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10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

Two quite
revealing documents.

CDP
2/11/51

Very much

"FREEDOM AND THE SECURITY SERVICES"

Freedom and the Security Services is the title of a discussion document produced by the Security Services Study Group of the Home Policy Committee of the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party. As its title implies, it purports to be much concerned with "freedom", which it seeks to promote by "democratic accountability". A subsidiary concern is for the public image of the Security Services themselves which are defined as MI5, MI6, GCHQ, the Special Branch and "other agencies" such as the Defence Intelligence Staff. The last sentence of the document epitomises the Study Group's laudable intentions. "It is our belief that only by establishing clear lines of accountability will those who are charged with the difficult and sensitive task of protecting our freedom be able to enjoy greater public acceptance and respect than is now the case". Since the originators of the document have been mainly responsible for any lack of "public acceptance and respect", their motives are open to question. Indeed there are indications, amounting to evidence, that they have been much less worried by alleged threats to freedom than by what they conceive to be impediments to the creation of a socialist state by revolutionary means. As BETTY MATTHEWS, doyenne of CPGB theoreticians, told a recent conference in Prague on Lenin's "concept of hegemony in the on-going class struggle" (World Marxist Review April 1983) ". . . the state apparatus [in Britain] is used for deterring, weakening and curbing the working class, its organisations and the trade union movement. This takes the form of laws to control the trade unions and, in particular, to curb wages. Significant changes have taken place in the police and the army, aimed at strengthening the coercive apparatuses in order to cope with present and future unrest". She continued that "the objective of democratic struggle" as laid down in the CPGB's programme is to "change the structure of power relationship through the transformation of some state institutions to make them serve the power of the working class". The evidence that this is precisely what has prompted the authors of Freedom and the Security Services is threefold, viz. : -

- I. What the document says and what it fails to say.
- II. The political associations and antecedents of the Group's main witnesses.
- III. The composition of the Group itself.

I. What the document says and what it fails to say.

In the introduction to the document it is said that "There is considerable evidence that large sections of the Security Services have a fundamentally anti-socialist outlook; we are unable to accept that the Security Services as presently [meaning "now"] constituted and directed, act, as is their duty, in the interests of the nation as a whole." There is also evidence says the document that "Security Services have used information gathered, at home and abroad, to influence thinking about political issues in Britain . . . they have tried . . . to portray many of those supporting social change, in this country or abroad, as the witting or unwitting tools of the Soviet Union" and they have "exaggerated the threat of the Soviet bloc and emphasised the good intentions of the West", including of course those of their own country. The document goes on to allege that "Links have been created between the Intelligence Services and openly right-wing campaigning and research organisations" and that "there is extensive surveillance, recorded on computerised secret files, of a wide range of people, beliefs and activities extending far beyond any possible threat to our security".

"The wide range of people" to whom the document refers includes "those who are active within the labour movement, especially socialists . . . who wish by democratic means to change the status quo", "active trade unionists", "socialists and activists", "those who campaign for peace or establish and maintain personal communications with people in countries branded as potential enemies" and members "of well-known and long discredited Cold War Soviet fronts" of which, however, no examples (such as the World Peace Council?) are given. Obsessed, as all Communists are, with the fate of the Allende regime in Chile, the group fears or affects to fear that the Security Services could be used for a similar purpose in this country.

Leaving aside the question of whether there is any foundation to these charges, the document betrays the motives of its authors by failing to mention why the Security Service has had to take an interest in "those supporting social change, in this country or abroad" who may have been "witting or unwitting tools of the Soviet Union".

Any paper which had any pretensions to authority and to a genuine preoccupation with the interests of the country "as a whole" — not just, as the document later lets slip, "the national interests of British working people" (whoever they may be) — would surely have given an account of the reasons which led a Labour Government to take measures to protect the country from espionage and subversion by people and organisations whose first loyalty was to the Soviet Union and International Socialism. And here it is worth recalling the statement that the Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, made to the House of Commons on the afternoon of 16 March 1948. He said: -

"In answer to questions on the subject of the transfer or dismissal of certain Government servants, I have said that there are certain duties of such secrecy that the State is not justified in employing in connection with them anyone whose reliability is in doubt.

"Experience, both in this country and elsewhere, has shown that membership of, and other forms of continuing association with the Communist Party may involve the acceptance by the individual of a loyalty which in certain circumstances can be inimical to the State . . .

"The Government have therefore reached the conclusion that the only prudent course to adopt is to ensure that no one who is known to be a member of the Communist Party or to be associated with it in such a way as to raise legitimate doubts about his or her reliability, is employed in connection with work the nature of which is vital to the security of the State."

Just over a week later on 25 March the Prime Minister made a further statement to the House of Commons in which he said, inter alia: -

"They could not change the pattern of Communist methods all over the world. They had seen one country after another go down [Czechoslovakia had just fallen to a Communist coup. BB comment]. They had the vivid illustration of the Canadian case [the Gouzenko revelations. BB comment], in which the innocent person — in the impressive language of the report of the Russian Secret Service — was brought into the net, dragged in a little way first, until he was too hopelessly enmeshed and his loyalty undermined. They had to meet this sapping from within, and it was the duty of any Government to take action. There were not only these classes of Communists and Fascists. There were the crypto-Communists. A question was asked whether there would be a list of bands and organisations. Anyone with experience of Communist activities over the years would know the number of disguises in which Communists appeared, with a whole litter of 'friends of various countries' — that was the general title. [Our underlining] One could not lay down anything as simple as that. . . There was a prima facie case against members of Communist and Fascist organisations that they had divided loyalties. Far more difficult were the instances where the person was not actually a member." [Our underlining]

(The Times 16 and 27 March 1948)

If Attlee's statements make a good text for BB sermonisings, they are not even mentioned by the Study Group. Nor is there any reference to the Report to Parliament in 1956 of the Conference of Privy Councillors on Security. According to this report "the chief risks are presented by Communists and other persons who for one reason or another are subject to Communist influence. The Communist faith overrides a man's normal loyalties to his country and induces the belief that it is justifiable to hand over secret information to the Communist Party or to a Communist foreign power. This risk from Communists is not, however, confined to members of the Party, either open or underground, but extends to sympathisers with Communism". The report stated further that "one of the chief problems of security today is to identify members of the British Communist Party, to be informed of its activities and to identify that wider body of those who are both sympathetic to Communism and susceptible to Communist pressure and present a danger to security". That this statement was well-founded is demonstrated not only by the cases of BURGESS and MACLEAN but by those of KLAUS FUCHS, of ALAN NUNN MAY, of the FLOUD brothers and of CAIRNCROSS, all of whom worked for the Russian Intelligence Service in the interests of International Socialism but who are not mentioned by the Study Group. BLUNT's name appears not as a Communist and a Soviet spy but as "evidence" of the alleged "unaccountability" of the Security Service. PHILBY is mentioned only in order to discredit the D notices system and BURGESS and MACLEAN are mentioned merely to demonstrate the "arbitrary restrictions" on the release of public records. There is not even a passing reference to the numerous other well-authenticated cases of Russian and Soviet Bloc espionage activity since the Security Service was charged with measures to counter it.

These measures have included the barring from employment in posts giving access to classified information of people whose loyalty may be suspect. The vetting procedure attracts criticism from the Study Group on three counts. First, "union negotiators" who are vetted "can be refused entry into defence and other high security establishments" which would "obviously hinder effective representation or potential industrial action". Second, some Civil Servants "are so carefully screened in advance", that "they are the last people who would cooperate in industrial action" and third, "left-wing socialists are likely to be as antagonistic to the Soviet Bloc as many in the Western Alliance". It is understandable that such objections would be raised by those who are prepared to use industrial action for political and revolutionary purposes in organisations responsible for the security of the state.

II. The political associations and antecedents of the group's main witnesses.

According to the foreword to the discussion document contributed by JIM MORTIMER, much of the basis of the study of the Security Services was provided by ROBIN COOK MP and the written works of TONY BUNYAN and DUNCAN CAMPBELL. COOK and CAMPBELL were also members of the Study Group.

ROBIN COOK is well-known for his sustained criticisms of the Security Service and for the Bill he sponsored with the object, as he said, of "clipping the wings of MI5". Less well-known is his support since its inception in 1977 of the group which produces the bi-monthly magazine State Research and an annual Review of Security and the State. The State Research Group claims to be "an independent group of investigators collecting and publishing information from public sources on developments in state policy, particularly in the fields of policing, internal security and espionage. It is also concerned with the links between the agencies in these fields and business, the Right, and para-military organisations".

The head of the group until he became in 1981 Head of the Research Department of the GLC's Police Committee was TONY BUNYAN, who is well-known to BB readers. BUNYAN began his political career as a sociology student at the Polytechnic of North London at a time when it was a hot bed of revolution, which has been immortalised in Lady Cox's Rape of Reason. He was at the same time a reporter on Time Out and lived with a colleague on that magazine, PHIL KELLY (see below). BUNYAN later became News Editor of Time Out, which in the mid-70s was publishing a series of anti-Western intelligence articles inspired by the CIA traitor PHILIP AGEE (BB 12/81). The articles were written by, among others, KELLY, DUNCAN CAMPBELL (see below), CRISPIN AUBREY and AGEE's American confederate MARK HOSENBALL, who published the names of CIA agents in London and revealed information about GCHQ. AUBREY was one of the three prosecuted under the Official Secrets Act in what was known as the ABC trial. His book on the trial Who's Watching You? was published by Penguin in 1981 and is used, as is Time Out, as a source by the Study Group. AGEE and HOSENBALL (who now writes for the Sunday Times) were both deported by the Labour Home Secretary Merlyn Rees, who was later censured in the House of Commons by ROBIN COOK and others. A committee set up to defend the two Americans included among its members BUNYAN and KELLY, who wrote articles "analysing the deportation cases and the sinister political forces behind them". These articles appeared in the Leveller magazine which has often been quoted by BB and which the Study Group also quote as a source and on which we comment below. BUNYAN is the author of The Political Police in Britain (Friedmann 1976), the vade mecum of those who wish to dismantle the state security apparatus. This he represents as an instrument of capitalist repression, wielded with ever

increasing vigour, a view which BETTY MATTHEWS echoed at Prague and which has long been the received wisdom of the CPGB. BUNYAN's book was praised in fulsome terms by PHILIP AGEE, who described him as a journalist who is not afraid to "dig up the truth about the real subversives". These are listed by the Study Group as "the City of London, the banks, currency speculators, company directors and managers or activists within the Conservative Party".

BUNYAN's collaborators in producing State Research and the Reviews of Security and the State have included PHIL KELLY, MARTIN KETTLE, a contributor to the CPGB's Marxism Today and now a journalist on the Sunday Times, BRENDA KIRSCH of the CPGB and the Labour Research Department (BB 11/82 p. 15 and passim), KAREN MARGOLIS co-author of The Technology of Political Control and a member of IMG (now Socialist League), SARAH SPENCER, Editor of the NCCL's magazine Rights, SHELLEY CHARLESWORTH, a contributor to Marxism Today, PHIL SCRATON a contributor to Rights, NICK ANNING, a contributor to Labour Herald and ROBERT SPICER, author of Conspiracy, published by the Communist publishers Lawrence & Wishart (BB 5/82 pp. 8 and 9). E.P. THOMPSON contributed an introduction to the first Review of Security and the State (1978) and TONY BENN wrote the introduction to the second Review which appeared in December 1980. The Morning Star (10 December) quoted him as saying that MI5 and MI6 were the "praetorian guard of the existing order . . . They are destructors of our liberties instead of defending all our liberties", etc. etc.

The Leveller, with which BUNYAN, CAMPBELL, AUBREY and others were associated, when it was founded in February 1976, set out to be "an investigative and politically radical magazine" which would examine "the wheeling and dealing of finance and industry, the machinations of the law, the plans of the military and the manoeuvres of the state". It would report "what is important to the Left". An example of what was "important to the Left" was the publication by the Leveller of extracts from two official documents, Security Handbook and A Guide for Representatives of the Establishment (sic). Izvestya's correspondent in London was inspired to write a despatch in which he said that the documents which had been "kept in secrecy until the left-wing journal Leveller published excerpts from them on 7th January (1980) showed how the bourgeois state has continued its assault upon the rights and liberties of the citizens at such a rate that Britain of today is, in this field, probably second to no other Western European country".

The 78 founding subscribers to the Leveller included besides AUBREY, TIM GOPSILL, Secretary of the AGEE-HOSENBALL Defence Committee and now Secretary of the

Free Lance Branch of London National Union of Journalists and a contributor to Free Press, STUART HALL, CHRIS MULLIN, DARCUS HOWE (all well-known to BB readers), AIDAN WHITE of the Guardian, the AGEE-HOSENBALL and ABC Defence Committees, a leading light in the so-called Campaign for Press Freedom and a contributor to Marxism Today, and MARTIN WALKER of the Guardian who collaborated with AGEE. In July 1982 the Leveller published an appeal for £5,000 to help buy new printing equipment and to help finance a move from 57 Caledonian Road, London N1, the address of the publishers of a book by AGEE and another American LOUIS WOLF on Dirty Work Too: the CIA in Africa. The sponsors of the appeal included TONY BENN, BRUCE KENT, KEN LIVINGSTONE, FRANK ALLAUN MP, DENNIS SKINNER MP, PETER HAIN, RUSSELL PROFITT, HILARY WAINWRIGHT (BB 6/82 p. 20 and passim), FENNER BROCKWAY, ANNA COOTE and GERRY ADAMS.

In addition to COOK, BUNYAN and CAMPBELL other major witnesses and sources included: -

GERRY GILLMAN, General Secretary of the Society of Civil and Public Servants (BB 1/83 pp 13 and 16), who told the group he suspected his union's telephones had been tapped.

BEN RUBNER, General Secretary of the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades Union (FTAT) (BB 8-9/82 pp 3 and 4), who also thought his union's telephones had been tapped.

N.B. In the Index for June-December 1982 RUBNER's first name was given incorrectly as "BILL".

JACK DROMEY (BB 2/83 and passim) "who confirmed in his evidence . . . that the Grunwick Strike Committee had had its telephone tapped".

DOUG GRIEVE, General Secretary of the Tobacco Workers Union (BB 8-9/82 pp 4 and 21). GRIEVE's statement when moving a resolution on the Special Branch at the 1979 Trades Union Congress was quoted as follows: -

"It is the same attitude of the state that regards trades unionism in general as a potential threat; and, in consequence, instructs a sizeable number of police, organised in the Special Branch, to spy upon trades unionists who are engaged in wholly legal activities. Indeed it is very regrettable

that because successive governments, Labour and Tory, have denied police their basic human right of joining a trade union that representatives of the police are not present at Congress today, and not able to contribute to this debate".

It is worth noting that one of the recommendations of the Study Group is that "Special Branch officers like all other police ranks should be enabled to join the trade union of their choice" an important item in the CPGB's programme The British Road to Socialism (p. 41).

A major NON-witness was Sir Harold Wilson who to the Group's regret "did not see fit to talk" to it about MI6.

III. The composition of the Study Group.

JO RICHARDSON MP (Chairman) (BB 6/82 p. 9 and passim).

PETER ARCHER MP.

ANDREW BENNETT MP (BB 12/82 p. 9 and below).

DUNCAN CAMPBELL (BB 7/82 pp 4 and 11 and passim). CAMPBELL has written numerous articles in the New Statesman in which he has revealed "secrets" of British intelligence activity and for which he received the Cobden Trust Award for Literature. On 15 February 1980 the Morning Star, reporting the creation of the Labour Party's Study Group, quoted CAMPBELL as saying that he thought "a small number of MPs probably had their phones tapped — about ten at any one time". CAMPBELL was one of the contributors to a book Policing the Police, edited by PETER HAIN. LIVINGSTONE's Labour Herald (4 September 1981) recommended the book to "anyone who still thinks that the police . . . are capable of impartially playing referee and holding the ring for decent upright citizens to go about their lawful business in freedom and security". The two other contributors were MARTIN KETTLE and JOANNA ROLLO of the Socialist Workers Party. In an interview with Labour Herald (13 November 1981) CAMPBELL said "the law is not neutral and no one on the left should imagine that it is so. Nor are the police neutral in their enforcement of the legal regime as it is". CAMPBELL is now Civil Defence Adviser to the GLC for which or for whom he is well-qualified. Among his many contributions to the denigration of British defence organisations was "background

research and information" for an article by the well-known anarchist STUART CHRISTIE, published by the Leveller (5 February 1982) and in the 1982 Cienfuegos Press Anarchists Review (May 1982).

BOB CRYER MP (BB 11/82 p. 10 and passim).

ROBIN COOK MP (see above).

IAN FAIRLEY (TUC), who seems to be an odd man out in the Study Group.

DOUG GRIEVE (see above).

JOHN GRIFFITH. Presumably this is the Professor of Public Law at the London School of Economics, regarded by his peers as a harmlessly eccentric amateur poet. (BB 10/81 p. 3).

MICHAEL FOOT MP (BB 12/82 p. 6 and passim).

BRUCE GEORGE MP. Sponsor of an amendment to the Armed Forces Bill designed to "end the ban on lesbian and gay relationships in the services except in circumstances where heterosexual relationships would also be outlawed" (Morning Star 16 April 1981).

PETER HAIN (BB 3/83 p. 21 and passim).

ROY HATTERSLEY MP.

JUDITH HART MP (BB 4/83 p. 20 and passim).

ERIC HEFFER MP (BB 3/83 p. 14 and passim).

PATRICIA HEWITT (BB 4/83 pp 17 and 18 and passim).

ALEX LYON MP, Chairman of the Labour Campaign for Criminal Justice of which HARRIET HARMAN MP, formerly of the NCCL, was Secretary in 1981.

PHIL KELLY (see above and BB 12/81 p. 18). KELLY is on the staff of MULLIN's reorientated Tribune.

MICHAEL MEACHER MP (BB 3/83 p. 19 and passim). It is worth noting that the Labour Coordinating Committee in which MEACHER is prominent operates from No. 9 Poland Street, London W1, the building owned by the Rowntree Trust which houses State Research and several other organisations devoted to "civil liberties", financed by the Trust.

JOHN McWILLIAM MP (see below).

ANDY NICHOL (sic). "NICHOL" is presumably ANDREW NICHOLL, a lecturer in law at the London School of Economics who drafted ROBIN COOK's Bill "designed to clip the wings of MI5". NICHOLL is apparently a member of the Outer Circle Policy Unit, which The Times (29 February 1980) described as a "small think tank funded by the Rowntree Trust".

MARTIN KETTLE (BB 4/83 p. 18 and passim and above).

CHRIS PRICE MP (BB 4/82 pp 18 and 20). PRICE, who now writes for the New Statesman, wrote as follows in the Leveller (17 April - 1 May 1981) on the subject of "phone taps": -

"It was largely due to the Post Office Engineering Union (POEU) that the recent debate [on "phone taps"] was stimulated. BRIAN [sic] STANLEY, the General Secretary, [and one of the Group's main witnesses] made a speech at Labour Party Conference two and a half years ago complaining of the distasteful job his members had to do: last year the union produced a pamphlet Tapping Your Telephone, indicating the extent of illegal tapping; and one of its three MPs in the Commons JOHN McWILLIAM [see above], moved the amendment in the Standing Committee. If the Select Committee [on Home Affairs] fails to get the Home Office to come up with some legal safeguards, the Bill will be back in the union's hands to force by some sort of direct action, this supposed 'law and order' government to put a bit of law and order into telephone tapping".

DENNIS SKINNER MP (BB 12/81 p. 20 and passim).

E.P. THOMPSON (BB 1/83 pp 6, 8 and passim — and above).

PHILIP WHITEHEAD MP, another odd man out?

BETTANEYCAL REVERBERATIONS

Two Guardian journalists, IAN BLACK and NICK DAVIES, wrote letters to the Editors of Communist publications including Communist Focus (February) and Socialist Organiser (9 February), announcing that they were "trying to research a series of articles about the activities of the Special Branch and the Security Service, MI5, particularly in relation to domestic politics, trades unions, pressure groups, etc. Our experience is that many individuals and organisations have come across these people in some way or another; questions being asked, mail going astray, even physical surveillance". The two journalists invited potential informants to write to them, preferably giving their telephone number so that they could be contacted quickly. The Morning Star (9 February), which doubtless had received a similar letter, was, in view of the Guardian's behaviour over SARAH TISDALL, inclined to think that giving it the kind of information it sought might be a "risky affair". BLACK and DAVIES duly reported their findings in the Guardian for 17, 18 and 19 April. Linking the articles to the prosecution of BETTANEY, the authors went out of their way to represent the Security Service as an illegal threat to civil liberties. "The service, often with the help of the police Special Branches, collects information on members of political groups of the left and right, on peace campaigners and trade unionists. Some of the methods employed are outside the law. This investigation by NICK DAVIES and IAN BLACK shows how such activities represent an assault on the civil liberties of ordinary citizens . . . We concentrated not on the service's legitimate and widely accepted operations against the Soviet block, but on the large and growing and sometimes illegal surveillance of domestic targets . . . Our inquiry has focused on the side of MI5's work which often infringes civil liberties".

BLACK and DAVIES seem to have been successful in their appeal for information and it would be interesting to know how much of it was contributed by readers of the Communist press and whether it included anything emanating from BETTANEY. The Morning Star (23 April) reported that he had "spilled the beans", some of which the Star picked up. His "revelations" and the stories about his alleged "Nazi" behaviour at Oxford have enabled the Communist press to have a go at the Security Service. Socialist Worker (14 April), Tribune (20 April), Socialist Organiser (19 April) — "Free Bettaney!", PAUL FOOT in Socialist Worker (28 April) on "The Fascist who spied for Russia" and Socialist Action (27 April) — "MI5 - organiser of frame-ups and murders" are some of the items noticed by BB.

BB 3/85

THE MASSITER FILE

BB is not concerned with the allegations Ms. MASSITER has made about MI5 but with the motives, in so far as they are ascertainable, of those, including herself, who made the film "MI5's Official Secrets".

LARRY GOSTIN, General Secretary of the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL), in a letter to the Guardian (27 Feb) stated that "NCCL has a special interest in this

programme [MI5's Official Secrets]. We have been assisting its producers — CLAUDIA MILNE and GEOFFREY SEED — for the past nine months; and we are a civil liberties organisation whose civil liberties have been seriously infringed". The infringement, of which he complains in his letter, apparently consisted of inquiries said to have been made about the leadership and officials of the NCCL. In the programme itself he said "It angers me — it outrages me to think that that would happen. It's, it just seems so outlandish — for, um, government or security services or police to actually think that a voluntary organisation like NCCL is a threat to anyone".

GOSTIN's sense of outrage would appear to be somewhat exaggerated in view of the fact that he and his confederates were at perfect liberty to spend nine months working on a film which was highly critical of organisations, allegedly guilty of "seriously infringing" the NCCL's "civil liberties". As for GOSTIN's contention that the NCCL is not a threat to anyone, the mere fact that it should spend so much time in attacking organisations whose business is the security of the state shows that this is not true. NCCL is a threat, not because it is exclusively concerned with "civil liberties" but because it is and always has been under the influence of Communists and their sympathisers. They are concerned not to preserve "civil liberties" but with exactly the opposite. Their aim is to destroy a state system, where "civil liberties" are preserved, and to replace it with one in which they will be extinguished. The film commentator (HUGO YOUNG) who said that "The NCCL is a non-party group with moderate left wing origins that's championed the defence of civil liberties in Britain for 50 years", was either ignorant of the facts or, for some ulterior motive, telling less than the truth.

BB has in the past provided a good deal of information about the extent of Communist influence in the NCCL. Its current chairman is BILL BIRTLES, the husband of PATRICIA HEWITT, former General Secretary of the NCCL and now NEIL KINNOCK's Press Secretary. According to the film, "MI5 opened a file on her because of her close association with somebody who was at the time a member of the Communist Party". This was BILL BIRTLES, who left the Communist Party to join the Labour Party preparatory to his election as a Camden Labour Councillor in 1981. That his switch of parties had little to do with his loyalties was demonstrated when, in January 1984, he bought £100 shares in the Morning Star.

As for Mrs. BIRTLES (alias Ms. HEWITT), she, like GOSTIN, has given vent to her indignation in the Guardian (9 March). She was reminded that the NCCL was, in the 70s "a kind of reception centre for terrorist suspects, illegal immigrants, militant

trade unionists and radical journalists" and she was asked whether that "wasn't enough to make even the Labour government foam at the mouth". She agreed that this was so but maintained that "an awful lot of NCCL's work had no political connotations". That may be so but it doesn't alter the fact that, as she acknowledged later in the article, "it is absolutely valid for a civil liberties campaigner to want to work on the other side of the fence. Ultimately the purpose is the same — to try and use political power for political change".

In our last issue we noted (p. 17) the Morning Star's opinion of the NCCL's interim report on the policing of the miners' strike. It will be no surprise to our readers to hear that the NCCL Executive have rejected it by eleven votes to five. They considered that "the inquiry exceeded its terms of reference in commenting on the conduct of striking and working miners and in setting out civil liberty principles which did not strictly relate to the role of the police, police authority and criminal courts" (e.g., the right to "scab"). It will be interesting to see whether the Executive's decision will be endorsed at the NCCL's AGM next month (Labour Weekly 8 March 1985).

HARRIET HARMAN, the other former NCCL official, allegedly the subject of MI5 inquiry, has also been loud in her complaints in and out of parliament. In an article in Labour Weekly (15 March) she has demanded "a much tighter delineation of the security services activity. If you are not engaged in criminality, the security services should not snoop on you . . . And the real subversives are governments who, in the name of democracy, stamp on our democratic rights".

If the concern of NCCL, in the persons of GOSTIN, HEWITT and HARMAN, for "our democratic rights" may ring somewhat hollow, how about the others mainly concerned in the production of the film? Of the two ex-MI5 employees on whose allegations the film mainly depended, the identity of only one, Ms. CATHY MASSITER, has been revealed. She too has insisted that she was worried by what she considered to be infringements of people's rights. But was that all? The Daily Mail (23 February) produced information that suggested that it was not. In June 1984 she wrote a letter to New Society supporting an article, also in New Society (31 May 1984), by a former female colleague in MI5, MIRANDA INGRAM, on the BETTANEY case. Ms. INGRAM had concluded that "MI5 is one of its own threats to national security and must accept some of the blame in the Bettaney case". This seems to have been because, in her view, MI5 was not "truly representative of the British people" and, if it had been, "the doubts and fears of Bettaney might have been contained". But Ms. MASSITER did not stop at writing to New Society. She wrote to BETTANEY himself

because, though she "barely knew him", she "felt sorry for him".

Of the two producers of the film, CLAUDIA MILNE and GEOFFREY SEED, BB knows nothing. No doubt we shall be hearing more at least of Ms. MILNE, for she has let it be known that she has more files from other MI5 employees which could make a second film on the Service (Morning Star 7 March).

The narrator, HUGO YOUNG, former Political Editor of the Sunday Times, brought to his task the smoothness of a snake in the grass. His drift is typified by an article he wrote for Marxism Today (July 1984), in which phrases like "Mrs. Thatcher herself will no doubt continue to speak the language of the gluttonous privatiser", flow pleasantly from his pen. In his commentary on the film, YOUNG contrives to appear impartial. "Every democratic society needs . . . security services" he says. He even seems to concede that it is legitimate to study the "influence of Communists and Trotskyists within CND". Yet he also questions whether JOHN COX, the Communist CND Vice-President, should have been investigated (if indeed he was) and he suggests that "legitimate trade unions, a libertarian body like the NCCL, the bugging of pay negotiations, the tapping of Communist trade union leaders' phones [see below under TU] — all these seem a long way from national security". Put like that of course they do as YOUNG, being the clever fellow he is, well knows.

The research for the film was undertaken by a journalist named GERRY GABLE of somewhat murky antecedents. A former member of the YCL and a CPGB candidate in a local government election, he was closely associated with MAURICE LUDMER, the Communist founder and Editor of the (revived) Searchlight anti-fascist magazine (BB 6/81 p. 8). He and LUDMER were also among the first sponsors of the Anti-Nazi League. As an anti-fascist activist he, with two others in the guise of Post Office engineers, entered the house of historian David Irving, in order to steal papers. The three were convicted in January 1964 of breaking and entering with intent to commit felony. Sixteen years later the New Statesman (15 February 1980) published an article by DUNCAN CAMPBELL, BRUCE PAGE and NICK ANNING (of State Research) suggesting that GABLE had been used as an agent by MI5 and Special Branch to provide information and purvey disinformation about AGEE, HOSENBALL, PHIL KELLY, AUBREY, BERRY and DUNCAN CAMPBELL (the ABC trio). The object of the article was to discredit both GABLE and the security authorities. Whatever the truth about GABLE's alleged connection with security, his credentials as a "researcher" do not sound either unbiased or reliable.

As an expert on Special Branch and MI5, the film producers employed a journalist,

NICK DAVIES, who had acted as adviser to Labour members of the Parliamentary Select Committee, which had just "investigated the Special Branch because of concern over its methods and objectives". According to DAVIES, it is "absolutely routine" for MI5 to break the law. He says he has spoken to MI5 officers "whose sole purpose in life is to break and enter property". These fascinating conversations were presumably a result of his appeal to the Communist publications, Communist Focus and Socialist Organiser, mentioned in BB 5/84, which resulted in the Guardian articles mentioned in the same issue of BB.

The film on MI5's secrets, based on the allegations of Ms. MASSITER and her anonymous colleague, the assertion by Ms. MILNE that she has other information from other colleagues, the conversations that NICK DAVIES has allegedly had with other MI5 officers on illegal operations, the article by Ms INGRAM and the case of BETTANEY leave one with the distinct impression that vetting for MI5 is not quite what it ought to be. Perhaps they should prefer quality to quantity and, as they are in duty bound when assessing a candidate's suitability, give the benefit of any doubt to the state?