, led to riots in most of the large towns in Great Britain, including Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh. In Bristol there was three days of rioting during which prisoners were set free from three prisons, toll houses were destroyed, and the bishop's palace, the Mansion House and the Customs House were burned to the ground along with many other public buildings, warehouses and private houses. Unlike London none of these towns had police forces to respond to the disorder.

In May 1832, the third Reform Bill became law (3) but its effect - which increased the number of voters to one in twenty-five compared with one in fifty in a population of twenty-two million - was disappointing. The new voters came mostly from the affluent middle-classes, leaving the working classes excluded. In response, moderate radicals formed the National Political Union of the Working Classes with the intention of pursuing parliamentary reform through peaceful legitimate means. But, as often happens, their meetings were soon hi-jacked by a relatively small group of people on "the extreme left of the political spectrum". (4) Known as the Ultra Radicals, their main aim was the overthrow of the existing government and they embarked on a policy of deliberate confrontation with the police.

"Determined to bring the police to a conclusive battle", (5) the Ultra-Radicals called on all members of the National Political Union of the Working Classes to meet at Cold Bath Fields on 13 May 1833, under the pretence of adopting 'preparatory Measures for holding a National Convention' which, it was suggested, was 'The only means of Obtaining and Securing the Rights of The People'. The meeting was declared illegal by the government. Disorder broke out when the police moved in to disperse the meeting and, in the ensuing confrontation, Police Constable Culley was stabbed to death.

Rising unemployment, a series of bad harvests and the demand for political reform became a trigger for many outbreaks of violence between 1839 and 1848, a period which is often described as the Age of the Chartists. Indeed, Mather describes it "as an era of unusual turbulence". (6) A National Petition, calling for universal suffrage and other reforms, which became known as the Peoples' Charter, (7) was presented to Parliament in July 1839 but the House of Commons declined to consider it. During the following month there were riots in Bolton, Manchester, Macclesfield and Hindley. In Birmingham, where the Chartists had called a 'National Convention', a small body of Metropolitan Police officers, sent to the city because of anticipated disorder, were totally overwhelmed, on two occasions, by large crowds and were only saved by the timely arrival of the military.

In 1866, there were renewed demands for electoral reform. The Reform League, set up two years previously and firmly committed to manhood suffrage and the ballot, as opposed to household suffrage advocated by many Advanced Liberals at the time, (8) organised a public meeting for the evening of 23 July to take place in Hyde Park. Notices declaring the meeting illegal were issued by the Home Secretary, Spencer Walpole, who had just taken office. Finding the gates locked and large numbers of police deployed inside the Park when they arrived, members of the Reform League moved off to Trafalgar Square. However, a large crowd, some of whom had obviously been attracted to the scene by the prospect of a clash between the police and members of The Reform League, remained to storm the railings round the Park, overwhelming the police and 'in the general melee which ensued, there were many casualties ... among both police and public'. (9) The police were unable to disperse the crowd and Mayne was forced to send for military aid, the first occasion on which this had been done in London since the formation of the Metropolitan Police in 1829.

Unemployment was also a primary cause (10) of a number of outbreaks of disorder in London during 1887. Trafalgar Square had become a meeting place for the unemployed and, as various charitable organisations attempted to assist them by giving out meal and lodging tickets, more and more people were attracted to the locality. Socialist and Radical groups

were quick to seize upon the opportunities it gave them to propagate their respective causes and they organised a series of demonstrations which became progressively more disorderly, giving rise to an increasing number of complaints from local residents and tradesmen. As a result, a general ban was introduced on all further meetings and demonstrations in and around Trafalgar Square. This led to an outcry against the repression of free speech and, at a huge demonstration attended by between 25,000 and 40,000 people on 13th November, the police, supported by troops, clashed with protestors as they strove to enforce the ban. Many people, including policemen, were injured during the clashes and the events became known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

High unemployment during the early 1930s was again a major cause of serious public disorder in many towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom. Thousands of people took part in five National Hunger Marches organised by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM), all of which converged on London. Elsewhere, large crowds, sometimes as many as 80,000, met to protest at the lack of food and work amongst the poorer classes. Clashes between the police and protestors were numerous - for instance, in London in November 1932, over 3,000 police officers were deployed around the Houses of Parliament as the unemployed took their protest to the heart of the capital - many of these clashes were extremely violent.

*(ii) Protests against actions taken by national and local government*

Disorder under this category occurs when people are protesting against some actions, proposed or taken by either the national or local government in the United Kingdom, which is seen to be either an infringement of individual freedom or an unfair imposition on the community. An early example occurred between November 1842 and October 1843 when there were a number of disturbances in South Wales. Known as the Rebecca Riots they were triggered by the introduction of new toll-gates on turnpike roads and a substantial rise in the existing charges.

But one of the best documented of the early examples under this category occurred in 1855 when large crowds gathered in Hyde Park on four consecutive Sundays to protest about a bill, introduced by Lord Grosvenor, which would restrict the rights of people to trade on Sundays. Prior to the proposed meeting on 1 July, the Commissioner, Sir Richard Mayne, warned the London public that no meetings would be allowed to take place and neither would people be allowed to assemble in large numbers. Steps were taken to enforce this prohibition and a large force of police were deployed in Hyde Park on the Sunday. Initially they lay down on the grass and for a while merely watched the growing crowd as sections of it shouted at people driving through the Park in their carriages.

An occasional missile, normally a piece of hurdle or clod of earth, was thrown. Eventually the crowd pressed forward onto the drive itself and the officer-in-charge, Superintendent Hughes, ordered the police officers to draw their truncheons and force the crowd back. It was some time before the main body of the crowd was dispersed, and the Park was not finally cleared until mid-evening. In the meantime a section of the crowd had gone to Lord Grosvenor's house, which was nearby but were met by a body of police officers who dispersed them. There was widespread criticism of police action which was subsequently investigated by a Parliamentary Commission. (11)

A much later example occurred in 1958. The previous year, a Conservative Government had introduced a Rent Act which removed many of the restrictions on local council rents. Previously the amount local councils' could charge people who lived in local authority housing was pegged back and was well below that which could be obtained by private landlords for comparable accommodation. The new Act allowed councils to calculate a maximum rent for each of their houses or flats based on the rateable value. In St Pancras, in London, the majority of tenants suffered rent increases when the Act became operative in 1958 and there were a number of demonstrations against the new legislation, culminating in serious disorder on 21 and 22 September.

A more recent example of disorder under this category occurred during March 1990. In 1989, a Conservative Government, in an attempt to revise the rating system, under which the amount people paid towards local taxation broadly depended on the size of the property and the area in which it was located, introduced the community charge in Scotland. More commonly known as the Poll Tax, people rather than property became liable, all adults paying an equal amount in a particular area of local government. Under the new scheme, because of the number of adult occupants, many of the poorer households found themselves paying more, whilst those who lived in larger houses, and were arguably more comfortably off, paid less. Although this caused considerable resentment, and many people refused to pay, the introduction of the Poll Tax in Scotland passed off without serious disorder.

However, when it was introduced in England and Wales in 1990, the Great Britain Anti-Poll Tax Federation, which had been formed the previous year, organised a series of demonstrations in a number of towns and cities, as local councils met to decide how much people should pay. At a number of these demonstrations, predominantly in southern England, serious disorder occurred. For instance, on 6 March, protestors clashed with police in thirteen towns, including Bristol, Maidenhead, Reading and Exeter. The following day there was disorder in Southampton, Plymouth and Newbury. On 8 March, police fought running battles with protesters at Hackney in East London; the following night there was a repeat performance at Brixton in South London. But all these were local affairs. The most serious disorder occurred at a National Rally, organised by the Federation, on 31 March, when over 25,000 people converged on Trafalgar Square. Shops were looted, cars overturned and set on fire and a wide range of missiles were thrown by the protestors as police, both mounted and on foot, tried to control the violence.

### *(iii) Protests against the actions of a foreign government*

Before the Second World War, the actions taken by foreign governments were of little concern to people in the United Kingdom. However, the growth in the distribution of news, particularly via television, led to a

number of protests in the United Kingdom against the actions of foreign governments either towards their own people or towards the people of other countries.

In 1961, for instance, the Metropolitan Police arrested 30 people when disorder broke out after demonstrators had marched to the Belgian Embassy in London to protest against the death of the former Congolese Prime Minister, Mr Patrice Lumumba. In 1965, Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence was a trigger for a number of demonstrations over the following two years by people who supported black majority rule. Some of these demonstrations ended in disorder.

In April 1986, over 270 people were arrested in London as protesters, demonstrating against America's bombing of Libya, clashed with police. More recently, in January 1991, twenty officers were injured and fifty-seven people were arrested during clashes between police and demonstrators picketing Turkish businesses in London. The demonstrators were acting in sympathy with those taking part in a general strike in Turkey.

But, the most outstanding example of disorder under this category occurred in the late 1960s. By 1967, there was growing opposition, particularly amongst many young people, to American involvement in Vietnam and, in the autumn, 10,000 people demonstrated, relatively peacefully, outside the American Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London. However, a second demonstration in March 1968, involving about the same number of people, saw scenes of violence not seen on mainland Britain during the previous thirty years. In a battle which raged for just over an hour, police officers guarding the Embassy were bombarded with stones, clods of earth, coins and branches from nearby trees. Wooden poles, which initially displayed placards protesting against American involvement in Vietnam, were used as clubs as the demonstrators fought to reach the Embassy. They failed, but 13 windows in the Embassy building were broken, 243 people were arrested and 147 police officers required medical treatment.

The third of the demonstrations occurred in July 1968. Although only 3,000 people took part, Embassy windows were again broken and, after their attempts to reach the building had been thwarted, a section of the crowd rampaged down Park Lane. On this occasion 49 people were arrested and thirty-nine police officers required medical treatment. On the fourth occasion, in October 1968, thousands of people marched to Trafalgar Square where a rally was held before the march continued to Hyde Park - the exact numbers varied between 30,000 estimated by the police and 100,000 estimated by the rally organisers. The potential for disorder was immense but, because the police adopted a strategy of 'passive containment' (12) there was little disorder.

The most serious disorder under this category has tended to involve predominantly United Kingdom citizens but there have been occasions where political refugees from a country have staged a protest which has resulted in violence, particularly when they have been confronted by supporters of the existing regime. The most notable examples of this have involved the citizens of Iran, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the Shah's overthrow in January 1979, and also those of Libya. In 1985, a woman police officer was shot dead by a gunman inside the Libyan People's Bureau as opponents of Colonel Ghaddafi demonstrated outside.

#### (b) INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

##### (i) *Employees in dispute with their employer*

Industrial unrest invariably involves a dispute between employees and their employers over pay, working practices, working conditions or the fear of lost jobs. An early example of this as a cause of disorder occurred early in the summer of 1842 when workers in a number of industries, particularly in the Midlands and the North, went on strike for higher wages. (13) The strike spread rapidly, accompanied by various outbreaks of disorder. At most of the meetings, the strikers expressed their determination to remain on strike until the People's Charter became law. The Chartist Executive eventually declared their support for the strikers,

but "the government launched a series of prosecutions against the Chartist and trade union leaders, and the outbreak was brought to an end." (14)

Whilst the Great Dock Strike of 1889 was significant for its lack of violence and disorder, it should not go unmentioned, partly because it is regarded as one of the labour movement's most famous victories, and partly because the co-operation between strike leaders and the police was a lesson that has, to a large extent, gone unheeded in recent industrial disputes.

The conditions in which many dockers lived at the time were appalling and their demands for increased wages and better working conditions were modest. Relief funds were distributed to the strikers and their families with great efficiency, and the peaceful protest marches to the City generated a great deal of public sympathy for the dockers. The dock owners, however, would not compromise and the dispute became bitter and protracted. On the point of defeat by starvation, the strikers were saved when fellow workers in Australia sent, what was, in those days, a substantial sum of money. In London, Cardinal Manning, speaking for the strikers, many of whom were Irish and Catholic, touched the middle-class conscience and assisted the strike leaders in negotiating the terms of a settlement. The victory achieved by the dock workers helped many other groups to secure increased wages and better conditions and was a key factor in the development of the modern trade union movement.

The miners' strike in Yorkshire four years later contrasted vividly with the Great Dock Strike. In September 1893, troops were called out in Yorkshire to assist the local police during a coal strike after miners had been locked out. The most serious incident occurred at Ackton Colliery just outside Featherstone, when troops shot dead two people during a demonstration by a group of striking miners and their supporters.

In the four years preceding the outbreak of the First World War, in 1914, there were a series of industrial disputes, a number of which culminated in violence. Troops were deployed to assist the police during the South Wales Coal Strike of 1910 and the early part of 1911. This was followed by a strike of seaman in June 1911 and the first national rail

strike in August. The following year, the first national coal strike lasted for just over five weeks.

Called by the Trades Union Council in support of the miners, the first general strike in British history began on 4th May 1926 and lasted for nine days. The strike was triggered four days earlier when miners, having refused to accept a return to their 1921 minimum wage structure, which would have been equivalent to an average wage cut of about 13 per cent, and an increase in the working day from seven to eight hours, were locked-out by their employers. Whilst the strike is noted generally for a lack of violent confrontation between strikers and the forces of law and order - troops were deployed as a precautionary measure in South Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland - there were many localised clashes between strikers and police. By 12 May it was clear that support for the strike was crumbling and the TUC had little option but to call it off, leaving the miners to continue their battle on their own.

Along with the dock strike of 1889 and the General Strike of 1926, the miners' strike of 1972 has a place in British trade union history. At the time, "it was, by British standards, unusually violent," (15) although it has to be said that it has been superceeded by events during the printers' strikes at Warrington in 1983 and at Wapping in 1986/1987, and during yet another strike by the miners in 1984/1985.

The strike occurred after the National Coal Board refused to meet the wage demands of the National Union of Mineworkers. Led by Arthur Scargill, although he was not at that time a national official of the union, 15,000 pickets were mobilised outside Saltley Coke Depot in Birmingham on 10 February and successfully prevented lorries from taking coke from the Depot after the Chief Constable asked the Depot Manager to close the gates. The strike was eventually settled after the miners agreed to accept the recommendations of the Wilberforce Committee, one of which was a £6 per week pay increase.

*(ii) Some employees are working but others are on strike*

Recent examples of where disorder has occurred because some employees have continued to work whilst others are on strike include the building workers strike in 1972, Grunwick in 1977 and the Miners' Strike during 1984/1985.

During the summer of 1972, building workers went on strike after being refused a wage rise and a reduction in the working week. The strike lasted for twelve weeks, but was by no means, solid, and flying pickets were used in an attempt to bring more and more building sites to a standstill. However, even when they did succeed, few of those working on the building site were prepared to take part in picketing; many just moved to another building site that was still operating.

For the first six weeks there was little violence, but, because expected support for the strike failed to materialise, some of the more committed strikers began to adopt more vigorous methods. Machinery was frequently damaged and threats were made to working builders that, if they failed to stop work, they would be physically attacked. The peak of the strike occurred on 6th September when eleven coaches all loaded with flying pickets descended on Telford and Shrewsbury. Eleven building workers who had chosen to continue working were injured and damage, amounting to £3,000, was caused at five sites.

In 1977, at Grunwick, a mail-order photographic laboratory in north-west London, a small group of Asian workers demanded the right to join a Trade Union and for that Union to be recognised by management. When this was refused they went on strike but the majority of the workforce continued to work. Thousands of people came from all over Britain to demonstrate their support and attempts were made to blockade the entrances to the laboratory to prevent those who were continuing to work from gaining entry. As a consequence, there were a number of violent clashes between the police and the demonstrators.

During the Miners' Dispute in 1984/85, which was triggered by the threatened closure of pits by the National Coal Board, although the National Union of Mineworkers were already in dispute with their employers over wages, most Nottinghamshire miners worked almost continuously throughout the strike, despite vigorous attempts to stop them by miners from elsewhere. In Derbyshire too, many of the miners stayed at work. Although much of the picketing in these areas was carried out peacefully there were, nevertheless, numerous clashes between striking miners and the police as the latter strove to keep coke depots open and protect those miners wanting to work. Towards the end of the strike a few miners started to drift back to work in those areas in which there had generally been one-hundred percent support, most notably in Yorkshire, South Wales, the North East and Scotland. As a result the disorder spread over a wider area.

*(iii) Permanent replacement of employees by workers from another union*

On occasions employers have replaced their employees with workers from another Union. A recent example of this as a cause of disorder occurred during the mid-1980s. In October 1985, the owner of News International, Rupert Murdoch, told the two print unions, the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades 1982 (SOGAT '82) and the National Graphical Association (NGA) that overmanning and disruption at the company's two London plants threatened the survival of the entire organisation. He therefore told them of the proposed move to new premises at Wapping and gave the unions until the end of the year to present their proposals for satisfactory working arrangements.

On 1 January 1986, the unions demanded that their members should be guaranteed jobs for life and that there should be a cost of living indexation in future pay negotiations; the demands were promptly rejected by News International who gave the unions notice that collective agreements with workers would be terminated in six months time. The unions promptly held a ballot of their members for industrial action after which they announced plans for an immediate strike on 24 January; News International

responded by deeming that, in taking such action, all the print workers had dismissed themselves.

In the meantime, the journalists, all members of the National Institute of Journalists, moved to the new premises at Wapping, and together with members of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AEUW), with whom News International had made a no strike agreement, the company were able to start printing their four main newspapers on 26 January.

During the following year, members of SOGAT '82 and the NGA, supported sometimes by members of other Trade Unions and invariably by members of left-wing groups such as Class War, the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers Revolutionary Party, demonstrated regularly outside News International's Plant at Wapping. There were numerous clashes with police as the demonstrators tried to prevent the distribution of newspapers. The year-long dispute culminated in violent clashes between police and demonstrators on 24 January 1987, the first anniversary of the commencement of the dispute, after which the two unions called off their support for the dispute.

#### *(iv) Use of non-Trade Union labour during an industrial dispute*

More commonly, however, employers have used non-Trade Union labour to carry out work which is normally performed by their own employees or may be undertaken by members of other unions, who, although not on strike, are sympathetic to the strikers' cause. A typical example of this occurred in 1984, during the Miners' Strike. Members of the Rail Unions refused to move coke from the Coking Plant at Orgreave to the British Steel Works at Scunthorpe. British Steel responded by arranging for it to be moved by road, using convoys of lorries driven by non-Union labour.

The decision by British Steel led to a massive increase in picketing by striking miners and their supporters, and there were some violent confrontations with the police. The events at Orgreave culminated in the attendance of about 10,000 demonstrators on 18 June, as miners' leaders,

noteably their President, Arthur Scargill, called for one last determined effort to stop the fully laden lorries from leaving the coke works, and there were violent scenes as a force of over 3,000 police officers succeeded in preventing the miners from achieving their aim.

#### (c) POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

At political demonstrations violence sometimes occurs when one group of people with a particular view is opposed by a group with a contrary view. An early example of clashes of this type occurred in 1886, a year in which there were a number of clashes between members of the Fair Trade Movement and the Social Democratic Federation.

During the mid-1880s, Britain was suffering from a recession, many people were out of work and both movements were competing for the support of the unemployed. The Fair Trade Movement blamed the recession on unfair foreign competition and called for the introduction of tarrifs to protect the United Kingdom economy. The Fair Traders, as they were more commonly known, supported the London United Workmen's Committee which organised rallies and demonstrations in the mid-eighties to publicise the plight of the unemployed. However, the Social Democratic Federation "viewed the Fair Traders as traitors to the labouring classes, bogus imposters, puppets of the capitalists." (16) The circumstances surrounding the most serious clash on 8 February 1886 are described in chapters 4 and 6.

There were numerous examples of this type of conflict during the 1930s and the 1970s. Stevenson suggests that "the history of the British Union of Fascists and its place in the politics of the 1930s is inseperable from the issue of political violence and public order in twentieth century Britain." (17) Formed in 1932 by Sir Oswald Mosley, a former Conservative Member of Parliament, the BUF focused their hatred almost exclusively on the Jews. (18) Various organisations, in particular the communists, leapt to the support of the Jews and whenever the BUF held a meeting or a march, often followed by a meeting, opposition groups would gather. Although the activities of the two groups was predominantly centred on London, there were many clashes among the rival supporters between 1932 and 1936 but the

two most serious incidents occurred in London. In 1934, at Olympia crowd of 5,000 people gathered outside the Hall to oppose the meeting, attended by 15,000, being held by the BUF inside the Hall. Just over two years later, on 4 October, 1936, BUF plans to march through the East End of London to hold rallies at four different locations, were thwarted when the police were unable to clear the route of people opposed to the fascists.

Events in the 1970s bore a remarkable resemblance to those of the 1930s. During this period various fascist groups, predominantly the National Front, who were mainly against the settlement of black people in the United Kingdom, were opposed by a variety of moderate and left-wing groups, coming together under broad umbrellas such as the Liberation Movement (at Red Lion Square in 1974), the Anti-Nazi League (at Lewisham in 1977). At Southall, in 1979, the various groups set up a committee to co-ordinate arrangements but gave it no name. The march by the National Front at Lewisham resembled the events at Cable Street in 1936 for, although the march went ahead, it was prevented from taking much of its intended route because the police were unable to clear it. And although only about 70 people attended the National Front meeting in Southall Town Hall in 1979, the events of that day outside the Town Hall resembled those outside Olympia in 1934.

#### (d) COMMUNITY DISORDER

Community disorder occurs generally when a section of the community, holding what they believe to be deeply held grievances, often relating to unemployment, bad housing, unequal opportunities and the behaviour of the local police, confront the most accessible form of authority, the police. Recent examples are the inner-city riots in a number of towns and cities in England between 1980 and 1985. The causes of community disorder are extremely complex and many people have tried to identify them with varying degrees of success. There is insufficient space here to attempt an in-depth examination of the various writings on the subject but it would be remiss if mention was not made of some of the leading arguments that have been put forward.

For instance, in summarising the views expressed in the aftermath of the 1981 inner-city riots, Benyon states -

"Many police officers, politicians and commentators claimed that the police were becoming the scapegoats for the disorders. Other opinion leaders argued that police behaviour was a central factor. Some saw police harassment as a primary cause of the riots - confrontation and provocation had led to the propensity to "hit back". Others considered that while police action triggered off the events in Brixton and Toxteth, the fundamental causes were social and economic deprivation." (19)

At first glance this is a sweeping and all-embracing statement by Benyon but it does accurately reflect the views expressed at the time and serves to highlight the difficulties experienced in precisely identifying the underlying causes. Scarman described the Brixton riots of April 1981 as "communal disturbances arising from a complex political, social and economic situation", but added that the situation was "not special to Brixton." (20) But he went on to say that "the riots were essentially an outburst of anger and resentment by young black people against the police" (21) and "the violence erupted from the spontaneous reactions of the crowds to what they believed to be police harassment." (22)

Broad support for this view comes from two other sources. In their submission to the Scarman Inquiry into the rioting in Brixton in 1981, the Commission for Racial Equality suggested there were three main ingredients leading up to the outbreak of those disorders. They were firstly, poor police/community relations; secondly, discrimination against and attitudes directed towards the black community; and thirdly, the economic and social conditions in which the rioters lived. (23) In an article about the 1981 riots, Clive Unsworth is, perhaps, more specific, listing four main ingredients. Firstly, law and order, in particular the changing style and methods of policing; secondly, racial conflict; thirdly, the disaffection of working-class youth; and fourthly, the decay of the inner-cities. (24)

Writing after the publication of his report into the 1981 Brixton riots, Scarman, not unnaturally, perhaps, in the light of his comments in the report, suggested that -

"the young blacks ... who confronted the police in Brixton ... saw themselves as the victims specifically of police harassment on the streets and more generally, of social and economic deprivation and frustration."

However, he did point out that whilst the police, as a force, were "in no way responsible for their social and economic disadvantage" they contributed "to the spirit of disquiet which was one of the reasons for the disorders" because "their refusal or inability to adjust their methods to the social conditions" with which the young blacks were faced "angered and alienated them". (25) A similar view was expressed by former Chief Constable John Alderson. Pointing out that whilst the riots were "fuelled in adverse social conditions" they were "triggered by police practice". (26) Gregory, too, took a similar view, suggesting that -

"the factors identified cover racial tension and the experiences of relative deprivation due to unemployment and poor living conditions, all of which can be more generally described as associated with the 'inner city problem' found in many major industrial societies."

Continuing, he suggested that whilst the casual factors are not a police responsibility but "a responsibility for the whole country and, particularly the government on power", there did appear to be a consensus (albeit somewhat hesitant from some police officers) that the police themselves "were a contributing factor" to the disorders. (27)

Community disorder during the 1980s was invariably triggered by some action taken by the police. For instance, in 1980, in Bristol, it was a police raid on a cafe frequented by members of the Afro-Caribbean community. In Brixton and Tottenham, in 1985, it was police raids on the houses of two black women; in the first case the woman was shot and seriously injured by a police officer who was part of a squad seeking her son who was wanted for questioning in connection with a robbery, whilst in

the latter case, the woman collapsed and died whilst police officers searched her home for stolen property.

The action does not always involve the police in their role as law enforcers. Although the major Brixton riot on 11 April 1981 was triggered when two police officers stopped and searched a man whom they suspected of carrying drugs, rioting the previous day had occurred when a section of the community misunderstood the innocent actions of two police officers who were trying to assist a black youth who had been stabbed.

Lord Scarman returned to the subject in 1987 when as British Chairman of the International Year of Shelter, he told a London housing conference -

"As I discovered in Brixton, people who find themselves isolated from the mainstream of the nation's life can become first alienated from society, and ultimately hostile. I fear for the nation if a substantial number of our young people see themselves without homes, without jobs, or without at least a reasonable prospect of a home and a job." (28)

#### (e) RACE RIOTS

Race riots occur when the tension between a section of the indigenous population and one or more groups from the ethnic minorities is such that physical confrontation takes place. According to Gregory, a primary cause for riots of this kind, and those which have been described in the preceding paragraphs which come within the term 'community disorder', is reluctance of government to recognize that Britain has become a multi-racial society and their failure "to take proper cognisance or action over the consequent problems of racial ghettos, race hatred and cultural differences." (29) This country has been fortunate in having undergone relatively few 'Race Riots', as they are commonly known, such as those that took place in a number of seaports during 1919, and in Nottingham and London's Notting Hill in 1958.

The race riots of May and June 1919 started in East London and quickly spread to Newport, Liverpool, Cardiff, Tyneside and Glasgow. In all these

ports, black seamen, who had settled in these areas during the First World War were attacked by large crowds of white people. Seaman's lodging houses, in which many of the black seamen stayed, were "besieged, stormed and emptied of furniture, which was then burnt in street bonfires." (30) The most serious incident in Cardiff, two white men and an Arab were shot dead when a house was stormed by a crowd. The causes for these outbreaks of disorder were reported to be a fear by white people that they would lose their jobs to the black sailors, many of whom, having settled in Britain, were looking for on-shore work; there was also considerable resentment against them for "consorting with white women." (31)

Nearly thirty years later, encouraged by a Labour Government, an increasing number of people from the Caribbean began arriving in Britain in 1948 (32) Many of them settled, amongst other places, in Nottingham and the London area known as Notting Hill and by 1958 both had fairly large black communities.

In August 1958, racial violence erupted in Nottingham as "white crowds up to 4,000 strong swarmed around the St Ann's area near the city centre, 'nigger hunting'." (33) The conflict started after six Englishmen were stabbed by people of Afro-Caribbean descent in the centre of St Ann's on 23 August. The following Saturday night, 3,000 white people gathered in the black area and when they found the police protecting the local population, turned their anger on them. At least 17 white people were arrested, five of them being sentenced to three months imprisonment; the others were fined.

In Notting Hill, serious disorder first occurred on 30 August. There followed a further three days in which large numbers of white people gathered and the police came under attack on a number of occasions as they strove to protect the black population. Although there had been a number of minor attacks on blacks by white people in the month preceding the rioting, it is likely that the trigger incident occurred during the early hours of 24th August, when a gang of nine white youths carried out five separate attacks on black people in the space of three hours. Out of a

total of 99 people arrested during the disorders, 64 were white and 35 black.

Whilst the actual disorders in Nottingham and London bore certain similarities, the causes were different. The Times News Team suggested that, in Nottingham, "there was jealousy at the standard of living for which coloured people had to fight so hard" and "resentment at a small minority of coloured 'wide boys' who wore flashy suits and appeared to live off young prostitutes." (34) A survey, carried out by James Wickenden on behalf of the Institute of Race Relations immediately after the riots, suggested -

"It was probably the 'wide boys' who first contributed an irritating factor to the general unease by moving up to the head of the queue at the Employment Exchange in front of white unemployed. This became, as an official put it, 'a very sore point' with the white workers." (35)

It was also the 'wide boys' who carried knives and "hurled abuse at employment and assistance officials when not satisfied with the decision or post offered to them" (36)

At Notting Hill, on the other hand, the conflict "was caused mainly by housing difficulties, not employment." (37) Forced to take the lowest and worst-paid jobs but, at the same time, to pay exorbitant rents for squalid accommodation, Pilkington suggests that "the sight of black people living in overcrowded hovels was proof in the eyes of Notting Hill's white residents that West Indians were dirty and primitive." Pointing out that "racial animosities were particularly intense" in Notting Dale, Pilkington continues -

"This working-class neighbourhood maintained a primarily white population throughout the 1950s, and was renowned locally for its strong sense of community - hostile towards outsiders. By 1958, when moderate unemployment aggravated Notting Dale's economic insecurities, racial hostility had begun to be expressed through violence." (38)

As in Nottingham, there was some resentment towards black people amongst the white population, because a small group of blacks were seen to be living off the earnings of prostitutes.

The so-called inner-city riots which occurred in a number of English towns during the 1980s have often been referred to as race riots. However, in his report on the Brixton riots of April 1981, Scarman suggests that although "there was a strong racial element in the disorders ... they were not a race riot". (39) He is supported in this view by Killian, who points out that although there was "an important ethnic factor in some disturbances" Afro-Caribbean and Asian youths were invariably joined by local white youths in confrontations with the police. He continues -

"The fact that most (perhaps all) of the police who were attacked were white reflects rather the difficulty the Metropolitan Police Force has had in recruiting blacks, not that black police officers would have been immune from attack." (40)

There was, however, one outbreak of disorder in London in 1981 which could be called a 'race riot'. On 3 July, about 300 skinheads arrived in Southall to attend a concert at a public house, called the Hamborough Tavern. During their short walk along The Broadway, the main street running through Southall, they broke windows and were abusive to shopkeepers. Southall is an area where a high percentage of the population is of Asian origin and a large, hostile crowd gathered outside the Hamborough Tavern. A detachment of police officers were quickly deployed between the public house and the crowd. Describing what followed as "a major battle", (41) Kettle suggested that "the cause was clearly racial" (42) originating as it did, as a potential clash between Asians and skinheads.

#### (f) RELIGIOUS RIOTS

During modern times, i.e. since 1829, mainland Britain has been remarkably free from serious disorder arising from religious quarrels. Perhaps the only major outbreak of violence which could be said to have had

a religious background, although even that is debatable, was the Garabaldi riots which occurred between 1862 and 1864. So-called after an Italian political figure who was preaching secularism and republicanism in Europe, the riots brought English workingmen, who professed to support this view, into conflict with Irish workingmen, who tended to be papist and monarchist.

The first outbreak of serious disorder took the police completely by surprise. On 28 September, at a meeting, in Hyde Park, called by those who supported secularism and republicanism and attended by between 10,000 and 20,000 people, the principal speaker, Charles Bradlaugh, was initially prevented from speaking when a mob of Irish men and women, armed with sticks and rocks, attacked the Garibaldians and 'captured' the mound from which Bradlaugh intended to speak. Supported by a group of Grenadier Guardsmen, armed with walking sticks, the Garibaldians re-took the mound, forcing the Irish men and women to flee, and the meeting resumed. But the Irish re-grouped and later that afternoon the Garibaldians were attacked by an even larger force, this time swinging clubs. Again the Irish took control of the mound. They were still in occupation when torrential rain drove everyone from the Park. A repeat performance occurred the following Sunday, 5 October, when the Garibaldians received even more support from soldiers, including contingents from the Coldstreams, Life Guards and Buffs as well as the Grenadiers. On this occasion, although there was a greatly increased police presence, they did little to stop the fighting in the Park because both they and the Government were looking for reasons to ban all park meetings in the future.

As a result of the events on 5 October, the meeting due on 12th October was banned by the Office of Works and the Home Office; over a thousand police officers were deployed to prevent speeches within the Park and to turn back people who were approaching it. Military pickets stood at all entrances to the Park turning back soldiers in uniform.

Prevented from meeting in Hyde Park, confrontations between the English and Irish working-classes occurred in other areas of London, predominantly, as one would expect, in those areas where there was a

substantial Irish population; disorder also occurred in other towns, notably Birkenhead. These sporadic outbreaks of disorder occurred through 1863 and into the first part of 1864. In April, Garabaldi himself was widely acclaimed when he arrived in London and although he was due to speak in a number of towns throughout England, ill-health forced him to leave before any of these engagements were undertaken.

(g) ASSOCIATED WITH SPORTING EVENTS

At sporting events, particularly those associated with football, gangs of supporters from opposing teams become embroiled in taunting each other and, if it is allowed to, this develops into physical confrontation and violence. Incidents such as these have been a regular feature of the English football scene for the last twenty years but, for reasons which have already been mentioned in the introduction to this paper, this form of disorder has not been discussed.

(h) ASSOCIATED WITH SECTS

Clashes between rival groups of people who belong to different sects(43) has been a feature of British society since the end of the Second World War. For instance, during the late 1940s, gangs of Teddy Boys, so-called because of their Edwardian-style dress, were often in conflict with other more conventionally dressed groups; during the late 1950s and early 1960s, clashes between mods and rockers at many seaside towns became a regularly occurrence during the spring and summer bank-holiday week-ends. In 1964, police in London were on standby at an airfield ready to be flown to seaside towns to assist the local police in quelling disorder caused by these groups. Such clashes diminished in size and frequency towards the end of the 1960s, but the Chief Inspector of Constabulary reported in 1980 that "there was a resurgence of disorder by 'mods' and 'rockers' at seaside resorts during the bank holidays, particular over the Easter week-end when a total of about 600 arrests were made at 7 of the leading resorts."(44)

But serious disorder under this category is not confined to occasions when rival sects clash. There have also been occasions when a meeting of

one sect has ended in disorder. For instance, in November 1989, police in Western-super-Mare had to call for re-inforcements from five towns when 300 people attending the Enduro motor-cycle rally, rioted for two hours. (45)

More recently, some attempts by the police to stop the growing practice of Acid House Parties have ended in violent confrontation between the police and either the organisers, or those attending the party, or both. These unlicensed parties, often held in disused premises without the permission of the owner, have, as the name implies, become synonymous with drugs. Examples under this category are many and there is space to mention only four, selected to show that it is a country-wide problem. For instance, in October 1989, police withdrew from the scene of an Acid House Party in Woodhatch, Surrey, when sixteen officers were injured after being attacked with baseball bats, CS gas and dogs by so-called security guards, hired by the organisers to keep order. (46)

In April 1990, it took police officers, some with riot equipment, three hours to restore order after they were attacked by a crowd of 400 people, using bricks, iron bars and wooden stakes, who had gone on the rampage when the police tried to prevent such a party in Kettering, Northamptonshire. (47) In August, at Carlisle, in Cumbria, 200 youths went on the rampage, looting nearby shops and causing more than £20,000 of damage as they smashed shop, office and car windows, after 50 police officers had raided a party being held in a disused power station. (48) Two weeks later, 2,000 youths clashed with police as they tried to attend a party in Bournemouth, Dorset. Shops were damaged as bottles and cans were thrown at the police. (49)

#### *Notes and References*

1. Northern Ireland is deliberately excluded because the Royal Ulster Constabulary is an armed force which has, for the last twenty years, been fighting terrorism on a scale which does not exist on the British mainland.
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3. Representation of the People Act, 1832.
4. Stead, Philip John. The Police of Britain. Macmillan, New York, 1985, p.44.
5. Ibid, p.45.
6. Mather, F.C. Public Order in the Age of the Chartists. Greenwood Press, Westport, Connecticut, 1984, p.1.
7. The People's Charter called for the granting of manhood suffrage, voting by ballot paper, payment of members of Parliament, abolition of property qualifications for membership, equal electoral districts and annually elected parliaments.
8. Although firmly committed to manhood suffrage, the Reform League had "no real intention of seeking the enfranchisement of casual labourers." See Wright, D.W. Popular Radicalism: The Working-Class Experience 1780-1880. Longman, London, 1988, p.159.
9. Keaton G.W. Keeping the Peace. Barry Rose, Chichester, 1975, pp 144-145.
10. Although the most serious violence occurred as a result of action taken by the Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren with the approval of the Home Secretary - see The Conquest of Violence: Order and Liberty in Britain by T.A. Critchley (Constable & Co, London, 1970) pp 153-154.
11. The criticisms are discussed in chapters 4 and 7.
12. See chapter 6 for a description of 'passive containment' in this instance.
13. They also wanted the removal of certain economic abuses, e.g. truck payments. See Mather, op cit. 6, p.10.
14. Mather, op. cit. 6, p.10.
15. Clutterbuck, Richard. Britain in Agony: The Growth of Political Violence. Faber & Faber, London, 1978, p. 55.
16. Tichter, Donald C. Riotous Victorians. Ohio University Press, 1981, p.103.
17. Stevenson, John. The BUF, the Metropolitan Police and Public Order. In British Facism (Eds: Kenneth Lunn & Richard C. Thurlow). Croom Helm Ltd, London, 1980, p.135.
18. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police reported that "by 1936 Fascist speakers in the East End of London were openly vilifying the Jews" and pointed out that this inevitably provoked "racial animosity". Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis for the Year 1936. Cmd 5457. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1937, p. 26. For this reason it could be argued that the

conflict between the Facists and Anti-Facists of this period should be placed under the category of 'Race Riots' rather than Political Demonstrations. Nevertheless, the BUF were a political party, as were the National Front later, whose members stood in both parliamentary and local elections.

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20. Scarman, The Rt Hon The Lord. The Brixton Disorders 10-12 April 1981. Cmnd 8427. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1981, p. 45, para. 3.110(1)
21. Ibid, p. 45, para. 3.110(7)
22. Ibid, p. 45, para. 3.109.
23. Commission for Racial Equality. The Underlying Causes: Submission under Part II of Lord Scarman's Inquiry into the Brixton Disorders. Commission for Racial Equality, London, 1981, p.3 et seq.
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26. Alderson, John C. Police and the Social Order. In Police and Public Order in Europe, op. cit. 25, p.25.
27. Gregory, Frank. The British Police System - with special reference to public order problems. In Police and Public Order in Europe, op. cit. 26, p.55.
28. The Guardian, 13 May 1987.
29. Gregory, op. cit. 27, p.48.
30. White, Jerry. The summer riots of 1919. In New Society, dated 13 August 1981, p.260.
31. Ibid, p.260.
32. It is estimated that 125,000 entered the country between 1951 and 1958.
33. Pilkington, Edward. Beyond The Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots. I.B. Tauris, London, 1988, p.6.

34. Times News Team, The. The black man in search of power. Nelson, London, 1968, p.131.
35. Wickenden, James. Colour in Britain. An Institute of Race Relations survey published by Oxford University Press, 1958.
36. Times News Team, op. cit. 34, p.131.
37. Ibid, p.134.
38. Pilkington, op. cit. 33, p.8.
39. Scarman, op. cit. 20, p. 45, para. 3.110(2).
40. Killian, Lewis M. The perils of 'race' and 'racism' as variables. In New Community (Journal of the Commission for Racial Equality), Vol. IX, No. 3, Winter 1981/Spring 1982, p.378.
41. Kettle, Martin & Lucy Hodge. Uprising: The police, the people and the riots in Britain's cities. Pan Books, London, 1982, p.156.
42. Ibid, p.155.
43. The term 'sect' is used here in its widest context to mean a group of people who follow a particular way of life, e.g. mods, rockers, etc., or who regularly attend events of a similar nature, e.g. motor cycle rallies, Acid House Parties, etc.
44. Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for the Year 1980. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1981, p. 50.
45. Sun, 6 November 1989.
46. Mail, 2 October 1989.
47. Sun, 23 April 1990.
48. Sun, 13 August 1990.
49. The Guardian, 28 August 1990; Sun 26 August 1990.

## APPENDIX 'C'

### THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLIGENCE

#### *Intelligence gathering - the early years*

The gathering of information in relation to public disorder has a long history, but, as Geary points out, it is "difficult to cite specific examples", particularly "in relation to industrial disputes as these matters tend to be kept secret".(1) However, it would be wrong to talk about intelligence as a vital ingredient of successful public order policing without making some attempt to trace its history.

The importance of good intelligence in responding to likely or actual disorder was recognised by Rowan and Mayne during the early troublesome years of the modern police force. In 1831, the Commissioners arranged for officers in plain clothes to attend meetings where a breach of the peace could be anticipated, after the police had been caught ill-prepared on two occasions when large numbers of people suddenly appeared on the streets late at night.

In 1832, an instruction was sent to all Superintendents in charge of Districts that they were to arrange for men in plain clothes to attend meetings of the National Political Union and to report the details of any threatening speeches. But such arrangements were not without their dangers. In his attempts to gain as much information as possible, one of the officers employed on these duties, Sergeant Popay joined the NPU, using a false name, and became one of the leading members of the Camberwell Branch. It was subsequently alleged that he denounced both the Government and the Police at the various meetings he attended and urged members of the

Union to fight for their cause. There was a public outcry when members of the Union became aware of Popay's real identity and a Select Committee was appointed to inquire into a complaint that policemen were being employed as spies.

In their subsequent report, the Select Committee resolved, firstly, that -

"the Conduct of the Policeman Popay has been highly reprehensible, in as much as he appears to have taken an active Personal Part in the proceedings which his duty only required him to observe ..."

Secondly, the Committee suggested that there was -

"reason to apprehend that sufficient caution was not always exercised by those to whom Popay's Reports were submitted in checking the occasional diffuseness of their contents, and in warning him against having recourse to undue means for supplying them".

Thirdly, the Committee felt that the employment of police officers in plain clothes should be -

"strictly confined to detect Breaches of the Law and to prevent Breaches of the Peace, should these ends appear otherwise unattainable".

However, the Committee urged "the most cautious maintenance of those limits, and solemnly deprecates any approach to the Employment of Spies, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, as a practice most abhorrent to the feelings of the People, and most alien to the spirit of the Constitution". (2)

Of course, Britain does not have a constitution in the generally accepted sense of the word so it is difficult to know precisely what the Committee meant, but the use of plain clothes police officers to infiltrate groups and gather information about their members has remained controversial to this day.

In 1833, Commissioner Rowan described to the Committee sitting to investigate the events at Cold Bath Fields on 13th May how he had sent four or five plain clothes officers into the field as the demonstrators arrived, to take a note of the speeches and pass information back to Superintendent May, who was in overall charge on the ground. But, they also had an additional role; they were to seize the leaders of the Union as soon as the uniform officers appeared. (3)

The police continued to use plain clothes officers as their principal method of collecting information until well into the twentieth century. In London, at many meetings associated with the Chartists, the Metropolitan Police deployed only a small number of uniformed officers actually at the scene but kept a large contingent hidden in reserve. At the same time, "one or two men in plain clothes would be sent to mingle with the audience with instructions to report to a senior officer at once if there was evidence that disorder might develop". (4) In this way, suggests Critchley, "the police were able to time any intervention with nice precision". (5)

From elsewhere in the country, the Chief Constable of Manchester was able to inform the Home Office on 4 February 1840 "that the movement of the Chartists in Manchester were completely under police surveillance" and in Birmingham it was suggested that "the agents" of the Chief Constable "were sounding the depths of Birmingham Chartism". (6)

A large amount of information also found its way directly to the Home Office from a variety of sources. Regular reports were received from such people as The Lord Lieutenants in the counties, local military commanders, local postmasters, factory inspectors and public-spirited citizens, all of whom kept the Home Secretary fairly well up-to-date on "the mood and activities of the working classes". Although often reluctant to do so, press reporters too, were able to provide verbatim reports of speeches made at meetings, particularly during the period of the Chartists and these reports formed the basis of a number of criminal prosecutions. (7)

According to Critchley the gathering of information and subsequent dissemination of intelligence during the Chartist period, "was more elaborately developed than at earlier times, and more carefully controlled". Nevertheless, despite the apparent successes in monitoring Chartist activity in Manchester and Birmingham, the Home Office warned magistrates "from time to time of the dangers of employing spies" and gave "little encouragement to their use". (8)

Indeed, Critchley reports that, as the century wore on, many of the newly created police forces "were crippled by the inadequacy of their detective departments" in their response to the threat of public disorder. (9) Thurmond-Smith, too, states that intelligence gathering was "a weak aspect of the police" but suggests that this was understandable when it is recalled "that detection in the nineteenth century was rudimentary at best and depended heavily on the personal qualities of the men assigned to such duties." (10) In London, a Criminal Investigation Department, consisting of "three inspectors, nine sergeants and a body of plain-clothes men" had been set up by Sir J Graham in 1842 (11) and the value of these officers in a public order context was described by Clarkson and Richardson, writing about the events of 1887 only two years after they occurred.

During a meeting of the unemployed in Hyde Park on 18th October 1887, the word was "passed secretly amongst the bystanders that they were to separate and make their way by circuitous routes to the Temple Railway Station on the Thames Embankment, where it was intended to form a huge procession" but Clarkson and Richardson report that "intimation of this manoeuvre was ... gained by plain clothes police, and communicated to the uniform branch". (12) The uniform police were therefore able to intercept most of the small groups before they reached the Thames Embankment with the result that only about 1,000 people arrived at the rendezvous. But while this appears to have impressed Clarkson and Richardson, it did not impress Thurmond-Smith. Referring to the ability of the Metropolitan Police to discover the purpose of a particular meeting and the intentions of those who might attend, he describes the Force as often being at its "weakest in

intelligence matters", frequently depending on "perfunctory and crude sources of information." (13)

This last statement applies equally to events outside London where, six years later, during the miners' strike in the West Riding of Yorkshire during which two people were shot dead by troops at Featherstone Colliery, Critchley describes "police intelligence collection and surveillance" as being "low-level and unorganised". (14) Geary points out that, in comparison with the Chartist period, the Home Office "was hardly involved at all, receiving no communications from the strike area". (15)

#### *Special Branch and MI5*

Critchley suggests that Special Branch, which was formed in March 1883, was "intimately concerned with public order and with any who threaten to disturb the peace" from its inception (16) but this was not the case. Formed originally as the Special Irish Branch in response to a series of bombings by the Fenians, they concentrated their activities for the first twenty years or so in responding to what is generally described today as terrorism. Indeed, it was not until well into the twentieth century that Special Branch became involved in gathering information about groups likely to create the types of disorder which are referred to in this paper.

By June 1889, the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police consisted of about three hundred men. Describing how there were five chief inspectors in the Department, Clarkson and Richardson report that one of them, Mr Littlejohn, was in command "of a little body of what may be termed political police". (17) Despite this, "the political surveillance of the socialist movements" at the turn of the century still "rested with the local police and the CID". (18) In 1905, Special Branch were instructed to monitor the suffragettes but they met with little success. Although they attempted to keep surveillance on the leaders of the movement, they were handicapped, as, indeed were the uniform police, by the complete absence of women within their ranks.

Originally, the Special Branch consisted of only twelve men under the command of a Chief Inspector, but by 1914 the numbers had increased to fifty and this was increased to one hundred during the First World War. (19) In 1909, MI 5 was formed. It was and, indeed, remains principally concerned with countering espionage and domestic subversion, but, in 1923, there is evidence to suggest that it became involved in industrial intelligence operations. (20)

*The period immediately before World War I*

Compared with previous industrial disputes, the collection of information and its subsequent translation into intelligence during the coal strike in South Wales in 1910, was "both highly organised and centralised". (21) The officer in overall command of the combined police and military response, General Macready, initially arranged for two army captains, Childs and Farquhar, to set up an intelligence department in the area. In order to be certain that there would be no repeat of the incident at Featherstone Colliery in 1893, Churchill, who was then Home Secretary, arranged for a Home Office official, Mr Moylan, to be based in the strike area. During his time in South Wales, Moylan toured the area, attended meetings with both employers and strikers, and regularly sent reports back to Churchill at the Home Office. Finally, at Moylan's request, two Welsh-speaking CID officers were amongst the large number of Metropolitan Police officers sent to the strike area and, on at least one occasion they "attended a miners' meeting and recorded statements made by members of the strike committee." (22)

The success of the intelligence operation during the strike is best summed up in a memorandum from Macready to the Home Office. Pointing out that "it was not until the services of selected officers had been obtained, and they had evolved a system of intelligence similar to that used in war time, that there was any feeling of security in regard to the intentions of either managers or strikers", Macready recommended the setting up of a similar system "at the commencement of any strike". (23)

### *World War I*

At the outbreak of World War I, "the day-to-day work of keeping watch on political and industrial groups in London and the country still remained with the local police as a by-product of their public-order role." (24) But it is clear that during the war, Special Branch became "increasingly active in dealing with labour unrest", becoming a "crucial arm of central government" in the process. (25) In June 1913, Basil Thompson was appointed head of the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police, which included Special Branch. He was to play a leading role in the development of information gathering and the assessment of intelligence for the duration of the war and for the period immediately following it. In addition to Special Branch, a number of Government Ministries and Wartime Departments also set up their own Intelligence Sections. For example, in 1916, the Minister of Munitions, then Lloyd George, asked Thompson to "set up a 'directorate of intelligence' to watch and report on industrial unrest in the arms factories" (26) and twelve sergeants from the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police were drafted in to form the nucleus of the new directorate. (27) Other Ministries and departments who became involved "with various aspects of labour intelligence" included "the new Ministry of Labour and National Service, the Board of Trade, the Admiralty Shipyard Labour department and the Army Contracts department". (28)

In April 1917, government departments "in receipt of intelligence on labour unrest" were instructed by the War Cabinet, now led by Lloyd George, to pass it all to the Ministry of Labour and National Service, "where it was collated". (29) The Ministry was then responsible for preparing a weekly report "as to stoppages, disputes and settlements and labour propaganda ... together with a general appreciation of the labour situation" for the benefit of the Cabinet (30) The police, however, continued to send their reports to the Home Office. Morgan points out that the collecting of information on such a grand scale became "a powerful weapon for central government in facing up to labour during the war", (31) and, when, in 1917, munition workers went on strike, the arrest of the

leaders was made possible because the CID had a list of "the most dangerous men" and had been "accumulating" evidence against them for some time. (32)

However, there was much duplicity of effort in the gathering of information during the war. In some cases this was deliberate. Thompson describes how, unknown to one another, he sent two woman police officers to attend a meeting of the Central 'Stop the War' Committee. Both were elected onto the Committee which lead him to comment "I shall not be without information". (33) But, generally it was either as a result of inter-departmental rivalry or through sheer inefficiency. The Government eventually recognised this duplicity of effort and after the war, in May 1919, Thompson was given the title, Director of Intelligence and appointed head of Special Branch, which now became independent from the Criminal Investigation Department of the Metropolitan Police. As Geary explains -

"From this point onwards information collected by uniform police, plainclothes police, CID officers, agents of various government departments and military intelligence would be passed to and assessed by Special Branch. In addition to their co-ordinating and assessing roles Special Branch officers would themselves be engaged in operational intelligence matters." (34)

#### *The role of the military during this period*

The army, too, appeared to be "collecting intelligence in relation to industrial matters during" the war. However, Sir Basil Thompson took the view that such action could "raise a cry of military dictatorship and provoke strikes." (35) As a consequence, the collation of intelligence by the military ceased in 1916. But their absence from the field of industrial intelligence was short-lived. Indeed, Morgan suggests, that at the time of the formation of the Directorate of Intelligence, under Thompson, in 1919, the most important body "uncovering information about labour unrest was the Intelligence Organization at GHQGB". The Army High Command was against the use of soldiers as "spies", however, and the army again abandoned its industrial intelligence role. In December 1919, "the Special Branch took over all intelligence work conducted by the army into the mood of labour since the beginning of the year". (36)

*Between the wars*

The period 1917 to 1919 was a particularly busy one for the Special Branch. There were hundreds of strikes, including two by sections of the police themselves. According to Critchley, "a particularly distasteful feature" of the 1919 police strike was the involvement of Special Branch in watching and reporting on the activities of their uniformed colleagues. (37)

In the aftermath of World War I, unemployment rose sharply as many servicemen were unable to find jobs on demobilisation. By 1920 the number out of work stood at 2 million and the following year, the National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM) was formed. During the ensuing years the government accused the NUWM of being dominated by communists. Indeed, during the 1920s intelligence reports from the Directorate of Intelligence suggested there was a massive communist conspiracy to create industrial unrest throughout Britain. Thompson, and more particularly Childs, who took over as Director of Intelligence in November 1921, were obsessed, or so it seemed, with trying to prove there was a Communist plot inspired by Moscow. A typical example of this is contained in a report submitted by Thompson to the Cabinet in September 1921 -

"The organisation of the unemployed by Communists acting under Russian inspiration is still developing ... there is little doubt that the National Administrative Council of the Unemployed is a section of the International Union of Unemployed ... this union takes its orders from Soviet Russia and its object is to prepare the unemployed for the World Revolution". (38)

And yet there was little hard evidence for assumptions such as these. (39)

In January 1920 the train drivers went on strike. Strikes by dockers and tramwaymen during the following two months led the new Labour government, under Ramsay MacDonald, to consider using the Emergency Powers Act and, on 15th April, the cabinet appointed a five-man Committee on Industrial Unrest to enquire into the strikes "with a view to ascertaining whether any appreciable percentage of the unfortunate aspects of these strikes was due to Communist activity". (40) According to Andrews -



"much of the evidence considered by the committee came from intelligence supplied by the Special Branch, SIS and MI5. It included intercepted letters from British Communists, from Zinoviev and Comintern, and from the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU), minutes of the CPGB's Politburo and other party committees, and reports from informers within the Communist Party." (41)

Another significant event in 1920 was the expansion of Special Branch to enable it to "cope with the increase of work resulting from the industrial situation". (42)

The first of seven so-called hunger marches to take place during the 1920s and 1930s, organised by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement, occurred in the autumn of 1922. Setting off to march to London from a number of different locations throughout the country, "the marchers, demanding work or full maintenance at trade union rates, were widely surveilled by the police en route for the capital". (43)

During the General Strike several organisations were engaged in collecting intelligence. The army's intelligence section was increased by the transfer of "twelve 'highly trained' officers from MI5 who proved 'of great assistance during the emergency'." In some areas, soldiers in plain clothes mingled with the strikers and reported on what they were "saying and thinking". (44)

The failure of the General Strike in 1926 severely weakened the Labour movement. In the economic depression that followed, the movement concentrated increasingly on rallying the unemployed rather than on gaining better conditions and more pay for those already in work. Consequently, there was a shift in emphasis by the intelligence-gathering agencies. Bunyon argues that "the activities of the unemployed were completely legitimate political actions within the liberal-democratic system - marching, petitioning and making speeches - yet the Branch and the police infiltrated the movement, followed its leaders, attacked peaceful marches, and prepared lists of 'militants' to be arrested if the chance arose". (45)

The National Unemployed Workers' Movement, meanwhile, organised a further five national hunger marches between 1929 and 1936, as well as numerous local demonstrations. Many of these resulted in "pitched battles" between the police and the unemployed resulting in the arrest of hundreds of people. Unbeknown to his colleagues, one of the members of the national decision-making council regularly passed detailed information to Special Branch, including "circulars and maps of planned marches". (46)

The Metropolitan Police made "particularly careful preparations" for the arrival of the 1932 march. Apparently, "both the Special Branch and police informers were active at an early stage" (47) and there was "extensive infiltration" by the police into the ranks of the NUWM. (48) For instance, a Sergeant Buckell reported that on this occasion -

"the marshals will not lead the procession but will be among the rank and file. Dummy leaders will be put forward. Instructions have been received in the districts to make the march as spectacular as possible and to have as many clashes with the police as can be arranged."

The report then went on to suggest that "if the provincial numbers are large enough" London members should "concentrate on local demonstrations in order to keep as many police employed as possible in the suburbs whilst the main demonstration forces its way to the Houses of Parliament." (49)

Describing how many other reports by informers and Special Branch were sent to Scotland Yard in the weeks prior to the arrival of the march in London, Morgan states that marchers had been told "not to obey police commands that they should form up in the roadway and march four abreast" but they should walk on the pavement "so that the police would be unable to discriminate between peaceful and militant citizens". (50) Despite the increased involvement of Special Branch, there remained a heavy reliance on divisional officers to supply information as is seen from this "very urgent and confidential" memorandum sent out to local police commanders from Scotland Yard -

"To assist the Commissioner in taking any action he may consider necessary in connection with the Unemployed Demonstrations, will you please report as early as possible the names and addresses of any local or other leaders of the Communists or Unemployed against whom you possess evidence of incitement to create disturbance, or of participation in disturbances that have occurred". (51)

At the same time all national leaders of the NUWM and some prominent people who were in sympathy with their aims were placed under surveillance. The information obtained allowed "the police to be well-prepared for any eventuality". (52)

Little has been written about the gathering of information relating to the British Union of Fascists who were arguably as greater threat to public order as any group between the two World Wars. However, Bowes suggests that "the speed with which the British fascists were rounded up" during the Second Warold war "confirmed the fact that the Special Branch operated within the fascist movement". (53)

In summing up the period between the two World Wars, Geary suggests that "a centralised and co-ordinated intelligence system had been established" and was regularly "activated during industrial disputes". (54) Morgan too, sugests that "intelligence investigations into potential labour unrest, developed during and immediately after the First World War, continued as a major feature of the police response" during this period, and indeed became "increasingly sophisticated and widely used". (55)

#### *After World War II*

With the exception, perhaps, of the British Union of Fascists, there were few attempts to organise political demonstrations or industrial disputes likely to result in serious disorder during the period immediately following the Second World War. However, with the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in 1958, the various demonstrations organised by this group and the individuals who were involved came under the close scrutiny of Special Branch. By 1961, the strength of the Branch

had increased to 220 (56) to deal with the extra work this entailed. However, surveillance work outside London continued to be done by men seconded from the local Criminal Investigation Department but this was soon to change and each force now has its own Special Branch. Its size varies in accordance with the number of airports and seaports it has in its area, and the presence of dissident groups or the number of targets it may have which would be of interest to terrorist groups.

During the strike at Roberts-Arundel "plain-clothes officers mingled with pickets" (57) and during the Neap House Wharf industrial dispute Special Branch officers attended all mass meetings of dockers -

"and from these assessed the likely number attending the warves that day. Information gathered in this way was passed .... to the Police Control at Neap House, and there was constant interchange of information between the Special Branches of all Forces concerned". (58)

And, in the late 1960s, when confrontations between mods and rockers were common place at a number of seaside resorts, Waddington describes how the locations of forthcoming "battles became known amongst young people frequenting clubs and similar establishments", and police officers visiting such places were able to "tap the 'grapevine'" and "report back what they heard." As a result "officers could be mobilised accordingly and pre-emptive action" could be taken. (59)

In 1971, at the same time as a committee was set up to review the use of the military to aid the police in the event of serious and widespread civil disorder, "a working party of the Defence Scientific Advisory Committee was given the task", amongst other things, "of reviewing available intelligence-gathering" (60) but its report was never made public.

In one of his first public pronouncements after taking up his appointment as Metropolitan Police Commissioner in 1982, Sir Kenneth Newman "extolled the virtues of good intelligence", stating that it was "his intention to concentrate the intelligence effort in the inner-city trouble spots like Brixton". (61)

### *The Miner's Strike*

In all major industrial disputes, allegations are made that the police employ a wide range of techniques in gathering information; many are quite legitimate and to be expected but some, it is suggested, are illegal. The miners' dispute was no exception but, as McCabe points out, such "allegations are inherently difficult to prove or disprove". (62) Certainly, the miner's strike of 1984/1985 was an opportunity for the police to test a range of new ideas that had been put forward on the gathering and handling of information and intelligence in the aftermath of the inner-city disorders of 1981. A few forces had access to sources of information which gave the police early warnings of the targets for mass picketing; others found the secretive organisational nature of the miners, both at work and in their residential habitat, made it difficult to obtain information.

There was, however, a marked difference in the way in which police forces organised their intelligence gathering capability during the strike. In Derbyshire, for instance, whilst no doubt some information did come from the local Special Branch, officers of the Branch were not, as a matter of policy, engaged on duties connected with the strike; other police forces did use their Special Branch officers. Some police forces had dedicated intelligence units located adjacent to the Incident Control Room, whilst others managed the information within the Control Room itself. Some had a nominated officer in charge of intelligence, whilst in other cases it was just one of the many responsibilities which fell to the officer in charge of the Incident Control Room. Some forces used a data retrieval system whilst others did not.

One of the most detailed accounts of intelligence handling during the strike appeared in a report submitted by the Chief Constable of South Yorkshire, Peter Wright, to the South Yorkshire Police Committee at the conclusion of the strike. Pointing out that at the start of the strike "there were no established avenues for gathering information as to picket numbers or targets" Wright states that the collation of information in

South Yorkshire became a priority when some miners began to return to work in August 1984. He describes how -

"A Strike Intelligence Unit was set up under the control of an inspector. His duties included the receiving of information, assessing its credibility and disseminating it to operational commanders.

Emphasising that "it was solely directed to undertake a legitimate intelligence gathering role", Wright then went on to describe how the four man unit based at Police Headquarters was supplemented by "four experienced detectives" who were appointed as "field intelligence officers". The value of these officers was their ability "to identify targets of criminal intimidation" and he pointed out that the "liaison between them and the officers deputed to counter such intimidation" led to the arrest of a number of those responsible. (63)

During the Miners' Strike, units arriving in Nottinghamshire were given a Confidential Instruction which told them, amongst other things, that there would be "two plain clothes officers on duty in the vicinity of each Pit entrance" whose job it was "to gather intelligence and pass it on to the Control Room". The uniformed officers were told that if they had any intelligence at all they were to ensure "that these officers, who will make themselves known to you, are in receipt of the information". (64) In North Wales, the chief constable admitted having plain clothes men amongst the pickets to gather information. (65)

Despite this, according to Geary -

"Police intelligence on the whole was not very good. There was information that pickets were on their way from spotter cars at crossroads (sometimes violently attacked by pickets), but not so much information about where they were going." (66)

The National Reporting Centre's role in the handling of intelligence during the miner's strike was confined, in the main, to producing daily situation reports, statistical information and weekly reports on intimidation for the Home Office, and the compilation and distribution of a weekly information

bulletin to all Chief Constables in England and Wales. In addition, every three weeks, a senior member of the Centre's staff chaired a meeting of Intelligence Officers from those forces most affected by the dispute. However, the Centre did not have the resources to assess or analyse in any depth, the information being handled; that was left to the individual forces on receipt of the information.

*Public Order Intelligence Units during the miners' strike*

In a Confidential Report which was prepared for the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers after twenty-six weeks of the strike, it was suggested that "the training, provision of equipment and improvement in tactical and strategic skills" had "not been matched generally speaking by the development in the narrow yet vital field concerning the management of information and intelligence." (67) The report went on to recommend that all Forces should have a standardised dedicated Intelligence Unit, the objectives of which would be -

- (a) To assess and analyse information thereby providing intelligence to assist operational Commanders in predicting and anticipating circumstances and events that demand the deployment of resources;
- (b) To provide intelligence leading to the obtaining of evidence to support the prosecution of persons committing criminal offences. (68)

In order to achieve these objectives, the report suggested the Unit should undertake the following activities:

- (i) Receive all information relative to the National Union of Mineworkers' dispute;
- (ii) Assess the information received.
- (iii) Conduct an analysis of both operational information and logistical research;
- (iv) Validate, where possible, information received and where necessary refer matters for further enquiry;
- (v) Disseminate pertinent intelligence. (69)

Ideally, the Force Intelligence Unit should be adjacent but separate from the Force Incident Room. There should be an identifiable officer in charge, who should be directly responsible to the officer in charge of the Force Incident Room. Personnel employed in the Intelligence Unit should have the ability to handle and analyse large amounts of information. The Report suggested that if Special Branch officers were used in the Force Intelligence Unit, "there could be merit in ensuring that their activity within the Force Intelligence Unit is distinct and separate from that being undertaken within the Special Branch". (70)

In addition there should be a Central Intelligence Unit, the objectives of which should be -

- (i) the co-ordination and analysis of selective information and intelligence received from Forces;
- (ii) the identification of trends and patterns having a direct bearing on the operational deployment of resources;
- (iii) the identification of individuals engaged in organised criminal activities who transcend Force boundaries. (71)

The Central Intelligence Unit should be located within a Force mainly affected by the dispute and geographically central to the main areas of activity. The Central Intelligence Unit should be separate from the Force Intelligence Unit of the host Force.

Since the miners' strike, Central Intelligence Units have been set up on at least two occasions to monitor and assess information relating to two specific categories of disorder, football hooliganism and Acid House Parties. The National Football Intelligence Unit is based in London. The Police Acid House Intelligence Unit is based in Kent. (72)

#### *Public Order Intelligence Units generally*

The requirement for police forces, whose area of operation is threatened by serious public disorder, to have Public Order Intelligence

Units has already been mentioned in Chapter 4. So, too, have the principle objectives of such Units. The information to enable these Units to respond to the operational commander's needs comes from many sources. The principle ones are:

*a) Reports from overt police patrols*

In his book, *Policing Industrial Disputes*, Geary describes how a police superintendent told him, "Bobbies walking the streets see pickets going to a place or coming from a place and identify the fact." (73) But the debriefing of such patrols for information which may be relevant to future events, at the end of their tour of duty, has often been overlooked in periods of continuing disorder. During the miners' strike, therefore, great emphasis was placed on the need for officers to communicate all information relating to the dispute with individual Force Control Rooms. For instance, under the heading 'Intelligence', the instruction issued by the Nottinghamshire Constabulary to all incoming PSU Commanders, stated that "in order that resources can be efficiently deployed it is absolutely essential that good intelligence is passed back to the Control Room, promptly". The instruction went on to suggest that the intelligence required included the number of pickets involved, the attitude of the pickets, where they came from and details of vehicles used, before adding -

"Any other intelligence which you feel would be useful to us including whether miners are going through the pickets. If the mine is closed, the reason for it being closed". (74)

The Chief Constable of South Yorkshire reported that during the early stages of the strike, when picketing was taking place outside his police area, "static police cars were used to monitor the number of pickets and their direction of travel and the information was passed to neighbouring police forces likely to be the target of picketing". (75)

*b) Established community, trade and political organisations and their leaders*

Although established leaders can be a good source of information it needs to be recognised that in responding to disorder or the threat of it, such leaders often have little or no influence over those likely to create disorder.

In industrial disputes, this is likely to include both management and trade union officials, although in each case, there may well be difficulties. For instance, during the 1919 railway strike, Macready, by now Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police -

"took the precaution .... of sending a selected officer to each of the large railway termini to keep in close touch with the management, in order to check and verify all reports that might come in before they were passed on to the Yard". (76)

In an interview with Geary a branch secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers recalled that during the 1972 strike the police telephoned him on more than one occasion to ask him how he envisaged a particular picket or demonstration might go. (77) However, in most cases that kind of relationship did not exist during the 1984/85 strike. In South Yorkshire, for instance, "the National Union of Mineworkers" were unwilling to disclose their plans to the police" because, according to the Chief Constable, "they were intent on making the picketing of working collieries more effective by the use of the tactic of surprise". Wright also pointed out that "management had little knowledge of the picketing intentions of their workforce". (78)

Despite this, the National Coal Board, at both national and local level, were encouraged by the Department of Energy to pass all relevant information to the police. Although there was some concern about the quality and accuracy of some of the information, particularly during the early stages of the strike, it was generally of value to the police in the

formulation of their strategy and in planning their response to any particular incident.

*c) People who are recognised as leaders within a community, or a political or industrial group but who have no official standing*

Often such people have a better relationship with those likely to create disorder than do the established leaders, but, as a consequence, they are likely to be less forthcoming in providing accurate and relevant information.

*d) Media reports*

The Chief Constable of South Yorkshire suggests that during the miner's strike of 1984/85, it was necessary, at least during the early stages of the strike, "for the police to study press and media coverage ... in an attempt to perceive the intentions of the NUM leadership at national and local level". (79) For instance, it became apparent that there would be a major confrontation between police and miners at Orgreave on 18th June 1984, because, over the previous month, the President of the National Union of Mineworkers, Arthur Scargill, had taken a personal interest in picketing at the Coke depot and, on 17th June, at a huge rally in Wakefield he called for a mass picket to bring about its closure.

*e) Depending on the reasons for the anticipated disorder, people who regularly:*

- (i) Mix with an ethnic community.*
- (ii) Belong to a trade union or associate with members of a trade union.*
- (iii) Associate with or belong to a group with a particular political viewpoint.*

Such people are often known as informers and may be paid for information or give it out of a sense of public duty. However, people seldom volunteer to become informers and, in order to make this a viable source, members of

the Public Order Intelligence Unit must actively work to develop this source during periods of relative calm.

For obvious reasons it is difficult to discover the precise role police informers have played in the intelligence-gathering process, but Geary quotes the case of a man called Johnstone, who was the local secretary of the Unemployed Workers Committee Movement during the 1930s, and who regularly passed information to the police, for which he was paid. Occasionally, presumably in order to receive more money, he would make up a report, but on one occasion the police "challenged the authenticity of the information he was providing". This convinced Johnstone that at least one other person from his organisation was, in all probability, giving information to the police.(80) In describing early police activity in this area of operations, Critchley suggests that magistrates learnt "that successful policing depends on a flow of information from spies and informers" during the Luddites and Chartist periods. (81)

*f) Reports from police officers, usually operating in plain clothes, covertly patrolling the area, or infiltrating crowds, meetings or other public gatherings, or manning observation posts.*

Although Geary describes this as a "controversial method to obtain information", (82) it has been and remains one of the most common ways of obtaining information about possible outbreaks of public disorder, as will be seen from some of the examples already quoted. The purpose of attending such meetings is obvious. The police are likely to gain information as to the possible location of any further meetings, pickets or demonstrations, the number of people likely to attend, the purpose of the meeting/demonstration, and the likely mood and intentions of the crowd.

However, the employment of plain clothes officer to mingle with the crowd or to infiltrate a particular group has not been without controversy as has already been described. When the use of policemen in this way is discovered allegations that they have operated as agent provocateurs invariable follow. For instance, during the dispute at Grunwick, the Socialist Worker published pictures of a man, who was alleged to be a plain

clothes police officer who had been seen throwing bottles. (83) Later, during the same dispute, the leader of the union involved, APEX, alleged that "Union officials had photographed four men, two of whom hurled milk bottles at the coach bringing workers to the Grunwick plant in the morning". When the four were interviewed by a union official they claimed to be students "but didn't appear to know which college they were at". Grantham claimed that one of the men then ran away and "jumped into a police van", something, he pointed out, a picket would never voluntarily do. (84)

Geary claims that, in some cases, plain clothes officers are not only deployed in such circumstances to obtain information but also to make arrests and "it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that officers deployed specifically to make arrests would on occasions deliberately provoke illegal behaviour". (85) It is important, therefore, that officers who are operating in plain clothes in such circumstances are instructed to merely gather information to -

- (a) permit a more effective deployment of resources than would otherwise have been possible;
- (b) enhance the ability to predict future events to enable the necessary plans to be made; and
- (c) be in a position to counteract organised criminal behaviour.

They should not become involved in making arrests. However, if they are ultimately in possession of sufficient evidence with which to prosecute individuals for serious criminal offences, arrests can be made retrospectively, at a time which is best suited to the overall aims of the police operation.

*g) Reports from officers who have a specific, day-to-day responsibility for community affairs*

It is only fairly recently that police officers have been appointed specifically to roles which relate solely to what has become known as community affairs. Consequently there are few examples of the effective

use of such officers in preventing and/or restoring disorder. But, at Brixton, in 1985, after the shooting of Mrs Cherry Groce, Commander Marnoch instructed staff from his Community Liaison Department to visit locations within the Brixton area, in plain clothes, in order "to obtain accurate information from local sources on the mood within the community." (86)

*h) Reports from Special Branch*

Special Branch are likely to operate in a similar fashion to those already mentioned under (f), or obtain information in a similar manner to that described under (e), or obtain information from other security sources.

*i) Tapping telephones*

Despite the fact that it requires a warrant signed personally by the Home Secretary to intercept the telephone of either an individual or an organisation, this is by far the most controversial way of obtaining information. Whilst figures are sometimes given, invariably in answer to a question in the House of Commons, as to the number of telephones that have been tapped in a year, it is never disclosed whose telephones have been tapped so it is difficult to obtain any direct evidence that tapping has taken place. However, according to Geary, two senior police officers whom he interviewed during the course of writing his book, "did imply that strikers' telephones were sometimes tapped". (87) Although the evidence on which they based their views was not convincing, all but three of the union officials he interviewed were of the opinion that their telephones were tapped.

Geary does give three examples where there does appear to be some justification for suggesting that telephones were being tapped. In the first case, which occurred during the 1972 miner's strike -

"a telephone request for pickets to go to a certain location was made to the Barnsley offices of the NUM. Within a few minutes police had arrived at the scene of the alleged picket - a turnip field". (88)

In the second example, "an NUM Branch Secretary was told that his telephone had been tapped by a friend who happened to be a Post Office engineer who worked at the local exchange". (89) Finally, the ISTC South Yorkshire Strike Committee -

"in order to test whether their telephones were tapped, arranged a fictitious picket at a certain location. Within four minutes of the call pickets observed a police car and two vans full of policemen arrive at the address of the false disturbance, Granelli's Ice Cream factory." (90)

Often, however, in cases such as this the information is given to the police by an informer who is close to the centre of decision making. Not unnaturally, perhaps, strikers are reluctant to consider the possibility that there is an informer in their midst and they therefore assume that the police have received their information as a direct result of telephone tapping.

*j) By junior police officers reporting on the activities of their families and friends*

In the nineteenth century, soldiers were often billeted with the civilian population. As such they often heard snippets of information about forthcoming demonstrations and likely disorder which was immediately passed on to military intelligence officers. Such a system exists today, particularly in relation to industrial disputes, only instead of soldiers they are police officers. In an interview with a Superintendent who was involved in the policing of the 1980 Steel Strike, the Superintendent told Geary that intelligence was obtained from "bobbies who live at home." Pointing out that it is sometimes their parents or other members of their family who are on strike, the policeman will often hear things said which is of use in planning future police operations. (91)

*k) By directly questioning people who may be able to give useful information*

Information about the movement of pickets and demonstrators can be obtained from bus companies and railway officials. By establishing how many buses have been hired by the organisers of a demonstration or picket, or whether a train has been hired, the police can make a more accurate estimate of the numbers likely to be attending the demonstration or picket from that particular area. However, during the miner's strike in 1984/85, some organisers became aware of this and would order the buses for a particular journey but would change the destination once the journey had commenced. Not all coach companies agreed with this ploy, instructing their drivers to travel only to a previously agreed destination. The police "responded to these tactics by following coaches hired by the union", in some cases stopping them on some pretence before they reached their final destination so they were delayed. (92)

Sometimes, Waddington suggests, people who have been arrested "advise or warn the police about forthcoming threats to public order, from anticipated gang-fights to flying pickets." Often "this information is volunteered, not from any expectation of reward, but in the form of bragging" or in an attempt to "pose a threat to the police." (93)

*The importance of assessing the accuracy of information*

Each source should be recognised and appropriate methods should be adopted to ensure that the information from that source reaches the public order intelligence unit as quickly as possible. Information will not always be accurate, and reasonable judgment must be exercised as to the extent it can be relied on as a basis for action. For instance, in the aftermath of the riots in Brixton in April 1981, the police received information that petrol bombs and other missiles were being hoarded in selected premises in readiness for further disorder. The information was reported to have come from an impecable source and the police carried out a series of highly publicised raids on addresses in the Brixton area.

Nothing of any significance was found and the police were heavily criticised.

#### *Rumours*

During periods of heightened tension, rumours frequently circulate amongst those likely to create disorder. If allowed to spread unchecked such rumours can seriously escalate an already volatile situation. Often the trigger incident itself is the subject of much rumour and speculation. Sometimes the rumours originate in the community or group themselves; on other occasions they may originate as a result of inaccurate media reporting. Sometimes a rumour circulates as a result of an honest belief that what is being said actually happened; at other times a rumour might be deliberately started in order to increase tension to such an extent that serious disorder is inevitable.

An important function of the public order intelligence unit is to immediately check the accuracy and source of any rumour and then counteract it by giving an accurate account of what occurred to anyone likely to be able to influence what is being said within a community or group of people, or by allowing selected representatives to see for themselves that the rumour is false. For example, where a rumour is circulating that people in police custody have been beaten up, representatives should be allowed to visit police stations to see and speak to those who are being detained. Even so, it must be recognised that even if a rumour is proved false to the satisfaction of most of the community or group concerned, disorder might still occur for any one of a number of other reasons.

#### *Intelligence gathering during disorder*

Much of what has already been said relates to intelligence in anticipation of disorder but the accumulation of information as disorder develops is equally, if not more important. It is essential that all available information relating to the disorder is passed to the Gold Commander, in order that he may consider a change in his strategy, and to

the Silver Commander, to enable him to make appropriate adjustments to his tactical deployments, if necessary.

The policing of large crowds, particularly when there is a potential for disorder, is a complex activity. Quite often, because of one set of events which require their attention, police officers on the ground are not aware of other things that are going on around them. A recent development, therefore, has been the introduction of intelligence teams, used in London for the first time at the Notting Hill Carnival in 1988. The size of these teams will depend on the circumstances but at Notting Hill they consisted of a sergeant and four constables, in uniform. Their only function is "to report what is happening" and "because they are free to roam freely, they are more readily able to piece together features of the situation which would otherwise remain fragmented." (94)

Whilst it is impossible to predict with any certainty, had intelligence teams been reporting on the events at the Broadwater Farm Estate, in 1985, to Deputy Assistant Commissioner Richards, it is conceivable that he may have taken a different course of action, particularly in relation to his continued strategy of containment. (95)

#### *Conclusion*

Whilst the failure to predict disorder, or the activities of the rioters once disorder has occurred, has frequently resulted from an absence of information, it has also resulted from a failure to properly assess the information available in the system at the time. A weak public order intelligence system can have a disastrous effect on:

- (a) on the population as a whole;
- (b) on the police officers who are required to restore order once it has broken out; and,
- (c) in many cases, on those taking part in an event which, through no fault of the majority, has degenerated into violence.

Although there are occasions when it appears that a crowd, or a section of crowd, spontaneously becomes violent without any apparent leadership, such occasions are rare. The threat to public tranquility almost invariably arises from the actions and intentions of individual men and women, or small groups of men and women. It is the individual or the small group who plans to persuade others to create disorder, and it is the individual, acting singly or in a group, who creates it. It must be the aim of an intelligence organisation to identify such individuals, with a view to arresting them or at least preventing them from carrying out illegal acts against the Queen's Peace.

That having been said, in a democratic society the decision to establish a system of information gathering along the lines that have been suggested, will always be controversial (96) for it entails a large number of activities most of which come under the umbrella of police surveillance. But, police surveillance can easily become police repression without adequate safeguards. Nevertheless, democratic societies are, by their very nature, often the most vulnerable to serious public disorder. A democratic society therefore needs to protect the freedoms that exist with a system of information gathering that is properly supervised.

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