

**Networks, Mechanisms, and the Police: Britain's Security Apparatus,
1909 – 1939.**

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The Candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to other works.

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Abstract

Much of British security history is focussed upon institutions such as MI5. This institutional focus neglects the great uncertainties that existed in order to create a linear narrative that explains how current institutions obtained the position they currently hold. Although MI5 and MI6 did grow in importance between 1909 and 1939, they did not control or overshadow other components which also contributed to British security. Instead, they were interwoven into a security apparatus. Each component of this apparatus fulfilled specific functions to maintain British security. Despite great efforts to organise and increase the central control of security during this period, significant flaws persisted which allowed intelligence and policy officials to overreach their positions and negatively impact policy decisions – often with detrimental consequences.

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Abbreviations

AC – Assistant Commissioner

AC (A) - Assistant Commissioner, Administration

AC (B) - Assistant Commissioner, Traffic

AC (C) – Assistant Commissioner, Crime

AC (D) – Assistant Commissioner, Legal

ADM – Admiralty

ARCOS – All Russian Cooperative Society

BL – British Library

BUF – British Union of Fascists

C – Head of MI6

CAB – Cabinet Office

CID – Criminal Investigation Department

CPGB – Communist Party of Great Britain

DORA – Defence of the Realm Act

DPP – Director of Public Prosecutions

DRO – Durham Records Office

FO – Foreign Office

FOIA – Freedom of Information Act

FPA – Featherstone Printing Agency

GC & CS Government Code and Cypher School

GCHQ – Government Communications Headquarters

GHQ – GB – General Headquarters Great Britain

GMP – Greater Manchester Police

GOCinCs - General Officer Commanding-in-Chief

HO – Home Office

HMS – His Majesty's Ship

HMSO – Her Majesty's Stationary Office

HOW – Home Office Warrant

HQ - Headquarters

HUMINT – Human Intelligence

IOR – India Office Records

IPI – Indian Political Intelligence

IWM – Imperial War Museum

KV – Security Service

MEPO – Metropolitan Police

MI5 – Security Service

MI6 – Secret Intelligence Service

NCCL – National Council for Civil Liberties

NUPPO – National Union of Police and Prison Officers

NUWM – National Unemployed Workers Movement

NUR – National Union of Railwaymen

OSINT – Open Source Intelligence

PMS2 – Parliamentary Military Secretary No. 2 Section

PRO – Public Record Office

SB – Special Branch

SIGINT – Signals Intelligence

SIS – Secret Intelligence Service

SS1 – A section of Special Branch responsible for liaison with MI6

SS2 – A section of Special Branch responsible for liaison with the Home Office

SSC – Secret Service Committee

STC – Supply and Transport Committee

STO – Supply and Transport Organisation

TNA – The National Archives

TUC – Trade Union Congress

UK – United Kingdom

WSHC - Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre

WO – War Office

WSPU – Women's Social and Political Union

YCL – Young Communist League

Chapter One: An introduction to the history of British security.

Writing in 2002, John Ferris stated that ‘our knowledge is received wisdom: what we have been told, not what we have learned. Much remains to be found and some to be forgotten’.¹ This thesis seeks to question what we know about the history of British security, highlight areas that are received wisdom, and emphasise what we have learned. It achieves this through the application of intelligence theory to history and establishes a merit-based approach to the evaluation of Britain’s developing security apparatus between 1909 and 1939.

The primary flaw in the current narrative is that it is born out of a historical curiosity of how the institutions currently responsible for British security ascended to the position they currently maintain. This trend can be traced back to the early works of Christopher Andrew, which laid the foundations for the received wisdom that MI5 was predestined to assume a preeminent position within Britain’s security apparatus.² The removal of the ‘veil of official secrecy’ from intelligence records, following the Waldegrave Initiative in 1993, and the Intelligence Services Act 1997 brought further recognition to both MI5 and MI6.³ These changes have been accompanied by significant increases in the volume of official documents relating to intelligence activities, specifically those of MI5.⁴ The great increase in the availability of official

¹ J. Ferris, ‘The Road to Bletchley Park: the British experience with signals intelligence, 1892 – 1945’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2002), p. 53.

² Ferris, ‘The Road to Bletchley Park’, p. 53; C. Andrew, ‘The British Secret Service and Anglo-Soviet Relations in the 1920s Part 1: From the Trade Negotiations to the Zinoviev Letter’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 3, (1977), pp. 673 – 706; and C. Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community*, (London: Heinemann, 1985)

³ R. J. Aldrich, ‘CIA History as a Cold War Battleground: The Forgotten First Wave of Agency Narratives’, in C. Moran and C. J. Murphy (eds.) *Intelligence Studies in Britain and the US: Historiography since 1945*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 22; R. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America Cold War Secret Intelligence*. (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2002), pp. 1 – 16.

⁴ R. Aldrich, “Grow your own”: Cold War intelligence and history supermarkets’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2002), pp. 135 – 152.

records that address the activities of MI5 has further reinforced the inclination of academics to make these institutions the focus of a given study.⁵ This approach neglects any considerations for how uncertain the development of Britain's security apparatus was, particularly in the decade that followed the First World War, and how unlikely it often appeared that MI5 would succeed in the institutional battle for supremacy over British security.

This predisposition is entrenched by the current divide in British intelligence studies. It currently consists of two groups of academics: those who focus on history, and those that focus on theory. Christopher Moran notes that it is difficult to separate scholars of British intelligence into different schools, but recognises the validity of attempts to identify a number of approaches to British intelligence.⁶ This separation identifies the historical project and theory as two separate endeavours.⁷ Yet, the ability to question what intelligence is, how it is understood – specifically how it was understood in the past – is fundamental to a well-rounded appraisal of the development of British security.

The symptoms of this separation are a lack of recognition given to the police and a two-tier approach to British security.⁸ Instead of an appreciation of the merits of individual components which were tasked with maintaining British security, the current literature presents institutions such as MI5 as the most important, while institutions like

⁵ Aldrich, 'Grow your own', pp. 135 – 152.

⁶ C. Moran, 'The Pursuit of Intelligence History: Methods, Sources, and Trajectories in the United Kingdom', *Studies In Intelligence*, (2001), pp. 33 – 55.

⁷ P. Gill and M. Pythian, *Intelligence in an Insecure World*, (London: Polity Press, 2012), p. 1; and Wesley K. Wark, 'Introduction: the study of espionage: past present, future?', *Intelligence and National Security*, 8,3 (1993), pp. 1–13.

⁸ The concept of a tiered approach to a security apparatus is adapted from Brodeur: J. Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing: Remarks about the policing of political activities', *Social Problems*, Vol. 30 No. 5, (1983), p. 507.

the Metropolitan Police Special Branch and the regional police constabularies of the United Kingdom are presented as the ‘foot soldiers’ or the ‘police arm’ of MI5.⁹

A suitable remedy to this quandary is the application of intelligence theory to the history of British security. This study is a shift away from the institutional approach carried out by previous academic works. Adopting a network approach, rather than an institutional or hierarchical, permits individual components to be assessed for their contribution to the overall security apparatus. Of crucial importance to this approach is the use of the ‘intelligence cycle’.¹⁰ This construct will permit an evaluation of importance based on contributions to the different stages of the cycle: collection, analysis, dissemination, and direction.¹¹

This approach has permitted a number of neglected features of Britain’s security apparatus to be discovered. Primary among these features is the lack of a dominant institution. British security was maintained by a collection of institutions and individuals: a security apparatus. Just as Michael Warner utilised intelligence history to further develop a theoretical understanding of intelligence, the opposite approach,

⁹ For the reference that Special Branch became the ‘foot soldiers’ of MI5, see P. Gill, ‘*Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom*’, in J. P. Brodeur, P. Gill, and D. Töllborg (eds), *Democracy, Law and Security: Internal Security Services in Contemporary Europe*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), p. 269; and R. Wilson and I. Adams, *Special Branch: A History, 1883 – 2006*, (London: Biteback Publishing Ltd, 2015), p. 70. For the reference that the Special Branch became the ‘police arm’ of MI5, see Thurlow, *The Secret State: British Internal Security in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Blackwell, 1994), p. 143; and B. Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain, 1790 – 1988*, (London: Unwin Hyman Ltd, 1989), p. 169 and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, ‘State surveillance and Communist lives, Surveillance of the CPGB: 1920s – 1950s’, *Labour History Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (2004), p. 19.

¹⁰ A. Hulnick, ‘What’s wrong with the Intelligence Cycle’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 21, No. 6, (2006), pp. 959 – 979; L. Johnson (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 3; P. Gill and M. Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 4; R. K. Betts, ‘Analysis, war and decision: why intelligence failures are inevitable’, *World Politics*, Vol. 3 No. 1, (1978), pp. 61–89; M. Phythian, ‘Intelligence theory and theories of international relations: shared world or separate worlds?’, in Gill et al., *Intelligence Theory: Key Questions and Debates*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 54 – 72.

¹¹ Hulnick, ‘What’s wrong with the Intelligence Cycle’, pp. 959 – 979; L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, p. 3; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 4; and Phythian, ‘Intelligence theory and theories of international relations’, pp. 54 – 72.

applying theory to intelligence history has equal merit.¹² The method utilised to understand how modern intelligence agencies collect and disseminate data, liaise with their counterparts and policymakers, and how they are governed enriches the understanding of how Britain's security apparatus developed. Breaking down the actions of the security apparatus in such a manner permits an evaluation of the importance of individual components, as well the apparatus as a whole.

While MI5 certainly did grow in importance between 1909 and 1939, it did not overshadow the other components of the security apparatus. Instead, it was interwoven into the fabric of British security playing a specific role. Although described as an imperial security service following the 1931 meeting of the Secret Service Committee, and as taking over 'Scotland Yard Intelligence': it did not.¹³ Following the 1931 'transfer of power' Special Branch maintained the majority of their previous responsibilities, such as counter-terrorism, public order, and counter-subversion within Metropolitan London. Instead of a fundamental shift, the 1931 transfer is more accurately described as the transfer of the dissemination portion of the intelligence cycle.

This approach, as it did for Michael Warner, has equal merit for the further development of intelligence theory. A significant development is an appreciation for the historical application of intelligence theory. Instead of creating definitions of intelligence and applying them to historical actors, intelligence theory needs to incorporate an appreciation for the differences in interpretation. This now and then

¹² M. Warner, *The Rise and Fall of Intelligence: An International Security History*, (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2014), pp. 6 – 7.

¹³ K. Quinlan, *The Secret War Between The Wars: MI5 in the 1920s and 1930s*, (London: Boydell and Brewer Press, 2014), p. 14; Holt Wilson, 'Security Intelligence in War', 1934, Imperial War Museum (IWM), The papers of Sir Vernon Kell, MSS. Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 362.

applicability allows for the subtle differences in the way that historical actors viewed intelligence to be appreciated.

Historiography

A recent study of intelligence historiography notes that intelligence studies are ‘characterised by a desire for discovery’ and a failure ‘to take stock and to acknowledge the considerable body of work that has accumulated’.¹⁴ This can be explained as the quest to discover every ‘Missing Dimension’ of British intelligence history.¹⁵ This thesis seeks to reappraise a neglected dimension of British intelligence history. However, it is important to acknowledge the literature which this thesis will contribute to.¹⁶ The volume of this literature requires that it be divided into different categories, allowing common merits and limitations to be explored. These categories are: personal testimony, historical works, and theoretical approaches.

While many historians of intelligence trace the origins of British intelligence historiography to Christopher Andrew and David Dilks’s *The Missing Dimension*, it is important to note the contribution of former officials.¹⁷ The collection of personal testimonies which are relevant to this study mainly originate from former police officers, such as Herbert Fitch, Basil Thomson, and Wyndham Childs.¹⁸ These works aid in obtaining a contemporary perspective of the events. Although intelligence memoirs which were published before the Second World War, suffered less from the official secrecy which characterised the latter Cold War period, it is difficult to

¹⁴ C. Moran and C.J. Murphy (eds.) *Intelligence Studies in Britain and the US: Historiography since 1945*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), p. 3.

¹⁵ Moran and Murphy. *Intelligence Studies*, p. 2.

¹⁶ C. Andrew and D. Dilks, *The Missing Dimension: Governments and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century*, (London: Macmillan, 1984).

¹⁷ Aldrich, ‘CIA History as a Cold War Battleground’, p. 19.

¹⁸ See H. T. Fitch, *Traitors Within: The Adventures of Detective Inspector Herbert T. Fitch*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1933) pp. 77 – 79; and B. Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, (London: Collins, 1939); W. Childs, *Episodes and Reflections: Being Some Records From The Life Of Major-General Sir Wyndham Childs*, (London: Cassell & Company Ltd, 1930).

corroborate their accounts with official records.¹⁹ Although the attributes of these testimonies which are typically characterised as weaknesses – inability to be cross-referenced, and evidence of bias – can be considered strengths.²⁰ Portelli argues that oral sources display ‘the speaker’s subjectivity ... Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did’.²¹ In sum, oral sources and personal testimonies reveal the perspective of the interviewee or the author.

The evidence of a fear of the political left and the unknown threat posed by groups which were perceived to be revolutionary was widespread throughout official circles during this period. The representation of this fear in personal testimony aids in appreciating its extent, and its impact on security developments. The presence of fear and threat perception will be utilised to further elaborate upon alterations to Britain’s security apparatus. Its inclusion will aid in gaining an appreciation for how officials involved in the decision making process appreciated events as they occurred, and how the perception of threat, rather than its likely potential, was a significant driving force for reform throughout the period.

Academic examinations of British intelligence and security, such as Andrew’s *Secret Service*, Porter’s *Origins of the Vigilant State*, and Jeffery and Hennessy’s *States of Emergency* addressed the broader intelligence and security apparatus and its relationship with the government. However, because these works were published

¹⁹ This lack of credibility is displayed by Fido and Skinner in their appraisal of Herbert Fitch’s work. See: M. Fido and K. Skinner, *The Official Encyclopaedia of Scotland Yard: Behind the Scenes at Scotland Yard*, (London: Virgin Publishers, 2000) p.376. For the secrecy prevalent in the Cold War, see: G. Bennett, ‘Declassification and release policies of the UK’s Intelligence agencies’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (2002) pp. 21-32; and W. Wark, ‘In Never-Never Land? The British Archives on Intelligence’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (1992) pp. 195 – 203.

²⁰ Fido and K. Skinner, *The Official Encyclopaedia of Scotland Yard*, p.376.

²¹ A. Portelli, ‘What makes Oral History Different?’, in R. Perks, and A. Thomson, (eds), *The Oral History Reader, Third Edition*, Oxon, Routledge, 2016), p. 52

before the Waldegrave Initiative, and the reversal of the government's retention of intelligence records, the amount of information available was severely limited.²² Despite this limitation, authors made good use of the available sources, such as Cabinet Reports and memoirs, to effectively analyse the effectiveness of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.

More recent academic works have tended to be led by the release of official records. This 'release dependency' has resulted in the majority of academic works reinforcing the dominant position of MI5.²³ This is explicitly linked to MI5's release policies and their decision, in 1997, to begin transferring vast quantities of their official records to the National Archives, Kew. The result of the attention drawn by this ever increasing volume of official records is a tendency to focus greater attention on the work of MI5, neglecting the broader security apparatus.

The trend to focus upon institutions such as MI5 and MI6 is also present among official histories. This is understandable, to some extent, with Christopher Andrew's *Authorised History of MI5* and Keith Jeffery's *MI6* because they focus on the sponsoring department.²⁴ Because an institution is funding the project, they have a vested interest in the study portraying them in a positive light.²⁵ This results in a need

²² For an appraisal of the release policies of the British government prior to the Waldegrave Act, see: Bennett, 'Declassification and release policies' pp. 21 – 32; and Wark, 'In Never-Never Land?' p. 195 – 203. For an assessment of the Waldegrave Initiative, see: R. Aldrich, 'Did Waldegrave Work? The Impact of the Open Government on British History', *Twentieth Century British History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (1998) pp. 111 – 126; R. Thurlow, 'The Charm Offensive: The "Coming Out" of MI5', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (2000) pp. 183 – 190.

²³ R. Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand: Britain, America Cold War Secret Intelligence*, (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2002) pp.1 – 16; see also: R. Aldrich, 'Grow your own', pp. 135 – 152.

²⁴ C. Andrew, *The Defence of the Realm: The Authorised History of MI5*, (London: Penguin Group, 2009); and K. Jeffery, *MI6: The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909 – 1949*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2010). For reviews of Andrew's *MI5*, see: B. Porter, 'Other People's Mail', *London Review of Book*, Vol. 31, No. 22, pp. 15 – 17, (2009); for a review of Jeffery's *MI6*, see: S. Rimington, 'MI6, Review by Stella Rimington', *Financial Times*, 1 October 2010.

²⁵ See: R. Aldrich 'Policing the Past: Official Secrecy and British Intelligence since 1945' *English Historical Review*, Vol. 119, No. 483, (2004), pp. 922 – 953.

to treat them with caution. Yet, Andrew and Jeffery's works still resemble an independent academic investigation, both containing references indicating whether information originates from the secondary literature, publicly available archives, or from retained records. However, as Jeffery and Baxter have noted elsewhere, statements by authors claiming the open and complete access to official records 'need to be considered as critically as any other source'.²⁶ While official histories may be made with the intention of providing a comprehensive account for historians, the careful selection of primary records results in a need for them to be analysed critically.²⁷

Academic works which focus on the history of the police also share a common institutional limitation to intelligence history. While some works which chart the development of the British police highlight the evolution of the Home Office's control, this is often not applied to the security apparatus.²⁸ A reason for this separation is the 'High Policing and Low Policing' approach to British security.²⁹ Brodeur used this term to identify two forms which modern policing encompasses. High Policing is used to refer to counterintelligence, operations which are traditionally perceived to be the remit of MI5 or Special Branch, while Low Policing refers to the traditional criminal role.³⁰

The separation of these roles in the United Kingdom, MI5 being responsible for 'high policing' and having no power of arrest – and thus no involvement in 'low policing'

²⁶ Baxter and Jeffrey, 'Intelligence and Official History', p. 290.

²⁷ Baxter and Jeffrey, 'Intelligence and Official History', p. 289; and R. Aldrich, 'Grow your own', pp. 145 – 146.

²⁸ C. Emsley, 'The Birth and Development of the Police', in T. Newburn (ed.) *Handbook of Policing*, (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2003), pp. 72 – 75; J. Morgan, *Conflict and Order: Labour Disputes in England and Wales, 1909 – 1939*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); and D. Wall, *The Chief Constables of England and Wales: The Socio-Legal History of a Criminal Justice Elite*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company Limited, 1998) pp.44 – 56.

²⁹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp. 507 – 520.

³⁰ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp. 507 – 520.

– has resulted in it being neglected by police history.³¹ The converse is also true, the role of the police in intelligence activities is also neglected. Examples of this neglect can be seen in works which address police brutality in the interwar period.³² While they focus upon the use of force and the invasive nature of police surveillance, the police, especially their role as intelligence collectors, has not been included in any broader study of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.

This neglect of a broader appraisal of British Security history has been explained as a result of 'sensationalism and uncritical scholarship'.³³ While this may be true of some studies, the predisposition towards MI5 is likely a pursuit of a 'specific research agenda'.³⁴ However, further increasing the likelihood that a study of British security will focus on MI5 is the ease that MI5 records can be accessed in comparison with other adjacent records.

Recent academic investigations have assessed the importance of the wider intelligence apparatus. O'Malley's *Ireland India and Empire* has provided an analysis of the role of Indian Political Intelligence (IPI), making excellent use of the British Library's Indian Office records to offset the prevalence of MI5.³⁵ Jensen's *War Against Anarchist Terrorism* is also an important contribution. The combination of assessing security developments in an international context, and the inclusion of events prior to the creation of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909, allow it to break through the

³¹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp. 507

³² For an example of works which address police brutality in the inter-war period, see: J. Clark, 'Striving to Preserve the Peace!' p. 24 - 33; J. Lawrence, 'Fascist violence and the politics of public order in inter-war Britain: the Olympia debate revisited', *Historical Research*, Vol. 76, No. 192, (2003), pp. 238 – 267; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 147.

³³ Moran and Murphy, *Intelligence Studies*, pp. 2 – 3.

³⁴ Moran and Murphy, *Intelligence Studies*, p. 3.

³⁵ B. Coleborne, 'Review: Ireland India and Empire: Indo-Irish Radical Connections, 1919 – 1964 by Kate O'Malley', *Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 25, (2010), pp. 62 – 64.

institutional boundaries of other works. Such works try to avoid the readily accessible records often favoured by authors who pursue an institutional approach.³⁶

Despite the benefits academics have gained from the release of intelligence records, specifically, those from MI5, the majority of the records of the Special Branch have remained retained. Janet Clark, noted in her Ph.D. Thesis 'Striving to Preserve the Peace' that it has 'proved more difficult to obtain material still held by the Metropolitan Police'.³⁷ Specifically, Clark notes that in the eighteen months between May 2005 and December 2006 no decision had been made on the release of files requested under the Freedom of Information Act.³⁸ Clark is not alone in her inability to obtain access to Special Branch records, Ian Cobain recounts how a historian struggled to negotiate access to Special Branch ledgers concerning surveillance, in the latter nineteenth century, for three and a half years.³⁹ The increasingly large collection of MI5 records released into the public domain have led many researchers to overestimate the importance of MI5's contribution to British security and underestimate the role of Special Branch.⁴⁰ The restrictions on gaining access to Special Branch records emphasise the prevailing difficulty in attempting to break the institutional constraints on British security history.

The principal reason that prevents greater disclosure of Special Branch operations is their place within the broader security apparatus. Although part of the

³⁶ R. Aldrich, 'Grow your own', pp. 145 – 146.

³⁷ J. Clark, 'Striving to Preserve the Peace! The National Council for Civil Liberties, the Metropolitan Police and the Dynamics of Disorder in Inter-War Britain', (unpublished PhD Thesis, Open University, 2008), p. 16. Clark's comments were comparing the difficulties of gaining access to Special Branch records in comparison to similar records held by adjacent departments, such as the Home Office, War Office, and MI5.

³⁸ Clark 'Striving to Preserve the Peace!' p. 16.

³⁹ I. Cobain, *The History Thieves: Secrets, Lies, and the Shaping of a Modern Nation*, (London: Portobello Books, 2016), p. 164; and Information Commissioner's Decision Notice, FS50106800, 20 August 2008: Information Tribunal Appeal Number EA/2008/0078, 20 March 2009.

⁴⁰ Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand*, pp.1 – 16 and Aldrich, 'Grow your own', pp. 135 – 152.

Metropolitan Police, the Special Branch for all intents and purposes was an intelligence department akin to MI5 and MI6. Special Branch's foundation was intertwined with counter-terrorism and the dynamite conspiracies of the 1880s, and crucially it conducted a counter-subversive role between 1917 and 1931. Even after the transfer of dissemination responsibilities to MI5 in 1931, Special Branch still remained a formidable intelligence collector regarding terrorist threats, potential public order disputes, as well as communist and suspected communist activities within the Metropolitan district. Moreover, in cases where legal transgressions were being committed, it was bound to conduct an investigation because it was a police department.

The most surprising aspect of Special Branch's role during the period in question, and arguably the strongest reason for the retention of official records is not directly linked to their ethically dubious surveillance operations of suspected communists or those believed to be a threat to British security. Instead, it is Special Branch's liaison with MI6 in its foreign intelligence operations, as well as Special Branch's role conducting intelligence gathering operations outside of the UK. As well as infamous surveillance operations carried out under Basil Thomson in Poland, the MEPO 38 record add details of Special Branch collaboration with MI6 following the General Strike in 1926.⁴¹

Just as Special Branch's connection with MI6 and its foreign activities serve to hamper access to certain records, the alterations to security apparatus had a

⁴¹ For further details of Basil Thomson's blundered operation in Poland, see: E. O'Halpin, 'Sir Warren Fisher and the Coalition, 1919 – 1922', *the Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1981), p. 923 – 924; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119. For MEPO 38 records which explore the liaison between Special Branch and MI6 following the General Strike, see: MEPO 38/79; MEPO 38/80; MEPO 38/81; and MEPO 38/82 , The National Archives(TNA), Kew. Access to MEPO 38/80 has been granted via an agreement outside of the FOIA.

significant impact upon the official record. Alterations, such as the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1919, and the succession of Special Branch and MI5 in 1921 and 1931 – as the disseminators of intelligence – has resulted in some records of the investigations carried out by the Directorate of Intelligence and Special Branch being transferred to MI5.

Curry, in his *Official History*, explains that MI5 acquired these records when it assumed responsibility for 'internal security' in 1931.⁴² MI5 succeeded Special Branch in this role, which had maintained control over internal security since the dissolution of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1921. Curry notes, that following the transfer of power 'its [Special Branch's] records, were amalgamated with those in this [MI5's] office'.⁴³ This included the records that Special Branch maintained following the dissolution of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1921. However, as Curry emphasises, the amalgamation of active investigations was carried out on a case by case basis of what MI5 deemed to be important.⁴⁴ As a result, the current archive of MI5 records is the result of deliberate manipulation of official records by MI5 owing to their interpretation of what was important and necessary. This further distorts the appraisal of Special Branch's role in maintaining British security.

Intelligence Theory

⁴² J. Curry, *The Security Service, 1908 – 1945: The Official History*, (Surrey: Public Record Office, 1999), p. 92.

⁴³ Curry, *The Security Service*, p. 92.

⁴⁴ Curry, *The Security Service*, p. 92.

An often overlooked component of intelligence theory is a historical application. Just as the security environment impacts upon contemporary definitions of intelligence, it is equally valid that the security environment in the past impacted upon the understanding of policy makers. Intelligence theory, therefore, needs a then and now applicability in order to account for these differences – rather than superimpose contemporary definitions on historical actors.

The application of intelligence theory to an appraisal of a historical period also permits a broader perspective of the developments which occurred.⁴⁵ Rather than focussing upon the development of institutions, and the waning influence of political actors, a theoretical approach permits an evaluation of British security as an apparatus, and a framework for assessing the individual merits of institutions and actors within that framework.

A theoretical approach to intelligence history requires certain principles to be defined. As this study is a study of intelligence, identifying what is meant by intelligence is key. The three central theoretical components explored throughout the thesis: networks, mechanisms, and the role of the police within the security apparatus, also require explanation.

Rather than craft an intricate ‘all-encompassing’ definition of intelligence, which describes all of the intricate processes that intelligence entails, this study suggests that a more fluid approach to intelligence definition is preferable. Rather than the subject under examination dictating our understanding of intelligence, a more fluid

⁴⁵ Warner, *The Rise and Fall of Intelligence*, pp. 6 – 7.

approach to the definition of intelligence permits a degree of manipulation, allowing it to be relevant for this as well as other studies.⁴⁶

Intelligence, therefore, is the investigation of threats and opportunities to maximise advantages. Under this definition investigation, threats, opportunities, and advantages act as the anchors which can be expanded to fully clarify their meaning for a given study. With regards to this study, investigation refers to the mostly reactive intelligence collection activities of institutions such as the police, Special Branch, MI5, and MI6. Threats rather than opportunities dominate this study and refers to the political movements, nationalist, communist, fascist, and suffrage frequently perceived by government officials to pose a danger to the established order in Britain. Maximising advantage implies the mitigation of the dangers which officials believed these groups posed in order to maintain British security.

The term intelligence network is used very broadly in intelligence studies. It can refer to the nodal like communication between parties that are broadly considered equals, or have some form of reciprocal agreement.⁴⁷ It can also be used interchangeably to denote a group of individuals acting at the behest of an organisation, such as MI5 or MI6, collecting intelligence on a target. An example being MI6's casuals – a number of individuals who were used to check MI6's intelligence in the UK. However, the use of network in the latter case is not a result of an appraisal of the features of the relationship, or because of the nodal like qualities it displays. In

⁴⁶ For an appraisal of the developments of the definition of intelligence, see: Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, p. 1; W. Laqueur, *A World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence*, (New York: Basic Books, 1985), p. 8; Johnson, *Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, p. 1 – 4; and W. Agrell, 'When Everything Is Intelligence – Nothing Is Intelligence', *Sherman Kent Center for Intelligence Analysis Occasional Papers*, 1,4 (2002), <https://www.cia.gov/library/kent-center-occasional-papers/pdf/OPNo4.pdf>

⁴⁷ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p.41; M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: Second edition*, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 440 – 453.

order to provide greater clarity, the use of network will be used when a relationship displayed some degree of parity, whether in rank or in the degree of contribution of the members. When referring to groups commonly referred to as networks, alternative terminology, such as the notion of a cell will be utilised, to denote the specific forms these groups take will be identified.

This assessment does not reveal evidence to support a hierarchical or network approach, but equal evidence of both hierarchies and networks. Certain relationships, such as the Home Office, central government, and within institutions such as MI5 and Special Branch there is a clear hierarchy. A large amount of the official communication was one-way and constrained with policy directives passed from a superior to a subordinate.⁴⁸ However, the relationships between the institutions that carried out intelligence related duties display many characteristics that are attributed to contemporary intelligence networks. This is particularly true of regional police constabularies, but is also true of the relationship between MI5 and Special Branch. Because of their interconnectivity, nodal like communication, and relative equality, it is more accurate to classify these relationships as a series of networks.⁴⁹

The explanatory model, therefore, requires elaboration.⁵⁰ Rather than a hierarchy or network approach, it is suggested that British security was a hierarchy of networks.⁵¹ This elaboration maintains the traditional hierarchical perception of state security, particularly between policy makers and subordinate officials, but

⁴⁸ J. Mitchell, 'Hierarchies: Introduction', in G. Thompson, J. Frances, R. Levacic and J. Mitchell (eds.) *Markets, Hierarchies and Networks: The Coordination of Social Life*, (London: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 105.

⁴⁹ W. Powell, 'Neither Market nor Hierarchy: Network forms of Organisation', in G. Thompson, J. Frances, R. Levacic and J. Mitchell (eds.) *Markets, Hierarchies and Networks: The Coordination of Social Life*, (London: Sage Publications, 1991), p. 269; and Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 39 – 40.

⁵⁰ Beetham, 'Models of Bureaucracy', p.129.

⁵¹ See Appendix A, p. 312.

compensates for the examples of networks within the broader security apparatus. Within this model, political actors and leading security officials make up two networks: the political and the intelligence. These networks had a fluctuating membership with various ministers and officials forming informal connections throughout the period.⁵² Davies elaborates on this 'collegial' form, describing how: 'it is characterised by the "contributable nature of special knowledge and experience to the common task of the concern," a "network" system of communications based on lateral communications "resembling consultation rather than command," and "a content of communication which consists of information and advice rather than instructions and decisions."⁵³

A significant feature of the uppermost networks is the influence of fear, or threat perception, and its impact upon the development of Britain's security apparatus. Often, it was a commonly held fear of German spies, or the subversive influence of communism that bound politicians together into these networks that sought to influence the fabric of Britain's security apparatus. Rather than a proactive search for efficiency or a reactionary knee-jerk response to a crisis, fear was the main driving factor behind alterations to Britain's security apparatus.⁵⁴ The influence of fear in these developments accounts for the peaks and troughs, or the wave-like pattern of intelligence reform throughout the period. Instead of a pre-determined plan for the creations of a security apparatus, the political and intelligence networks were faced with circumstances which necessitated a response. As a result alterations and

⁵² Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 39.

⁵³ P. Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*, (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 325 – 326. See also: M. Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, (London: Unwin University Books, 1967), p. 181; and T. Burns and G. M. Stalker, *Management of Innovation*, (London: Tavistock, 1961), pp. 121 – 122.

⁵⁴ Johnson, 'A Shock theory of congressional accountability for intelligence', pp. 343 – 361.

adaptations were made in response to circumstances, and the fear, often of subversion inspired revolution, which was believed to be threatening British security.

The actors who made these decisions reside in the uppermost networks, and can be viewed as the collection of decision makers, or those who sought to influence policy. Below this network were evolving networks of intelligence officials, and police officers forming networks focussed on intelligence collection. It is this collection of networks which carried out the collection, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence to the higher networks.

The latter networks had hierarchical connections to the higher network, but maintained a degree of parity with their intelligence collection counterparts. The absence of a formalised structure stipulating seniority and the overlap with regards to the delegation of responsibilities resulted in a series of networks in competition. This is not the typical view of an interconnected intelligence network, instead representing a web of networked communications. Rather than portraying a centralised coordinated government apparatus, it is closer to the interpretation of businesses competing with a rival in one area, but also pursuing a joint venture with that rival in another.⁵⁵ The relationship between MI5, Special Branch, and MI6 is a clear example of this relationship.

Further elaboration of the means of government control of British security during this period reveals what can be described as mechanisms. These mechanisms are a collection of resources, personnel, and institutions to achieve aims determined from central government. During the period, there are three discernible mechanisms: intelligence, emergency, and oversight.

⁵⁵ Powell, 'Neither Market nor Hierarchy', pp. 268 – 270.

The emphasis on intelligence collection and the series of interconnecting networks to fulfill this requirement created what can be referred to as an intelligence mechanism. The various Chief Constables, officers of MI5, Special Branch and MI6, and independent actors were part of a larger mechanism which sought to seek out those who were perceived to be a threat to British security. An example of this intelligence mechanism can be seen in the outer most network displayed in Appendix A.⁵⁶ This mechanism was focussed on the collection of intelligence that could provide policy makers with sufficient insight to create policies to maintain British security.

As the threats to British security became more sophisticated, and their disruptive influences much greater, the government created a higher mechanism, one that exerted influence over the intelligence mechanism: the emergency mechanism. The emergency mechanism, which eventually became the Supply and Transport Organisation (STO), collated the intelligence collected, disseminated accurate reports to regional leaders and policy makers, and organised various civil resources. The ultimate goal of the emergency mechanism was to maintain a state of readiness for occasions when those the government believed to be subversive elements to be exploiting strike action to disrupt the 'essentials of life'.⁵⁷

The effective operations of the networks, mechanisms and the overall security apparatus was governed by law. Ensuring that the security operated within these boundaries was the role of the oversight mechanism. Although a primitive example of oversight, the series of Committees of Imperial Defence, Secret Service Committees,

⁵⁶ See Appendix A, p. 312.

⁵⁷ K. Jeffrey and P. Hennessy, *States of Emergency: British Governments and Strike Breaking since 1919*, (London: Routledge, 1983), p. 3

financial reviews, and appraisal of operations proved to be an important component of the security apparatus.

The role of the oversight mechanism was to carry out what can be termed proto-oversight. Although it was not as sophisticated as the oversight mechanisms created during the Cold War, it represents an experimental beginning in the control of an intelligence and security apparatus. It also reinforces the importance of law as an essential component within the explanatory framework. In order to fully understand how Britain's security apparatus operated, it is necessary to acknowledge the parameters which governed its activities. Alterations to laws governing the activities of a security apparatus is one of the last recourses of a government facing considerable threats to its security.⁵⁸ The importance of legal amendments is illustrated through the numerous attempts to create a new Public Order Bill in the 1930s.⁵⁹

The laws that govern how a security apparatus operates, not only include directives which may limit spheres of influence, but also the oversight and accountability functions of governance. The process of oversight is central to the efficient running of an intelligence and security apparatus. Without effective oversight, there are no repercussions for any transgressions, and no means to prevent improper conduct.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ I. Leigh, 'Intelligence and the Law in the United Kingdom', in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 640 – 655.

⁵⁹ Two attempts were made to draft new legislation for the growing public order concerns in the 1930s: 1932 Procession (Regulations) Bill and the 1934 Public Order Bill. For the former, see TNA HO 144/18294 and the latter, see TNA HO 45/25386.

⁶⁰ Gill, *Policing Politics*, pp. 207 – 296; Leigh, *The Frontiers of Secrecy*; Michael, *The Politics of Secrecy*; Norton-Taylor, *In Defence of the Realm*; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 52 – 54; Leigh, 'Intelligence and the Law in the UK', pp. 640 – 656; L. Fisher, 'Rethinking the State Secrets Privilege', in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 657 – 672; M. Phythian, "A Very British Institution", *The Intelligence and Security Committee and Intelligence Accountability in the United Kingdom*, in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 699 – 718; G. Hastedt, 'The Politics of Intelligence Accountability', pp. 719 – 734; M. Andregg, 'Ethics

Although the police were incorporated into networks, as well as the intelligence and emergency mechanisms, their importance to the security apparatus warrants further attention. Not only did the police perform an intelligence collection function, but they also acted as the front line in the effort to maintain British security.⁶¹ The role included combining an intelligence role with the more traditional criminal role. The combination of 'High' and 'Low Policing' roles, suggests that intelligence during this period, was closely bound with the activities of the police, or that it was police informed.⁶²

Police informed intelligence is an adaptation of intelligence-led policing and identifies the police as the instigators of intelligence investigations. The concept of intelligence-led policing refers to a development of an intelligence focussed approach

and Professional Intelligence', in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 735 – 757; S. Farson and R. Whittaker, 'Accounting for the Future or the Past? Developing Accountability and Oversight Systems to Meet Future Intelligence Needs', in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 673 – 698; T. C. Brueneau, and F. C. Matei, 'Intelligence in the Developing Democracies: The Quest for Transparency and Effectiveness', in L. Johnson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of National Security Intelligence*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 757 – 774; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 297 – 311; Gill, 'Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom', pp. 265 – 293; S. Shipiro, 'Parliament, Media, and the Control of Intelligence Services in Germany', in J. P. Brodeur, P. Gill, and D. Töllborg (eds), *Democracy, Law and Security: Internal Security Services in Contemporary Europe*, (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003), pp. 294 – 318; Johnson, 'A Shock theory of congressional accountability', pp. 343 – 361; M. Phythian, 'Intelligence oversight in the UK: the case of Iraq', in L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 301 – 314; H. Born, and T. Wetzling, 'Intelligence Accountability: challenges for parliaments and intelligence services', in L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 315 – 328; F. Manget, 'Intelligence and the rise of judicial intervention', in L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2011), pp. 329 – 342; H. Born, L. Johnson, and I. Leigh (eds.) *Who's Watching the Spies: Establishing Intelligence Service Accountability*, (Washington D.C: Potomac Books Inc, 2005); and M. Mc Cubbins and T. Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols and Fire Alarms', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 1, (1984), pp. 165 – 179; D. V. Puyvelde, 'Intelligence Accountability and the Role of Public Interest Groups in the United States', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 28, No. 3, (2013), pp. 139 – 158; Breakspear, 'A New Definition of Intelligence', pp. 678 – 693; and V. Madeira, "'No Wishful Thinking Allowed": Secret Service Committee and Intelligence Reform in Great Britain, 1919 – 1923', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2003), pp. 1 – 20.

⁶¹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

⁶² Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

to policing activities. It is a different prism to view the ‘way of doing police business’.⁶³ A main feature of police informed intelligence is a proactive approach, emphasising hunting and gathering intelligence and then using it to disrupt criminal or undesirable enterprises before crimes can be committed.⁶⁴ Police informed intelligence, therefore, refers to police officers, typically associated with low or criminal policing activities, and in the course of these duties also collecting intelligence to support future operations. While intelligence-led policing is the use of intelligence practices to enable policing priorities, police informed intelligence was the use of information gained from policing activities, whether ‘high’ or ‘low policing’, to support intelligence priorities.⁶⁵

These activities varied significantly throughout the period, but included the policing of public meetings, demonstrations, and pickets. A primary reason for the development of police informed intelligence was the requirement to gain accurate information on the progression of industrial disputes. These activities began on a smaller scale between 1909 and 1914. However, by the 1920s, when trade unions had a national membership, they were employed nationwide.

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⁶³ N. Tilley, ‘Community policing, problem-orientated policing and intelligence-led policing’, in T. Newburn (ed.) *Handbook of Policing*, (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2003), p. 321.

⁶⁴ Tilley, ‘Community policing’, pp. 312 - 313; A. James, ‘Forward to the past: reinvented intelligence-led policing in Britain’, *Police Practice and Research*, Vol. 15, No.1, (2014), pp. 79 – 80; J. Ratcliffe, ‘Intelligence-led policing and the problems of turning rhetoric into practice’, *Policing and Society*, Vol. 12, No. 1, (2002), pp. 53 – 66; G. Treverton, ‘Addressing “Complexities”’, pp. 353 – 355; T. Connors, ‘Putting the “L” into intelligence-Led Policing: How Police Leaders Can Leverage Intelligence Capability’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (2009), pp. 237 – 245.

⁶⁵ Tilley, ‘Community policing’, pp. 312 - 313; James, ‘Forward to the past’, pp. 79 – 80; Connors, ‘Putting the “L” into intelligence-Led Policing’, pp. 237 – 245; and Brodner, ‘High Policing and Low Policing’, p. 507.

In order to gain a greater appreciation for the developments of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus between 1909 and 1939, it is essential to analyse the apparatus that was already established. Without this appreciation, the reorganisation of British security in the 1920s, particularly the creation and abolition of the Directorate of Intelligence can appear as a 'flirtation with an umbrella homeland security office'.⁶⁶ Although it is accurate to claim that the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus was far from perfect, the series of adaptations was far from a knee jerk, or 'shock' reaction to a crisis.⁶⁷

When viewed alongside the developments of the Metropolitan Police, following its creation in 1829, these adaptations can be seen as repeated attempts to resolve previous problems with the same solutions. Repeated attempts to separate individuals tasked with sharing intelligence duties, as well as unifying them under one officer highlights that British policy makers, as well as those tasked with overseeing and analysing these developments, failed to learn the lessons present in a broad historical review. This failure resulted in the same mistakes being repeated, and the prevalence of flaws within the security apparatus.

⁶⁶ M. Van Cleave, 'Forward', in J. Hittle, *Britain's Counterinsurgency Failure: Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish War*, (Virginia: Potomac Books, 2011) p. ix. Michelle Van Cleave came to this conclusion after a meeting with the former Director General of MI5 Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller. For more on Van Cleave, see: M. Van Cleave, 'Strategic Counterintelligence: What is it and what should we do about it?', *Centre for the Study of Intelligence*, Vol. 52, No. 2 (2007); M. Van Cleave, 'Myth, Paradox & the Obligations of Leadership: Edward Snowden, Bradley Manning and the Next Leak', *Centre for Security Policy, Occasional Papers*, 15 October 2013; and M. Van Cleave, 'Foreign Spies Are Serious: Are We?', *The Washington Post*, 8 February 2009.

⁶⁷ Johnson utilises the 'shock theory', or police versus fire alarm analogy when debating different motivations for intelligence oversight. In the case of intelligence reform, the shock, or firefighting would equate to a response which was a sudden response to crisis with little deliberating time, or precedent in the intelligence community's history. The police patrol, on the other hand, would represent a steady investigation, with precedent in the intelligence community's history. For more on the shock theory and police patrol versus firefighting see: Johnson, 'A Shock theory of congressional accountability for intelligence', pp. 343 – 361; J. L. Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels: On the Practice of Intelligence Accountability in the United States', in H. Born, L. Johnson, I. Leigh (eds.) *Who's Watching the Spies: Establishing Intelligence Service Accountability*, (Potomac Books Inc: Washington, 2005), pp. 57 – 79; and McCubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 165 – 179.

Britain's security apparatus did not fundamentally alter in 1909. Instead, a series of changes throughout the nineteenth century had led to the foundations of Britain's security apparatus being laid. These changes involved the creation of the Metropolitan Police and its detective section in 1829, the Home Office's intelligence department in 1868, and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch in 1883. As well as these developments, the problems of intelligence liaison highlighted by the interaction of these three components illustrated fundamental flaws in the oversight of Britain's intelligence and security that persisted. The amendments to the delegation of responsibilities between these departments illustrate that the prevailing problems that existed in Britain's security apparatus existed much earlier.

The Metropolitan Police Special Branch, began with the creation, in 1842, of a detective branch, or Criminal Investigation Department (CID) within the Metropolitan Police.⁶⁸ Rather than the specific Special Branch section, created in 1883, this Special Branch referred to the plain clothes, or semi-clandestine section of the CID. This section carried out investigations into subversives, revolutionaries, or criminals until the formalisation of these duties in 1883. The surveillance of revolutionaries, during this period, typically related to foreign revolutionaries – Special Branch often being utilised to diffuse tensions between Britain and foreign governments.⁶⁹ The surveillance of criminals, however, was much more controversial. Porter recounts rare occasions when the police utilised disguises or hid themselves to observe an offence. One of these occasions occurred in 1845 when a police officer 'disguised himself as a cobbler in order to observe and arrest a counterfeiter [while] ... six years later

⁶⁸ Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 4; and Metropolitan Police, 'Timeline 1829 – 1849', (London: Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, 2013) p.2.

⁶⁹ Henderson, 'Memorandum', 28 March 1878, TNA, MEPO 2/156; Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 8; and B. Porter, *The Refugee Question in mid-Victorian Politics*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 151 - 152

another constable was similarly censured for hiding behind a tree to watch an indecent offence.⁷⁰ The use of these methods was not well received, particularly by the Home Secretary. This displeasure can be attributed to the utilisation of ‘high policing’ or intelligence methods to resolve a ‘low policing’ problem.⁷¹ The separation of these techniques being emphasised to prevent the use of ‘Continental’ methods in liberal England.⁷²

The official response to the Chartist movement in the 1840’s provides precedents for the impact that the perceived level of threat has upon the sophistication of the security apparatus, and the degree of centralised control that accompanies an increase in threat. While this centralising effort was in its infancy during the 1840s, the role of the police – particularly regional police constabularies is evident. This role involved the police taking notes on the proceedings of various meetings throughout the UK and the communicating those notes to the Home Office.⁷³ Despite the absence of a dedicated Special Branch, or regional CIDs, the British police were performing a ‘low’ and ‘high policing’ activities and supplying the details of those activities to the Home Office as early as 1840.⁷⁴

Further reinforcing the view that threat perception is a motivation for security adaptation. The impetuous to create a Home Office intelligence section came as a

⁷⁰ G. Grey, ‘Memorandum’, 12 December 1845, TNA, HO 45/1107; and Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 5.

⁷¹ Brodeur, ‘High Policing Low Policing’, p. 507.

⁷² Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 4; R. B. Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism: An International History, 1878 – 1934*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 185 – 341; R. B. Jensen, ‘The Secret Agent, International Policing, and Anarchist Terrorism’, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 29, No. 4, (2017), pp. 935 – 771; R. B. Jensen, *Liberty and order: the theory and practice of Italian public security police, 1848 to the crisis in 1890s*, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1991) A. Johansen, *Soldiers as Police, The French and Prussian Armies and the Policing of Popular Protest, 1889 – 1914*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); A. Johansen, ‘Soldiers as Riot Police in France and German, 1880 – 1914’, *French History*, Vol. 15, No. 4, (2001), pp. 400 – 420.

⁷³ The collection of regional police reports on Chartist meetings can be found in TNA HO 45/102, HO 45/249a, and HO 45/267

⁷⁴ Brodeur, ‘High Policing Low Policing’, p. 507.

result of the Fenian bombing campaign of 1867 – 1868, in particular, the Clerkenwell bombing in December 1867. Intelligence provided by the Dublin Metropolitan Police revealed that there was a plot to blow Clerkenwell prison ‘up’, as opposed to blown ‘down’ or ‘across’. Because of this use of terminology, the Commissioner limited his investigation to underneath the prison.⁷⁵ It was in the controversy surrounding this bombing that the Home office created its intelligence department, with Anglo-Irish barrister Robert Anderson taking the position of ‘advisor relating to political crime’.⁷⁶

Edward Troup, Under-Secretary of State for the Home Office between 1908 and 1922, indicated that Anderson’s role as ‘advisor relating to political crime’, involved HUMINT activities such as collecting information from paid informants. However, in the first incarnation of the Home Office’s intelligence apparatus, Anderson’s remit extended beyond the United Kingdom. Significantly, Anderson was responsible for paid informants, notably Le Caron, in the United States.⁷⁷ Thus, in the late 1860s, the separation of foreign intelligence, controlled by the foreign office, and British security, controlled by the Home Office, was non-existent. The lack of separation at this point had consequences for the future reorganisation of the Home Office’s intelligence apparatus when Basil Thomson (Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police, 1913 – 1921) assumed control as Director of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1919.

⁷⁵ Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 8; P. Thurmond Smith, *Policing Victorian London: Political Policing, Public Order, and the London Metropolitan Police*, (Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 192; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.16; and P. Kennedy, ‘The secret service department: a British Intelligence Bureau in mid-Victorian London, September 1867 – April 1868’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 18, No. 3, (2003), pp. 100 – 127.

⁷⁶ Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 8; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 16; Kennedy, ‘The Secret Service Department’, pp. 102 – 103; R. Anderson, *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*, (London: John Murray, 1910), pp. 23 – 26; T. Bunyan, *The History and Practice of the Political Police in Britain*, (London: Julian Friedman, 1976), pp. 102 – 105; and R. Deacon, *A History of the British Secret Service*, (New York: Taplinger, 1969), pp. 123 – 125.

⁷⁷ Troup, ‘The Home Office Secret Service’, 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 1.

Anderson was replaced in 1884 with Edward Jenkinson, who was Assistant Under-Secretary for Police and Crime in Dublin.⁷⁸ Although Anderson lost his position as the head of the Home Office intelligence section, he maintained his role as the controller of the American informants.⁷⁹ Following Jenkinson's appointment, his main focus was to prevent the bomb plots. In searching for the most effective method to complete this task, Jenkinson suggested a number of alterations to the organisation of Britain's internal security apparatus as a whole. Firstly, Jenkinson wished to combine his role as Assistant Under-Secretary for Police and Crime in Dublin with a similar position in Whitehall. Secondly, he proposed that he should have ultimate control over his own agents, the Divisional Magistrates Ireland, the Dublin Metropolitan Police, the Royal Irish Constabulary, Nicholas Gosselin - a resident magistrate in Ireland, and the various Police forces in Britain.⁸⁰ While many observers perceive Basil Thomson as seeking ultimate control over British intelligence in 1919, it is clear that Jenkinson preceded him in this desire, as well as in the extent of the bid.⁸¹

Jenkinson's greatest desire, however, was to create what can best be described as cells of informants. Individual informants sent to provincial towns and given 'ostensible occupations' as cover, who would be completely unaware of one another, as well as unknown to the local police forces.⁸² Although such an organisational change might have been effective, it was to be thwarted by the

⁷⁸ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4 151, p.1; and Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, pp. 49 – 50.

⁷⁹ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Jenkinson, 'Memorandum', 6 March 1884, TNA, HO 144/721/110757; and Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 50.

⁸¹ Andrew, *Defence of the Realm* p.106 – 109; and B. Porter, *Plots and Paranoia* p.146, and B. Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p.377.

⁸² Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 46.

combination of the acceptance of the need for secrecy, as well as the need for acceptance by the British Parliament.⁸³

The failure to enact these changes was the greatest detriment to Jenkinson's success; instead, it was the appointment of a new Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police, James Monro. Both proved to be incapable of cooperating with each other. The lack of liaison between Jenkinson and Monro culminated with Monro assuming control of all enquiries within London, and refusing to allow any of Jenkinson's informants to operate within London.⁸⁴ Troup highlighted that 'numerous attempts were made at compromise and cooperation ... [but] Sir Henry Mathews, [Home Secretary], in December 1886, abolished Mr. Jenkinson's office and entrusted the whole work to Mr. Monro'.⁸⁵

The friction between Jenkinson and Monro illustrates the problems of having two officers occupying similar, somewhat overlapping responsibilities within the security apparatus. Rather than seamless cooperation, it was commonplace for jealousy for resources and influence to become a barrier.⁸⁶ The lack of recognition of the friction that existed between Jenkinson and Monro, and the requirement for intervention, as opposed to allowing friction to continue was a fundamental cause of the breakdown of relations which erupted in 1931.

⁸³ Porter, *Origins of the Vigilant State*, p. 51. Although the British government did not accept Jenkinson's proposals, a very similar approach was adopted by Basil Thomson between 1917 and 1921 – much to the annoyance of regional Chief Constables.

⁸⁴ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.1. The ability of Monro to assume jurisdictional control was also held by regional Chief Constables and only overridden following a request for military aid to the civil power, a state of emergency, or by the Home Secretary during a national crisis. The independence of Chief Constables was reduced following the 1936 Public Order Bill which imposed greater powers on the Home Secretary with regards to processions.

⁸⁵ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.1.

⁸⁶ V. Kell, 'Staff Lecture', 1934, Private Papers of Sir Vernon Kell (Kell Papers), Imperial War Museum (IWM) PP/MCR/120, p. 13.

Monro's appointment caused further complications.⁸⁷ These complications were a result of his relationship with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Charles Warren. These problems were not a result of secret service work, but due to Monro's position as Assistant Commissioner (C) – which involved the leadership of the C.I.D. Monro's independence of action with regards to Home Office intelligence duties resulted in deepening resentment with the Commissioner. A similar confrontation occurred between Thomson and Commissioner Horwood in 1920.

Yet, Monro's resignation from his post as head of the C.I.D. did not resolve the issues between the two. Elaborate arrangements were made in dividing responsibility for enquiries within the Metropolis, which would be the responsibility of the Commissioner, and enquiries outside the Metropolis would be the responsibility of Monro.⁸⁸ This illustrates the necessity of having compatible personalities working alongside one another when dealing with internal security operations that affect the entire nation. The failure of the separation of responsibilities highlights that a compromising approach to reorganisation is unlikely to resolve such personality differences when resentment has already been established. As a result of this deep resentment between the Warren and Monro, Warren, according to Troup, resigned from his position as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, when these arrangements had 'hardly taken effect'.⁸⁹

In the period between Monro's appointment as Commissioner of Police and his resignation in 1890, he maintained the Home Office's intelligence work. Troup

⁸⁷ Monro remained the Assistant Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police when he assumed Jenkinson's role. Although Troup states that the office was abolished, Anderson still maintained a role as the handler of U.S intelligence assets. This suggests that only the work of the Home Office intelligence officer in the U.K. was transferred to Monro.

⁸⁸ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.2.

⁸⁹ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.2.

indicated that this arrangement 'worked well'.⁹⁰ Following Monro's departure in 1890, the Home Office took a more decentralised approach to its intelligence department. Two individuals Gosselin and Mr. H.G. Armstrong (Consul-General, New York) combined to conduct the Home Office's intelligence work in a quiet and tactful manner.⁹¹

The problems of liaison diminished somewhat when Sir Edward Henry became Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police. Henry, who later became Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, conducted enquiries within the United Kingdom, and intelligence work in America was supervised by Mr. C.A. Wilkins, a former Indian Civil Servant.

During the years which Jenkinson and Monro maintained control of the Home Office's intelligence department, various problems of communication, intelligence liaison, and jurisdiction plagued the system. A central problem was finding adequately qualified men who could execute the required task while co-operating with other members of the British security apparatus. The failure to recognise these inherent difficulties was a primary cause of the difficulties when attempting to reorganise Britain's intelligence and security apparatus in the 1920s and 1930s.

Chapter Breakdown

Although a theoretical approach to intelligence is important to this thesis, the appraisal of Britain's security apparatus will be divided chronologically. It will also maintain the typical time period, 1909 – 1939, common in similar studies to identify areas

⁹⁰ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.2.

⁹¹ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.2.

overlooked in the historiography.⁹² The primary focus of this study is the development of Britain's security apparatus, the exercise of central control, as well as the conduct of individual components collecting, and disseminating intelligence, which evolved in England and Wales throughout this period.⁹³ The maintenance of this time period emphasises the importance of the outer reaches of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, often overlooked in other studies. The chronological period permits other themes, such as the growth in perceived threats, and the oversight of the security apparatus to be fully explored.

Chapter two focuses upon the broader threats to Britain between the creation of the Secret Service Bureau in 1909 and the shift in perceived threats during 1915. While many current histories focus on the development of MI5 throughout these years, this chapter will highlight that the Special Branch and regional police constabularies were responsible for a considerable degree of intelligence duties relating to a number of perceived threats, such as Indian nationalism, the political activism of the Suffragette movement and industrial disputes. The focus on who collected intelligence will be used to emphasise that regional police constabularies were responsible for collecting and disseminating intelligence on public order incidents industrial disputes and disturbances. This will reinforce the perception of the police as intelligence collectors, and the role of the police informing intelligence operations prevalent in this period.

An analysis of how different departments communicated and liaised with one another highlights that, even in this early period, security focussed networks were

⁹² Limited attention is paid to developments impacting Ireland, Scotland and, to a lesser extent, the Empire.

⁹³ The evolution of these networks occurred on similar lines in Scotland and Ireland. However, owing to differences in the organisation of the Scottish police, the civil war in Ireland, the evolution of the security apparatus was contained primarily to England and Wales.

being formed. The development of these networks will be illustrated through the analysis of the police and military involvement during the South Wales Miners' Strike, 1910. The review of both military and police practices by General Macready, the officer in charge of military forces deployed to South Wales, in 1911 displays an advocacy for a network focussed approach to security related operations countering industrial disputes.

Alterations to the approach of the security apparatus during the Transport Workers Strike in 1911 supplement this analysis. This alteration emphasises that efforts to increase Home Office control aided in increasing the network focussed approach of the security apparatus. The latter analysis will also introduce the concept of threat perception, and its impact upon the centralised control of the Home Office, and the increase in powers granted to the security apparatus.

The third chapter will address the shift in the perceived dominant threat to British security: subversion. The exaggerated response to subversion by many politicians was influenced by the necessity to 'successfully prosecute the war'.⁹⁴ Rather than a measured approach to intelligence reform, the security apparatus – through the Parliamentary Military Secretary No. 2 Section (PMS2) – was permitted to experiment with elaborate, and morally questionable, HUMINT techniques. Despite the political fallout of PMS2, the perceived threat that politicians believed subversion posed to the security of Britain, and to the War effort, permitted Basil Thomson, Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police, to be given an enlarged remit.

This analysis of the intelligence policymaker relationship clearly reinforces the notion that the level of perceived threat increased the sophistication and size of the

⁹⁴ 'E. Troup to Chief Constables', 18 August 1917, TNA, HO 45/10884/346578.

security apparatus. It also highlights that the proximity of intelligence officials and policy makers can have a negative impact upon the efficiency of security apparatus, and of security related policy decisions. This portion of the analysis will introduce the political network. The political network, made up of leading politicians as well as influential intelligence and security officials had a significant impact upon the developments of British security. Rather than a static group of individuals, these networks membership and influence increased and decreased with the level of threat.

The development of the security apparatus in adopting the recommendations by Macready in 1911 is further explored in the examination of the industrial disputes which occurred between 1918 and 1919. The exploration of these disputes further emphasises the impact of threat perception upon the sophistication of the security apparatus, but also highlights that even in a period where the level of threat was considered to be in decline, the sophistication of the security apparatus remained greater than prior to its development.

The influence of threat perception, the political network, and the intelligence policy maker relationship is further explored in chapter four. This chapter analyses the introduction of the 'Emergency Powers Act' (1920), designed to maintain many of the features which intelligence officials and politicians believed to be essential to secure British security and the 'essentials of life'.⁹⁵ While reinforcing the notion of the steady increase of the sophistication of the security apparatus, this transition highlights the peak and trough nature of the security apparatus. Owing to this nature and the impact that the threat perception of the British government, despite decreasing, it did not dissipate, or return to its pre-war level.

⁹⁵ Jeffrey and Hennessy, *States of Emergency*, p. 3

The intelligence policy maker relationship is further explored through the negotiations between the British government and the Russian Trade Delegation. While there are numerous examples to highlight the overreach of intelligence officials during this period, the publication of intercepted communications between the Russian Trade Delegation and the Soviet government highlight that politicians were equally capable of overreach. This example highlights the problem of close proximity between intelligence officials and politicians.

The need for effective oversight of the security apparatus is further explored in the analysis of the Fisher Committee and SSC meetings in 1921. The need to retrench government spending in the aftermath of the First World War, as well as the infancy of overseeing a modern intelligence and security apparatus, resulted in a short-sighted approach to intelligence oversight. The greatest impact of this short-sighted approach to intelligence oversight is displayed in the actions of the SSC in attempting to reorganise the security apparatus following the departure of Basil Thomson in 1921. The combination of a poor understanding of the various components, and their internal make-up led to poor decisions on suitable alterations to the delegation of duties and the appointment of suitable personnel.

The capabilities of the security apparatus to operate autonomously, or with little government direction will be explored in chapter five through an analysis of the strikes facing the incoming Labour government. While previous chapters highlighted the developing nature of the security apparatus, this section will explore how the numerous components which made up the emergency mechanism, Supply and Transport Organisation (STO), Civil Commissioners, and regional police constabularies were transitioning from a reactive to a proactive response to potential emergencies arising from a large scale industrial dispute.

The appraisal of intelligence oversight will also be continued through an examination of the conduct of the intelligence and security apparatus during the Zinoviev letter. This analysis will reinforce the capabilities of members of the security and political networks to overreach their position and negatively influence policy. This assessment of intelligence oversight will be supplemented with a detailed examination of the 1925 meetings of the SSC following the Conservative victory in October 1924. Much like the meetings in 1921, the SSC failed to address fundamental personnel differences and take a broader review of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Rather than act proactively to prevent friction within the intelligence and security apparatus, the committee opted to take a 'fire alarm' approach to intelligence reform and to wait for the fallout from the competing departments.⁹⁶

The efficiency of the security apparatus, in particular, the capability to act as a network is illustrated, in chapter six, through its investigation and raid of the CPGB HQ; while the overall efficiency of the emergency mechanism is illustrated through its mobilisation during the General Strike. Together these examples illustrate that through the years of development following the First World War, the security apparatus and the emergency mechanism was able to respond efficiently and effectively to any crisis.

Moreover, despite political exaggeration of the perceived revolutionary threat of communism, the emergency mechanism was able to operate effectively and with minimal political interference. While there was overlap between the political and security networks, the extent of the Home Office's influence served as a positive feature rather than a negative.

⁹⁶ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 79; and Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 165 – 179.

The previous chapter will emphasise that there was some degree of jealousy between certain members of Special Branch, MI5, and MI6, the security apparatus as a whole, particularly regional Chief Constabularies, were capable of liaising and operating effectively. Furthermore, despite the flaws of the approach to oversight carried out by the SSC, the security apparatus was able to review its conduct following the General Strike, and institute an annual review in order to maintain similar levels of efficiency in the event of a future crisis.

Despite the level of efficiency displayed during the raid on the CPGB HQ and during the General Strike, chapter seven will display that the potential for friction and approach to oversight left fundamental flaws in the organisation and management of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus continued unchecked. The defects in liaison, identified in the 1925 SSC permitted the poor communication between MI6, MI5, and Special Branch to impact upon the efficiency on the raid on the All Russian Co-operative Society (ARCOS) in 1927.

The flaws in the oversight of the intelligence and security apparatus will be explored further through an examination of the 1927 SSC which failed to recommend changes to remedy a reoccurrence of similar problems. However, contrary to this narrative, this chapter will also present the continued effective liaison between MI5, MI6 and Special Branch. This will present liaison within the intelligence and security apparatus as effective, but with potential for poor communication.

This chapter will conclude with an appraisal of the revelation of two Special Branch members who were found to be operating for the intelligence cell controlled by William Norman Ewer – a journalist for the *Daily Herald*. The analysis of the secondary

appraisal of this revelation will be used to further reinforce the need for a flexible now and then approach to the definition of intelligence terminology.

Chapter eight will explore the fallout following the disagreement between Colonel Carter, Deputy Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police, and Desmond Morton, head of the production section of MI6. This fallout was the culmination of years of institutional jealousy and MI6's operation of its own intelligence cell, the casual network, within Britain. The significance of this fallout and resulting decision of the SSC to make fundamental changes to the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus is explored in detail.

Contrary to the existing narrative, the transfer of two sub-sections of Special Branch, SS1 and SS2, as well as MI6's casuals, did not constitute a significant shift in the delegation of responsibilities to Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Instead, the transfer of power following the SSC decision in 1931, constituted a transfer of the dissemination portion of the intelligence cycle, and not in the responsibilities for intelligence collection or analysis.⁹⁷ This portion of the analysis is complemented by a further examination of the importance of the 'us and them' approach to intelligence definition. While academic analysis of the terminology used during the SSC implies one explanation for the SSC decision in 1931, a broader review of SSC records, as well as the records of active investigations suggests that the changes to Special Branch's importance were not as significant as is currently believed.

The continuation of Special Branch's role as a central component of Britain's security apparatus is highlighted through its investigations into communist movement

⁹⁷ Hulnick, 'What's wrong with the Intelligence Cycle', pp. 959 – 979.

post 1931, particularly the hunger marches, and the Young Communist League. The lack of significant change following 1931 is further reinforced by the lack of impact upon the responsibilities of regional constabularies who still maintained a degree of autonomy in matters of counterintelligence and public order.

The final chapter reinforces the greater importance of the broader security apparatus as opposed to singular institutions. Through the analysis of the diverse threats to British security in the 1930s, chapter nine highlights the continued importance of the security apparatus, particularly Special Branch, through the response to public order incidents involving fascist and anti-fascist demonstrators.

This portion of the analysis is supplemented by the amendments to the legal parameters within which the security apparatus could operate. While there had been little change to these parameters since the introduction of the 'Emergency Powers Act', in 1920, the changes in the 1930s represent further examples of how the sophistication of the security apparatus, and the central control of the Home Office increase alongside the perceived level of threat.

The introduction of the 'Incitement to Disaffection Act' (1934) and the 'Public Order Act' (1936) illustrate that legal changes to the security apparatus represent one of the more powerful capabilities of central government to counter what it perceived to be a threat to security. The analysis of the 'Public Order Act', will be utilised to display that alongside legal changes, an increase in the level of threat is typically accompanied by an increase in central government control. The newly imposed parity of power between the Home Office and Chief Constables in allowing processions and the wearing of political uniforms resulted in an increase in Home Office power, while not greatly impacting the freedom that Chief Constables were accustomed too.

This analysis will display that British security history between 1909 and 1939 was more than the development of MI5 and MI6. Instead, a growing and fluctuating security apparatus developed and was amended to meet a changing security environment. The developments of the security apparatus were intertwined with the peaks and troughs of the threat perceptions of leading policy makers. However, despite frequent fluctuations in the perceived level of threat, the retrenchment never receded to a preceding low.

While this apparatus developed effective means of collecting and dissemination reliable intelligence on a number of perceived threats, the mechanism that developed was not without fault. The oversight of the intelligence and security apparatus repeatedly failed to take a broad review of the history of British intelligence and repeatedly attempted amendments that left fundamental flaws with the delegation of responsibilities. Because of these flaws, there was a failure to identify officials unlikely to cooperate with one another, and jealously pursue policies to the detriment of the broader security apparatus.

Despite these flaws, an autonomous security apparatus was developed, adapting to meet a variety of perceived threats to the realm. The regional police constabularies of the UK played a central role in this security apparatus in carrying out both 'low' and 'high policing' activities, and maintained this role, along with the Metropolitan Police Special Branch following the alterations in 1931.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

Chapter Two. A secret service revolution? British security and the threats to the realm, 1909 – 1915.

The prevalent bias towards MI5 is clearly evident in the intelligence histories of British security in the years preceding the First World War. These histories portray MI5's counter-espionage effort in an almost completely favourable light.⁹⁹ However, by adopting the view of British security as an apparatus it is possible to gain a broader and more in-depth understanding of how British security operated in years preceding, and during the first year of, the First World War.

Utilising this framework, this chapter will illustrate that MI5 was tasked with countering one of four key perceived threats to the realm. The other three perceived threats: Indian nationalists, the Suffragette movement, and labour militancy were all delegated to the Special Branch, and regional police constabularies. While the one key area delegated to MI5, counter-espionage, was of great importance, MI5 did not act in isolation. This chapter will assert that MI5 operated within a security apparatus, connected to adjacent institutions by a series of networks. These adjacent institutions, Special Branch and the regional police constabularies, each played an equally important role.

The chapter will demonstrate that each of the four key security threats to the realm occasioned some degree of adaptation by the various components of the security apparatus, whether in organisation, or in the dissemination of intelligence.

⁹⁹ The exception to this favourable view are the studies of Nicholas Hiley. See: N. Hiley, 'Entering the Lists: MI5's great spy round-up of August 1914', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (2006), pp. 46 – 76; N. Hiley, 'The Failure of British Counter Espionage against Germany, 1907 – 1908', *The Historical Journal*, 28 No.4 (1985), pp. 849 – 580; and N. Hiley, 'Re-entering the lists: MI5's Authorised History and the August 1914 Arrests', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 25, NO. 4, (2010), pp. 415 – 452.

The chapter does not challenge the central role of MI5 in its own assigned sphere, rather it illustrates that MI5 was but one component, dealing with one threat, within a larger security apparatus engaged against a plethora of threats.

The evolution of this security apparatus can also be viewed alongside increases in the Home Office's exertion of centralised control over British security. However, rather than this increase being a static process, this period highlights that the increases in Home Office control fluctuated in accordance with the perceived level of threat. Liaison and effective co-operation across the security apparatus, rather than the actions of one component, maintained British security.

This chapter will be divided into four sections, each dealing with a perceived threat to the realm. The first two sections will address Indian Nationalism and the Suffragette movement, and the developments to the Metropolitan Police Special Branch to counter them, as well as the establishment of Indian Political Intelligence (IPI) to coordinate the efforts to counter the perceived threat of Indian Nationalism. Although these threats were initially considered to be temporary, the persistent challenge they posed caused specific departments and sub departments to be formed to counter them.

The third section will analyse the response to industrial disputes, specifically the South Wales Miners' Strike in 1909 and the Transport Worker's Strike (Liverpool Railway Strike) in 1911. It will illustrate that, owing to the perceived severity of the threat, these disputes caused great increases in the employment of intelligence networks. It will also display how the increases in Home Office control and coordination of the intelligence collected. This was particularly evident during the organisation and

deployment of military resources during the South Wales and Transport Workers Strikes.

The final section will address the development of MI5 and how its efforts to surveil and disrupt German espionage in the years preceding and the first year of the First World War were enabled by the cooperation of the Special Branch and regional police constabularies. It is in this section that the notion of a security apparatus is particularly evident. While MI5 did have a leading role in investigating German espionage, the cooperation of Special Branch and regional police constabularies was essential.

The creation of IPI and the adaptation of the security apparatus to confront the perceived threat of Indian Nationalism can be interpreted as an early iteration of a 'knee jerk' or a shock approach to intelligence reform.¹⁰⁰ Rather than review the security apparatus, its capabilities, and the complexities of British security, a new department was created to combat the threat. This lack of planning and direction led many policy makers to believe the threat of Indian Nationalism was temporary. However, the longevity of the desire to assert Indian independence elevated it to one of the main threats to British security in the years preceding the First World War. Crucially, this was a threat that did not involve MI5.

Official perceptions about the threat of Indian Nationalism grew in the early years of the twentieth century. The rise of radical publications such as *The Indian Sociologist*, as well as suspected activities of the Indian nationalists in the United

¹⁰⁰ Johnson, 'A Shock theory of congressional accountability', pp. 343 – 361.

States and France resulted in the creation of IPI in 1909.¹⁰¹ However, despite the creation of IPI, the work of Special Branch in the surveillance of Indian nationalists did not decrease: indeed, much like Special Branch's connection with the monitoring of aliens following the creation of the Secret Service Bureau, and Special Branch's workload following the 1931 transfer of responsibilities to MI5, it actually increased.¹⁰²

The directive given to the newly established IPI was relatively limited, and as such, the resources available for independent enquiry were equally limited. IPI was established with the 'secondment of John Wallinger from the Indian Police to the India Office in 1909'.¹⁰³ This new department, as Popplewell notes, was never intended to expand the Department of Criminal Intelligence into a permanent imperial intelligence agency, but was a limited response to what the Indian Government saw as a short-term problem.¹⁰⁴

The problems of direction given to Wallinger were dramatically compounded following the assassination of Sir William Curzon Wylie, the political aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State for India, by Madan Lal Dhingra, an activist and advocate for Indian independence, in July 1909.¹⁰⁵ The assassination broke the lull in political violence that had existed in Britain since the Fenian bombings during the 1880s, and

¹⁰¹ 'Note on the Anti-British Movement among Native of India in America', Circular NO. 5, 1908', British Library (BL) Indian Office Records (IOR) L P&J 12/1; and K. O'Malley, *Ireland, India and Empire: Indo Irish Radical Connections, 1919 – 1964*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 6.

¹⁰² A similar increase in the workload of Special Branch occurred following the 1931 meeting of the SSC. See: Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70.

¹⁰³ O'Malley, *Ireland, India and Empire* p. 6. Wallinger was previously a Superintendent for Bombay police, see: R Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire, 1904 – 1924*, (London, Frank Cass, 1995), p. 138.

¹⁰⁴ R. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p.137. Wallinger was initially only to be seconded to the India Office for one year. When it became apparent that his secondment was going to last much longer, he began to enquire whether he would receive any financial increments as a result of how 'out of pocket' he was becoming: see: Wallinger to M. Section (India Office) 28 march 1912, (BL) IOR/L/P&J/12/36.

¹⁰⁵ Hulnick, 'What's wrong with the Intelligence Cycle', pp. 959 – 979.

focused the attention of Special Branch towards Indian nationalists.¹⁰⁶ This great increase in the threat posed by Indian Nationalism added greater importance to the surveillance of Indian nationalists, and the liaison between IPI and Special Branch.

Although this cooperation was of the utmost importance, the overlapping jurisdictions resulted in a degree of friction. Much like the surveillance of suspected Irish terrorists in the 1880s, Special Branch viewed the adjacent department with suspicion. Popplewell records that 'Scotland Yard resented his [Wallinger's] working independently'; but it is equally true that Special Branch resented the strain on its resources.¹⁰⁷

The impact of the Indian investigations on Special Branch's resources was repeatedly emphasised in correspondence between Superintendent Quinn, nominal head of the Special Branch and Commissioner Edward Henry, and between Henry and Troup.¹⁰⁸ Quinn, in particular, articulated the strain placed upon Special Branch by the increased demands placed upon it from the personal protection afforded to ministers 'whose lives are considered to be in danger ... [from] Indians of extreme views' and the enquiries resulting from the murder of Sir Curzon Wylie.¹⁰⁹ However,

¹⁰⁶ O'Malley, *Ireland, India, and Empire*, p. 6; Porter, *Origins*, p. 164; Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, pp. 125 – 126; and Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 1. The problems of international terrorism, typically attributed to anarchists, had been a persistent problem for European governments towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, see: Jensen, *The Battle Against Anarchist Terrorism*, pp. 185 – 341.

¹⁰⁷ Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p. 138.

¹⁰⁸ P. Quinn to E. Henry, 'Augmentations', 7 July 1909; E. Henry to E. Troup, 10 July 1909; and E. Troup (Under Secretary of State, Home Office) to E. Henry, 12 July, TNA, MEPO 2/1297. For more information on the nominal heads of Special Branch, see: Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. xiii.

¹⁰⁹ P. Quinn to E. Henry, 'Augmentations', 7 July 1909, TNA, MEPO 2/1297; O'Malley, *Ireland, India and Empire*, p. 6; Porter, *Origins*, p. 164; and Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, pp. 134 – 136.

these strains were alleviated following the augmentation of Special Branch by two sergeants and two constables.¹¹⁰

The efforts of Special Branch to meet the demands of monitoring Indian nationalists were also hampered by their other duties. During the negotiations to increase the number of officers in the (B) – Irish – division of Special Branch, Quinn emphasised the importance of countering ‘agitation of the Suffragettes’.¹¹¹ As well as the personal protection afforded to the Prime Minister, it also involved the policing and surveillance of Suffragette meetings and investigating the damage to property.¹¹²

Special Branch’s primacy in conducting investigations into the Indian nationalist movement is evident in the strain placed upon it, and the repeated requests for augmentation. The latter also reinforces the view that the response to Indian nationalism was a short-term ‘knee jerk’ reaction to the assignation of Sir Curzon Wyllie.¹¹³ However flawed this approach may have been, it was one that focussed upon Special Branch and IPI, and not MI5. Significantly, the creation of IPI and the augmentation of Special Branch is evidence that the development of Britain’s security apparatus was interwoven and influenced by the developing threats to the realm. Rather than a careful series of decisions to create an efficient organisation, official responses came as a result of evolving threats.

¹¹⁰ Quinn to E. Henry, ‘Augmentations’, 7 July 1909; Quinn to Henry, ‘Augmentation to Special Branch’, 5 July 1910; and W. Byrne to Henry, 27 January 1910, TNA, MEPO 2/1297; Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, pp. 138 – 139.

¹¹¹ P. Quinn to E. Henry, ‘Augmentations’, 7 July 1909, TNA, MEPO 2/1297, p. 2.

¹¹² P. Quinn to E. Henry, ‘Augmentations’, 7 July 1909, TNA, MEPO 2/1297, p. 2; and C.J. Bearman, ‘An Examination of Suffragette Violence’, *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 120, No. 486, (2005) pp. 365 – 397.

¹¹³ Johnson, ‘A Shock theory of congressional accountability’, pp. 343 – 361.

The investigations into the activities of the Suffragette movement was an area where the role of the police within the intelligence mechanism was particularly prominent, as well as the police-informed intelligence approach to British security. The combination of 'low' and 'high policing' activities by the British police illustrates the blurred line that existed between the two.¹¹⁴ The conduct of regional police constabularies further supports the interpretation that the police acted as intelligence collectors often independent of any hierarchical supervision. As the analysis of the official response to Indian nationalism highlighted, the response to the Suffragette movement focussed on the police – and not MI5.

Political activism, in pursuit of female suffrage, was one of the main perceived threats that faced the British government in years preceding the First World War. Groups such as the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) posed a serious threat to public order. The use of violence during meetings had begun to garner favour with the WSPU because of the increased publicity they received, particularly following a meeting in Manchester in 1905. Channing has shown that the WSPU began to view militancy as a central plank of their activities: the propaganda of the deed was more effective than more traditional campaigning.¹¹⁵

In a similar manner to the response which accompanied the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and anti-fascist demonstrations in the 1930's, the violence associated with the WSPU influenced politicians to change the law: Parliament passed the Public Meeting Act in 1908. In doing so they changed the parameters within which Britain's

¹¹⁴ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

¹¹⁵ I. Channing, 'Blackshirts and White Wigs: Reflection on Public Order Law and the Political Activism of the British Union of Fascists', (Unpublished PhD Theses, Plymouth University, 2013) p. 219; C. Rover, *Women's Suffrage and Party Politics in Britain 1866 – 1914*, (Routledge: Kegan and Paul Ltd, 1967), p. 80.

security apparatus could operate.¹¹⁶ However, the changes of legislation were not accompanied by wholesale revision, or amendments to, the constituent components of the security apparatus. Instead, amendments were contained to altering the manner in which the existing security apparatus could operate.

The Public Meeting Act neither curtailed WSPU activities, nor official apprehensions about Women's Suffrage. As these apprehensions increased, so too did the security response of the British government. No more agencies were created but security became more important and more intense. This was particularly true with regards to the surveillance carried out by Britain's security apparatus, particularly the Special Branch.

During the early months of 1909, while MI5 was still part of the Secret Service Bureau, the established components of Britain's security apparatus were already engaged against WSPU. These components primarily comprised of the regional police constabularies across the United Kingdom, with Special Branch playing a co-ordinating role. However, these changes largely resemble a network – with each party 'sharing expertise'.¹¹⁷ In a similar manner to the early investigation and surveillance of Indian nationalists, Special Branch's existing resources were stretched to meet the new challenge. It was only when policy makers appreciated the severity of the threat that change was made. Special Branch devoted a significant proportion of its officers to 'combat their [WSPU's] designs and protect Ministers from insult, annoyance and violence'.¹¹⁸ The augmentation of Special Branch involved an increase in officers, of

¹¹⁶ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 221.

¹¹⁷ Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*, p. 326; and Burns and Stalker, *Management of Innovation*, pp. 121 – 122.

¹¹⁸ A. Bruce, Assistant Commissioner (A), to E. Troup, Under Secretary of State, Home Office, 15 September 1909, TNA, HO 144/1043/183461, p. 1; Porter, *Origins*, p. 164; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 57.

varying ranks to the Irish (B) section of Special Branch, the section typically assigned to investigate acts of political violence.¹¹⁹

In the main, politicians believed that the WSPU, much like the Indian nationalists, posed a temporary a threat to British security. However, Alexander Carmichael Bruce's, Assistant Commissioner (A), correspondence reveals the police doubted that the 'troubles' associated with the suffragettes were likely to reduce.¹²⁰ Bruce argued that the officers assigned to anti-suffragette posts should be promoted permanently.¹²¹ Bruce's comments were prophetic: attempts to provide limited enfranchisement for women were defeated in the House of Commons in November 1910 and the years that followed witnessed an increase in the severity of the WSPU's use of violence.¹²²

The primary role of the Special Branch officers assigned to the WSPU was surveillance. Relatively little attention was paid to the regular damage to property: the official evidence relating to the investigation of the Suffragettes focuses upon uniformed and plain clothed surveillance of political meetings. The records of the surveillance of Suffragette meetings provide an insight into the intelligence collection practices of the pre-war British police, and the forms of cover used by the Special Branch.

¹¹⁹ Bruce to Troup, 15 September 1909, TNA, HO 144/1043/183461, p. 2.

¹²⁰ Although Bruce was Assistant Commissioner (A) responsible for Administration, and unofficially the Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, the severity of the Suffragette threat and the blurred line that existed between 'low' and 'high policing' caused him to intervene in a matter that was primarily the remit of the Assistant Commissioner (C).

¹²¹ Bruce to Troup, 22 September 1909, TNA, HO 144/1043/183461.

¹²² Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p.58; C.J. Bearman, 'An Examination of Suffragette Violence', pp. 365 – 397; and J. Purvis, "'Deeds not Words": Daily Life in the Women's Social and Political Union in Edwardian Britain', in S. Holton and J. Purvis (eds.) *Votes for Women*, (London: Routledge, 1999) pp. 135 - 158; and B. Harrison, *Peaceable Kingdom: Stability and Change in Modern Britain*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

Mere months after he assumed the position as Assistant Commissioner (C), of the Metropolitan Police, head of both the Criminal Investigation Department and the Special Branch, Basil Thomson was at the forefront of discussions regarding solutions to Special Branch officers gaining entry into Suffragette meetings. In correspondence with the Home Office, Thomson reported:

Officers of the Special Branch have lately had great difficulty in obtaining admission to meetings of Syndicalists and Suffragettes, and have more than once been recognised and molested during the course of such meetings. When they have attended as Pressmen objections have been raised by the reporters.¹²³

Unlike many reports regarding the surveillance of political activism in Britain, it is rare to gain such insight into the practices of the British police. It is possible to surmise that officers assigned to conduct surveillance of meetings during this period, adopted 'notional cover', wore plain clothes, and claim to be reporters if questioned.¹²⁴ From the information available, there is no indication that officers established more sophisticated forms of cover, either official or non-official, but they were nevertheless acting in a highly intrusive proactive rather than a reactive manner.¹²⁵

The actions of the police in entering private meetings stood in contrast to the official stance given by the Metropolitan Police. The perspective was that the police were not able to enter such meetings unless invited.¹²⁶ The appraisal of police entering public meetings was not confined to the surveillance of political activists, but also to the preservation of public order. This issue illustrates a conflict in police practices. In the former example, conducting surveillance, the police were entering public meetings

¹²³ B. Thomson to E. Troup, 15 October 1913, TNA, HO 45/10625/198406.

¹²⁴ B. Thomson to E. Troup, 15 October 1913, TNA, HO 45/10625/198406; and Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 66.

¹²⁵ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 66; P. Gill, *Rounding Up the Usual Suspects? Developments in Contemporary Law Enforcement Intelligence*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2000), pp. 79 – 80; and A. Sanders and R. Young, 'Police Powers' in T. Newburn (ed.) *Handbook of Policing*, (Devon: Willan Publishing, 2003), p. 246.

¹²⁶ This was the official stance taken during the aftermath of the BUF Olympia Rally in 1934, see Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 89; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 198; and Clark, *NCCL*, p. 69

often without the consent of the hosts. The latter example emphasises the reluctance of some police forces to enter meetings to preserve public order. It would seem apparent that the police were present when they were not wanted, and not present when they were needed.

The issue of entering public meetings was addressed by the Departmental Committee on the 'Duties of the Police with respect to the Preservation of Order at Public Meetings'. The Committee published a report on police practices in April 1909 and failed to suggest any significant changes in this norm. One significant aspect of the report highlighted three guidelines which should govern police practices: unwise for the police to interfere further than is necessary to prevent a breach of the peace; payment should be given to the police by the promoters of a meeting for any assistance given in the preservation of public order, and keeping order inside public meetings is part of the ordinary duties of the police.¹²⁷

Despite the lengthy interviews with various Chief Constables and the private secretary of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, the report did not advocate a universal approach to the policing of public meetings. Significantly, some Chief Constables had expressed a desire for more legislative cover.¹²⁸ However, the Committee concluded that resentment of police interference was likely to decrease rather than increase security.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ 'Report of the Departmental Committee on the Duties of the Police with respect to the Preservation of Order at Public Meetings: Vol. I Report and Appendices', TNA, MEPO 2/1264, p. 15; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 224.

¹²⁸ 'Report of the Departmental Committee on the Duties of the Police with respect to the Preservation of Order at Public Meetings: Vol. II Minutes of Evidence', TNA, MEPO 2/1264.

¹²⁹ 'Report of the Departmental Committee on the Duties of the Police with respect to the Preservation of Order at Public Meetings: Vol. I Report and Appendices', TNA, MEPO 2/1264, p. 15; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 224.

Channing illustrates that the rationale for not imposing greater powers upon the police was to prevent them being 'resented by public sentiment as an apparent infringement of the liberty of public meeting'.¹³⁰ The Committee believed that this resentment would outweigh any benefit gained from the police acting as stewards at public meetings.¹³¹ However, a broader influence may have also played a role in the Committee's decision: severity of threat.

Although meetings were under threat from interruption, the disruption and breaches of the peace were not sufficient to exhaust current police powers. Even the Chief Constable of Manchester, the only Chief Constable who supported Austen Chamberlain and J. Boraston's (Secretary of the Liberal Unionist Association) proposals for legislative reform, stated that the methods currently employed by the police were successful.¹³² The Committee recognised the threat of disorder at public meetings, but did not believe it was sufficient to exhaust the powers of the police, warrant legislative reform, or a centralised response.

Thomson's communication with the Home Office makes no reference to such a limit. Instead, Thomson suggested outsourcing the collection of intelligence in order to reduce the frequency of Special Branch officers attending meetings. Thomson proposed to pay 'one of the News Agencies for the supply of a short precis of the speeches, or in special cases of a verbatim transcript' to limit the frequency of Special Branch officers being noticed.¹³³ By outsourcing intelligence collecting to newspapers, the limited number of Special Branch officers attending public meetings would be less likely to be identified by the hosts. This would greatly increase their likelihood of

¹³⁰ 'Preservation of Public Order at Meetings', vol. I, p. 14, TNA, MEPO 2/1264.

¹³¹ 'Preservation of Public Order at Meetings', vol. I, p. 14, TNA, MEPO 2/1264.

¹³² 'Preservation of Public Order at Meetings', vol. I, p. 13 – 14; 'Preservation of Public Order at Meetings', vol. II, p. 14, TNA, MEPO 2/1264.

¹³³ B. Thomson to E. Troup, 15 October 1913, TNA, HO 45/10625/198406.

successfully infiltrating meetings, and obtaining accurate notes of the proceedings when necessary.

Although this technique of acquiring a précis of meetings, was a suitable open source intelligence (OSINT) alternative to Special Branch conducting surveillance, it was not Thomson's intention to rule out Special Branch surveillance operations. Thomson believed that the précis supplied by the News Agency could be used to keep the police informed, and 'when these reports show that the language is so inflammatory and dangerous ... arrangements will be made to introduce a police officer in the usual way'.¹³⁴ It is evident that Thomson was not attempting to limit the actions of Special Branch officers because of any legal limitations, but rather to prevent Special Branch officers being identified, and ensure a steady flow of intelligence.

Whilst outsourcing short-hand note taking at meetings on a more permanent basis may have been Thomson's idea, the use of notes taken by the media at public meetings was not confined to the Metropolitan Police. Regional Chief Constabularies, also engaged in the surveillance of Suffragette meetings, procured notes taken by the media. In February 1913, four months before Thomson became AC (C), during a meeting of the WSPU in Cardiff, Cardiff City Police received transcripts of shorthand notes taken by the *Morning Post*. This was in addition to the short-hand notes taken by an officer in 'plain clothes'.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ B. Thomson to E. Troup, 15 October 1913, TNA, HO 45/10625/198406.

¹³⁵ D. Williams, (Head Constable, Cardiff City police) to M. Macnaughten, (Assistant Commissioner C) 20 February 1913; F. J. Hodson, (Assistant Editor, *Morning Post*,) to D. Williams 20 February 1913; W. Harrison (Superintendent Cardiff City police) to D. Williams, 20 February 1913, TNA, HO 45/10695/231695.

The combination of notes taken by Superintendent Harrison, and the report from the *Morning Post*, highlights that, even in 1913, Special Branch was not the focal point of new surveillance practices employed by the police. Police constabularies were aware of the value of pooling, or 'fusing' multiple sources of intelligence to ensure accuracy.¹³⁶ In correspondence with Macnaughten, AC (C), - Thomson's predecessor – Williams (Head Constable of Cardiff City Police), emphasised that the different accounts of the WSPU meeting corroborated one another.¹³⁷ The example of Cardiff City Police utilising these techniques reinforces the view that the police informed other departments of efficient techniques, particularly regarding the collection of intelligence during indoor meetings.

The police presence at the WSPU meeting in Cardiff was not confined to the plain clothes officer. In addition, there was one Chief Inspector, one Inspector, and thirty constables – twenty of the latter being kept in the basement of the venue in case of a disturbance. The reports disseminated by Cardiff City Police to the Metropolitan Police illustrate that, by 1913, regional police constabularies, as well as the Metropolitan Police, were performing a dual function: collecting intelligence via officers in plain clothes and through agreements with news agencies. This was in addition to stationing uniformed officers inside the building in case of a public order incident.

The combination of different types of police officers, conducting a range of activities, demonstrates that the conceptual difference between what Brodeur defines as 'low' and 'high' policing was not evident in 1913.¹³⁸ It is doubly significant that there

¹³⁶ R. Russell, 'Achieving all-source fusion in the Intelligence' Community', in L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009) p. 189 – 198; and J. Simms, 'Intelligence to counter terror: The importance of all source fusion', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2007), pp. 38 – 56.

¹³⁷ D. Williams, (Head Constable, Cardiff City police) to M. Macnaughten, (Assistant Commissioner C) 20 February 1913, TNA, HO 45/10695/231695.

¹³⁸ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp. 507 – 520.

was already a synthesis between low, public order, policing and high, intelligence, policing was operating as a norm in Cardiff. The reach and sophistication of this unified approach to policing was not simply confined to the capital. The police apparatus was incorporated into an early form of the intelligence mechanism, performing police informed intelligence practices, before the First World War.

Whilst the role of the police within the security apparatus was increasing in significance, with 'high policing' increasing in both influence and in the sophistication of technique, there was also growing inter-agency collaboration. The vector for such collaboration was labour unrest.¹³⁹ In 1910, a violent miners' strike erupted in South Wales.¹⁴⁰ The government called in the military. Yet, like the police, this military intervention focused on maintaining security, and access to reliable intelligence, rather than the immediate restoration of public order.¹⁴¹ Significantly, the response to the South Wales Miners' Strike and the Transport Workers Strike involved the networking of military resources, with the civilian security apparatus. However, rather than maintain a traditional military reliant approach to industrial action and public order incidents, the focus was shifted to the police with a heavy centralising influence of the Home Office.

The employment of military forces during the South Wales Miner's strike did not only differ from previous military responses because of its security intelligence focus.

¹³⁹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp. 507 - 520

¹⁴⁰ 'Welsh Mining Riot: Mob Storms a Railway Station', *Evening News*, 2 November 1910; and L. Lindsay, (Chief Constable, Glamorganshire) to O.H. Jones, (Chairman of the Standing Joint Police Committee), 'Cwmlllynfell, Colliery, Cwmtwrch, Ystalyfera', 3 November 1910, TNA, HO 144/1551/199768.

¹⁴¹ The military also played a significant role in the maintenance of public order in other European countries. See: A. Johansen, 'State bureaucrats and local influence on the use of military troops for maintenance of public order in France and Prussia, 1889 – 1914', *Crime, History and Societies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2001), pp. 53 – 73.

It also faced a great increase in the degree of central control exerted by the Home Office. Under Churchill's instructions, General Macready (the officer in charge of military forces despatched to South Wales) was only to employ military resources if the situation deteriorated significantly. This was a decision which marked a transition of the military's role during industrial disputes.

Unlike previous deployments of the military to counter outbreaks of violence during industrial disputes, the military adopted a network focussed approach to the collection of intelligence. Rather than ensuring the maintenance of order, the military, focussed on collecting reliable intelligence. Macready argued that this network focussed approach, and the collection of intelligence would be critical to later operations where the military and the police would be employed in unison.¹⁴² The Home Secretary, Winston Churchill, was particularly in favour of such a syncretic approach.¹⁴³

Instead of the traditional military focussed approach to an incident of disorder, Churchill's intervention reinforced the role of the police, and suggested a new approach for the military. During a conference on 8 November, Churchill halted the despatch of military forces to Cardiff; and instead, replaced them with officers of the Metropolitan Police. This policy was amended, following further information provided by Lionel Lindsay, Chief Constable of Glamorganshire Police, who articulated the gravity of the situation. Churchill then agreed to the despatch of further officers of the Metropolitan Police along with the cavalry, 'under the charge of a special officer from HQ ... General Macready'.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² 'Notes of proceedings on Tuesday 8 November', 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁴³ Churchill to Macready, 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁴⁴ 'Notes of proceedings on Tuesday 8 November', 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

Churchill's centralising role, assessing and reassessing the most appropriate strategy as events unfolded, also involved the issuing of directions to both Lindsay, controlling the civil forces, and Macready the military. Churchill was particularly detailed with his instructions to Macready, stating:

If the emergency comes to the point where the Police authorities apply to you to use the military, you should then assume control of all the police and military on the spot act as you think for the preservation of order and prevention of bloodshed. You will consider whether the police forces can be used any further to quell riot without actually involving the military ... you and the authorities on the spot should bear in mind that vigorous baton charges may be the best means of preventing recourse to fire-arms.¹⁴⁵

These directions echoed the instructions provided to Lindsay, who was to use the Metropolitan Police and officers from other constabularies under his command to 'avert the necessity for using the military'.¹⁴⁶ From these correspondences, Churchill's belief regarding the most effective manner to counter instances of disorder and threats to security is clear. Rather than an immediate recourse to military reinforcements, Churchill believed that an effective use of civil resources would be sufficient.

Churchill had no wish to send the military in and to leave the government response at that. He emphasised the importance of the regular flow of intelligence. In correspondence with Lindsay and Macready, Churchill demanded regular contact regarding events. He also sent a representative from the Home Office, Mr. Moylan, to the strike area, to report independently.¹⁴⁷ This desire for multiple sources of intelligence highlights Churchill's recognition of the importance of intelligence early in his political career.¹⁴⁸ Although this recognition was central to the successful

¹⁴⁵ Churchill to Macready, 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁴⁶ Churchill to Macready, 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁴⁷ Churchill to Lindsay, 9 November 1910; and Churchill to Macready, 9 November 1910; and Macready, 'Diary', 9 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁴⁸ For works which explore Churchill and intelligence, see: R. Aldrich and R. Cormac, *The Black Door: Spies, Secret Intelligence, and British Prime Ministers*, (London: William Collins, 2016), pp.90 - 136; C. Andrew, 'Churchill and Intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 3, No. 3, (1988), pp. 181 – 193; Bennett, *Churchill's*; D. Stafford, *Churchill and Secret Service*, (London: John Murray, 1997); R. Aldrich, 'Conspiracy or Confusion? Churchill, Roosevelt and Pearl Harbour', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (1992), pp. 335 – 346.

management of South Wales Miner's strike, and later industrial disputes, the approach by Churchill and the Home office did not account for the need to centralise the receipt of intelligence, preventing an all-source fusion approach to intelligence analysis.¹⁴⁹

The primacy of utilising the resources of the police in the maintenance of law and order placed the military in a supporting role. Such a change in the typical role of the military, however, was not received well by local officials. They believed that the use of the military sooner would have prevented the outbreaks of disorder that occurred, and that the 'present arrangements are quite inadequate for [the] protection of life and property'.¹⁵⁰ The response of the Home Office made their position on the use of the military abundantly clear. Troup argued that a 'premature display of military force ... might have had precisely the opposite effect'.¹⁵¹ From this exchange Churchill's preference for a security information network to any kind of centralised military authority is evident. Despite the complaints from local business owners, Churchill stood firm with his new approach to public order incidents during industrial disputes.¹⁵²

Local officials were reminded of this official stance during a meeting with Macready, local Chief Constables, and Mr. Moylan (the representative from the Home Office). Despite Churchill's instructions relating to an eventuality when civil resources had been exhausted, Macready conveyed them as an outline for his approach to the disorder occurring in South Wales, and stated that 'he could not allow the troops to act

¹⁴⁹ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 101; R. Russell, 'Achieving all-source fusion in the Intelligence' pp. 189 – 198; Simms, 'Intelligence to counter terror', p. 38 – 56.

¹⁵⁰ Secretary of Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners Association to Churchill, 10 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁵¹ Troup to Secretary of Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners Association, 12 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁵² Secretary of Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners Association to Churchill, 10 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768; Troup to Secretary of Monmouthshire and South Wales Coal Owners Association, 12 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768; Macready, 'Diary of Events (Friday 11 November)', 12 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768 pp. 3 – 4.

in any way as police'.¹⁵³ Thus, Macready was left with the assignment of ensuring that civil resources were utilised efficiently enough to minimise the use of the military. As a result, Macready turned to gathering intelligence to enable him to make an informed decision of when to deploy military resources.

Upon arriving in Tonypany, Macready requested three officers for intelligence duties, but was allocated two – Major Freeth, who succeeded Macready as officer in charge of military forces in South Wales following Macready's return to the War Office in January 1911, and Captain Childs who became Assistant Commissioner (C) of the Metropolitan Police in 1921.¹⁵⁴ These officers were placed in different areas where disturbances were considered likely, and reported upon developing situations. Utilising these officers to gather intelligence, Macready was able to gain reliable local intelligence that would not only allow him to appraise incidents of disorder, and their severity, but also the police officers, and the local officials he was liaising with. Moreover, using this alongside the information provided by the police and local officials, Macready was able to disseminate reliable well informed reports to the Home Office.¹⁵⁵

After appraising the situation, Macready concluded: local constabularies were unable to discern an increase in the severity of a disturbance; mine owners believed that 'the whole resources of the Empire should be placed at his disposal' and his disposal only, while on the other hand, the strikers are unable to appreciate the fact

¹⁵³ Macready, 'Diary of Events (Friday 11 November)', 12 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768 pp. 3 – 4.

¹⁵⁴ Moylan, 'untitled memorandum' 15 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768; and Porter, *Origins*, p. 174.

¹⁵⁵ Macready, 'Diary of Events', 18 November 1910, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768, Porter, *Origins*, p. 174.

that indemnity for lawlessness is not provided in the Picketing Act.¹⁵⁶ The careful collection of intelligence had proved to be of greater importance than more troops in identifying when the intensification of miners' activities constituted a genuine threat and required substantial reinforcement.

When appraising the actions of the military following his return to London, Macready placed a great emphasis, both on the requirements of intelligence, and the network focussed approach which he adopted during the Strike. Macready interpreted the system in place prior to his arrival, relying upon managers for information regarding strikers, as 'worthless'; '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 sense of security in regard to the intentions of manager or strikers.'¹⁵⁷

Significantly, Macready highlighted that this system was of such great importance that it should be 'taken up at the commencement of any strike where there are indication that subsequent events may lead to their despatch of military or even Metropolitan Police'.¹⁵⁸ Macready also concluded that the intelligence officers selected should appraise the area a number of days prior to the arrival of the military.¹⁵⁹

The lessons derived from the Miners' strike were subsequently rolled out into a system. While Macready was correct in highlighting the impracticality of assessing a strike area, prior to the despatch of military or Metropolitan police reinforcements,

¹⁵⁶ Macready, 'Diary of Events (Friday 11 November)', 12 November 1910, p. 8; and Macready, 'Diary of Events', 18 November 1910, p. 3, TNA, HO 1441/1551/19768.

¹⁵⁷ General Macready to Churchill, 'Memorandum Certain Points connected with the Strike in South Wales' 5 January 1911, p. 77 in *Home Office: Colliery Strike Disturbance in South Wales. Correspondence: November 1910*, TNA, HO 144/1553/199768.

¹⁵⁸ Macready to Churchill, 'Memorandum Certain Points connected with the Strike in South Wales' 5 January 1911, p. 77, TNA, HO 144/1553/199768.

¹⁵⁹ Macready to Churchill, 'Memorandum Certain Points connected with the Strike in South Wales', 5 January 1911, p. 77, TNA, HO 144/1553/199768.

numerous aspects of his approach to British security had been recognised as integral, and were employed on a much grander scale.

During the Transport Workers Strike, the coordination of police resources, the regular updates from regional command officers, and the appreciation for local intelligence were all of pivotal importance. Moreover, the centralising influence of Churchill and the Home Office was of even greater significance owing to the near national impact of the Transport Workers Strike. The near national impact and the increase in the threat perceived by policy makers resulted in an increase in central control and the coordination of resources to maintain British security.

While many features of the network focussed approach to British security, such as central control from the Home Office, and a network focussed approach to intelligence collection were present during the South Wales Miner's strike, their true value became evident during the Transport Workers Strike, 1911. Owing to the syndicalist nature of the strike, with many areas striking in sympathy with railwaymen in Liverpool, the requirement to centralise control and the collection of intelligence was paramount.

Following the system pioneered by Macready, regional commands were put into place with each providing a daily diary of events; however, only in the South Wales strike area, where Macready's successor Major Freeth was stationed, did typical correspondence conform to the same layout.¹⁶⁰ This displays that despite the adoption of Macready's proposals, a uniform approach to the content and presentation of the reports had not been established.

¹⁶⁰ Freeth, 'Diary of Events, South Wales Strike Area', 18 August 1911, TNA, HO 45/10655/212470.

The Transport Workers strike, also saw the Home Office producing intelligence reports for internal consumption. Arthur L. Dixon's (Assistant Secretary to Under-Secretary of the Home Office) role being more focussed on the centralising of information received by the Home Office. However, the Transport Workers Strike does not show a great deal of progression from the South Wales Miner's strike, but significant lessons, such as the importance of central control were recognised.

During the Transport Workers strike, there was a higher level of attention paid to the need to secure the 'essentials of life' as a national security priority, as opposed to the local interests of businesses or 'public order' as an abstract concept.¹⁶¹ This was largely a result of the main difference between the South Wales Miner's Strike, and the Transport Workers Strike: scale. Upon the commencement of the strike, various Chief Constables and Mayors were all preparing for the eventualities of their resources being depleted, and enquiring about the procedure to request military aid.¹⁶² Significantly, these enquiries were not constrained to the volume of troops that could be requisitioned, but who they should send the request too.¹⁶³ Although Macready emphasised preparation and assessment of the situation – local officials were ill-informed of official procedure in such scenarios. Moreover, the increasing scale of the Transport Workers Strike resulted in such endeavours, as Macready noted, impossible.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶¹ Jeffrey and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3.

¹⁶² See: Major R. L. Bower (Chief Constable North Allerton Police) to Troup, 5 July 1911; L. Dunning (Head Constable of Liverpool City Police) to Troup 7 August 1911; A. Dixon (Home Office), 'Manchester', 17 August 1911; H. K. Stephenson (Lord Mayor, Sheffield) to Churchill, 16 August 1911; E. Robinson, (Deputy Lord Mayor), to Churchill, 14 August 1911; and Town Clerk, Rotherham, to Troup; 16 August 1911, TNA, HO 45/10654/212470. The monitoring of essential supplies during the transport workers strike was a precedent for official concerns following the First World War to maintain the 'essentials of life': Jeffrey and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3.

¹⁶³ Town Clerk, Rotherham, to Troup; 16 August 1911; and Troup to Town Clerk, Rotherham, 16 August 1911, TNA, HO 45/10654/212470.

¹⁶⁴ Macready, 'Points connected with the Strike in South Wales', 5 January 1911, TNA, HO 144/1553/199768, p. 50.

Despite, the difficulties present with assessing the volume of reports of actions of strikers, requests for military assistance, and shortages of food supplies, the Home Office managed to maintain a degree of control, and limit the requisitioning of the military. However, this limitation on the use of the military was a result of fiscal restraint, rather than an alternative approach to public order and industrial disputes.

In correspondence with regional police constabularies, Troup advised that, ‘if the police force at your command is not adequate to give effective protection to life and property ... it will be necessary for you to have Special Constables sworn in’.¹⁶⁵ Significantly, however, the Home Office did not propose to provide financial assistance to the local constabularies in their enrolment of Special Constables. Instead, the Home Office offered to pay ‘up to six shillings a day’ as long as the number of Constables does not exceed fifty percent of the ‘authorised strength of the force’.¹⁶⁶ In a continuation of a shoestring budget for Special Constables, the Home Office listed, among the characteristics of men suitable for duty: ‘trustworthy character, good physique, and those ‘public spirited citizens whose position enables them to serve without pay’.¹⁶⁷ Although the sophistication of the centralised official response to the Transport Workers Strike is clear, the willingness to pay for the necessary resources was lacking.

The greatest controversy surrounding the actions of Britain’s security apparatus during the Transport Worker’s strike was the use of the military. The traditional practice, one which remained common practice in other strikes, involved the resources

¹⁶⁵ Troup, ‘Telegram from the Home Office to Police Authorities in the Disturbed Areas regarding the Appointment of Special Constables’, 17 August 1911, TNA, HO 45/10654/212470.

¹⁶⁶ Troup, ‘Police Authorities in the Disturbed Areas’, 17 August 1911; and Troup to unlisted recipients, re. the appointment of Special Constables in disturbed areas, TNA, HO 45/10654/212470.

¹⁶⁷ Troup, ‘Police Authorities in the Disturbed Areas’, 17 August 1911; and Troup to unlisted recipients, re. the appointment of Special Constables in disturbed areas, TNA, HO 45/10654/212470.

of the civil power becoming depleted, and then the local authority, requesting military assistance. It was along these guidelines that Macready operated during the South Wales Miners Strike. However, owing to the volume of disturbances and disruption to the rail network, Churchill intervened. In telegrams to all Police Authorities in disturbed areas, Churchill suspended the Army regulation which required the formal requisitioning of military aid from the local authority, and granted the General Officers in Command of strike areas the ability to exercise their discretion as to whether troops were required.¹⁶⁸

While utilising the military in this manner was an effective use of central control, it caused a great deal of resentment amongst the population. During the course of, and following the strike, numerous letters of protest were received by the Home Office.¹⁶⁹ In reply to one such letter of protest, Churchill wrote:

The position is different when disturbances arise which affect the whole country. The Government is responsible for the maintenance of peace and order throughout the country as a whole, and the measures required to effect this object cannot be left to disconnected and possibly inconsistent action on the part of a large number of local Authorities, but must be carried out on a well-considered and uniform scheme adapted to the requirements of the whole of the areas affected.¹⁷⁰

The scale of the threat posed by the South Wales Miners and Transport Workers strikes, and its perceived impact, was sufficient to warrant an increase in central control. This increase represents one of the more powerful options of the government's executive powers to respond to a perceived threat to British security. The Transport Workers strike, in particular, highlights that the employment of the

¹⁶⁸ Troup to all Police Authorities within the Disturbed Areas, 19 August 1911, in 'Home Office: Railway Strike of August, 1911. Confidential Memoranda and Reports', TNA, HO 45/10658/212470, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ There are numerous collections of letters of protest, contained within sub folders, regarding the use of the military during the strike. See Sub folders 355, 359, 361, 364, 367, 377, and 378, TNA, HO 45/10656/212470; and Sub Folder 381 TNA, HO 45/10657/212470.

¹⁷⁰ Troup to G. R. Shepherd (Organising Secretary, Dundee Labour Representation Committee), 6 October 1911, TNA, HO 45/10657/212470, pp. 1 – 2; see also: 'Employment of Military without Requisition', 21 October 1911, 'Home Office: Railway Strike of August, 1911. Confidential Memoranda and Reports', TNA, HO 45/10658/212470, pp. 3 – 5.

security apparatus, and amendments to powers rose in accordance with the level of perceived threat. Although the extent of central control was not fully developed, the South Wales Miners and Transport Workers strikes represent the beginning of the Home Office's coordinating role during a crisis.

It is alongside these diverse threats to the realm, that the early years of MI5 must be considered. Like other agencies, MI5 was merely one more component within Britain's larger and evolving security apparatus. Like them, it was bound into a system of mutual interdependence: the regional police relied on the army; the army relied on the regional police; the Special Branch relied on the regular police; the regional police relied upon Special Branch. It was thus entirely predictable that MI5 would rely on the Special Branch, and local police constabularies too.

MI5 owed its creation to a large extent, to the growing sensationalism attracted by the increasing popularity of spy literature in Great Britain. The period, known as 'spy fever', was characterised by the underhand German spy quietly collecting intelligence in British coastal towns in order to prepare for a German invasion.¹⁷¹ One of the periods most well-known, authors, William Le Queux, ignited public opinion, helping spread the notion that Germans were secretly plotting within Britain.¹⁷²

This growing sensationalism spread to MO3, the section of military operations tasked with investigating German espionage prior to the creation of MI5, under the leadership of Major General James Edmonds.¹⁷³ In March 1909 Edmonds presented

¹⁷¹ D. French, 'Spy Fever in Britain', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 21, No. 2 (1978), pp. 355 - 370.

¹⁷² W. Le Quex, *The Invasion of 1910*, (London: E Nash, 1906); and W. Le Quex, *Spies of the Kaiser: Plotting the Downfall of England*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1909).

¹⁷³ Andrew, *MI5*, pp. 10 – 11.

the intelligence he had collected, largely testimonies from over-enthusiastic citizens living near coastal towns, or in the path described by Le Queux, to a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence. Noting the weaknesses in British espionage, and from the evidence provided by Edmonds, counter-espionage, the committee sought improvements.¹⁷⁴

Although the committee noted the weaknesses in British intelligence at this time, it did not seek to amend the apparatus and question the reliability of the evidence that Edmonds presented to it.¹⁷⁵ Instead, it supported the conclusions of Edmund's intelligence. The committee suggested four alterations to the existing security system: a system of controls to monitor aliens; a scheme for the defence of vulnerable points; a strengthened Official Secret Act; and a 'regular secret service'.¹⁷⁶ The final recommendation: a regular secret service led to the creation of the Secret Service Bureau (SSB), divided into domestic and foreign sections.

The SSB was one effort to strengthen the security apparatus: it was not the means of controlling the entire security apparatus. The other elements of the report were devolved to existing agencies. A system of controls to limit the movement of aliens was considered to be an effective method to limit the impact of German espionage, or sabotage. It was hoped that a system similar to the Germans', where foreign officials had to register with local police or garrison commander when moving to, or residing in certain areas, might be implemented. However, practical difficulties

¹⁷⁴ French, 'Spy Fever in Britain', p. 358.

¹⁷⁵ this same system which the committee noted as insufficient, was commended by Macready following the South Wales Miner's strike. It is more accurate to separate the underfunding and lack of officers working for British intelligence, than to criticise the approach itself.

¹⁷⁶ 'Report and Proceedings of a sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence appointed to consider the question of Foreign Espionage in the United Kingdom', 24 July 1909, TNA, CAB 16/8; and French, 'Spy Fever', p. 358.

such as the volume of aliens residing and travelling through the UK made such a scheme impractical.¹⁷⁷

While officially registering all aliens within Britain was deemed impractical, it was decided that an unofficial register should be created by regional police constabularies. Despite the potential political ramifications of such a list being released to the public, by 1913 the police had collated over 28,000 names, and addresses, and naturalisation status of both Germans and Austrians in the UK.¹⁷⁸ Much like the previous examples, the role of the police in the surveillance of people of German and Austrian origin illustrates a police informed approach to intelligence.

The Director General of MI5, Vernon Kell, was instructed to concentrate on the hunt for German intelligence officers. In order to do so, he was instructed by the sub-committee to establish and maintain contact with local police constabularies.¹⁷⁹ Major General Ewart, the Director of Military Operations, believed this connection to be of such importance, that he requested that Kell be granted 'private communication' with regional Chief Constables, which Churchill permitted.¹⁸⁰ This private communication not only granted Kell access to intelligence collected by Chief Constables on suspected German spies, regardless of how reliable that intelligence was, but also put him in contact with those Chief Constables preparing the unofficial aliens register. Such a list had immense value for Kell. Not only did it prove to be a starting point for

¹⁷⁷ French, 'Spy Fever', p. 359.

¹⁷⁸ Troup, 'Note', 12 May 1910, TNA, CAB 17/90; and French, 'Spy Fever', pp. 359 - 360

¹⁷⁹ Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', pp. 48 – 49; and Hiley, 'The Failure of British Counter Espionage', pp. 849 – 580.

¹⁸⁰ Major General S. Ewart to W. Churchill, 27 April 1910, and E. Marsh to All Chief Constables of England and Wales, 28 April 1910, TNA, HO 317/44.

the infamous Special Watch List created prior to the outbreak of war, it also aided in his investigation of suspected spies.¹⁸¹

However, MI5 did not employ liaison officers or agents to work alongside the regional Chief Constables investigating German espionage. Instead, MI5's primary method for investigating suspected German spies was postal interception.¹⁸² This reliance on postal interception provides a crucial insight into the intelligence collection practices of MI5. Owing to the limited number of staff, such a method of intelligence collection was the most efficient way to carry out surveillance operations and monitor suspected German spies within the UK. Although this was a practical use of MI5's resources, it does emphasise the limited role which MI5 played in the intelligence collection process.

Rather than conducting any form of HUMINT, MI5's primary role was intelligence analysis. The postal intercepts were carried out by the Post Office, and intercepted communications were then subsequently handed to MI5.¹⁸³ While the analysis of postal intercepts did yield significant results this practice illustrates that MI5, in the pre First World War period, played a minimal role in collecting intelligence on suspected German spies.

MI5's liaison with regional police constabularies, however, extended further than the delivery of names for the unofficial aliens register, and involved the conduct of HUMINT practices to collect intelligence on suspected German spies. The role of

¹⁸¹ Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', p. 48; Andrew, *MI5*, pp.46 – 51; Hiley, 'Re-entering the lists', p 415 - 452; and T. Hennessey and C. Thomas, *The Unofficial History of MI5*, (Stroud: Amberley Publishing, 2009), p. 39.

¹⁸² Andrew, *MI5*, p. 36; Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', p. 48; Hiley, 'Re-entering the Lists'

¹⁸³ D. Campbell-Smith, *Masters of the Post: The Authorised History of the Royal Mail*, (London: Penguin Books, 2012), pp. 214 – 215.

regional police constabularies in collecting this intelligence further supports the view of MI5 as part of the security apparatus.

Bernard Porter's research on MI5's pre-war liaison with British police constabularies led him to argue that a break rapidly occurred in the formal relations between MI5 and the Chief Constables. Following this break, Kell 'bypassed Chief Constables and found police officers willing to work with him'.¹⁸⁴ Porter cites correspondence between Kell and W.J. Pringle, of Blackpool borough constabulary. Porter interprets a plea for the recognition of the 'independent' work of Detective Inspector Leeson, which references his determination to work independently, even when at the point of exhaustion, as evidence of Kell's direct connection with officers of regional police constabularies.¹⁸⁵

If such an overreach of traditional forms of communication were true, it would illustrate poor liaison within the security apparatus, and reinforce the common friction between adjacent security departments. The concept that the head of a department established a year earlier could override the orders of a Chief Constable, and delegate duties to a police officer would have sparked a damaging confrontation between the police and MI5. The likely fallout would have mirrored that between Jenkinson and Monro in the 1880s. Moreover, it would support an interpretation that MI5, by 1910, had already ascended to a grandiose position above the police a year after its creation.

However, Pringle was the Chief Constable of Blackpool borough Police, and his recognition of the work carried out by Leeson confirms that his duties had been

¹⁸⁴ Porter, *Origins*, p. 170.

¹⁸⁵ W.J. Pringle (Chief Constable of Blackpool Police) to Kell, 2 January 1918, TNA, HO 45/10892/357291.

'handed' to him by the Chief Constable.¹⁸⁶ This supports the view that, following Churchill's request, regional Chief Constables were responsible for the degree of liaison with MI5. This also highlights that before the formalisation of a 'special branch' within each regional police constabulary, officers were being assigned 'special' duties in connection with surveillance of political activists, or broader counter-intelligence operations.¹⁸⁷

The combination of the Chief Constables' Aliens list and Kell's intercepted correspondence resulted in another list, the 'Special War List', of 200 suspects who were suspected of posing a risk during the event of war.¹⁸⁸ These individuals were divided into three groups: those who should be watched, searched or arrested.¹⁸⁹ Despite close scrutiny of this list by a number of historians, it remains unclear if it was circulated to the police.

It was the role of regional Chief Constables to watch, search, and arrest suspected German spies in their jurisdiction at the outbreak of war. Despite the intelligence provided from a specific list to incriminate suspects, there was still a degree of verification and surveillance prior to arrest.¹⁹⁰ Significantly, the 'great spy round-up' was largely the result of police work. A number of those officially listed as arrested were actually arrested following the investigations of local police constabularies in the days leading to, or early days of the outbreak of War.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ 'Borough Constabularies, England'; and Pringle to Kell, 2 January 1918, TNA, HO 45/10892/357291.

¹⁸⁷ For more on the formalisation of Special Branches within the UKs police constabularies, see: Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 42 – 43.

¹⁸⁸ Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', p. 49.

¹⁸⁹ 'Special War List: Wanted or to be Watched if in Great Britain', and 'List of Persons arrested since outbreak of war', TNA, KV 1/7; and Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', p. 49.

¹⁹⁰ R. J. Drake, 'Rough Notes on the History of German Espionage in this Country', 4 January 1917, TNA, KV 1/7, p. 4; Hiley 'Entering the Lists', pp. 49 – 50.

¹⁹¹ Frederic Sukowski, Karl Stubenwoll, and Thomas Hegnauer are among those Hiley lists as individuals arrested at the instigation of local police constabularies, and or individuals whose case

Even the *Authorised History of MI5* argues that the well-known spy round-up was only possible because of the cooperation established between MI5 and the regional Chief Constables.¹⁹² The severity and sophistication of the espionage effort directed by Germany against Britain can be debated. However, it was the result of this cooperation and liaison that 21 individuals, were arrested, and a 'devastating blow' to German espionage was delivered.¹⁹³

Rather than viewing MI5 as a lone department which overcame the determination of German espionage, it is more appropriate to view the counter-espionage effort as a task carried out by Britain's security apparatus. In this view, each department supported, and provided assistance to the other when requested. This conceptual approach accounts of the liaison and networking of British security during industrial action, and public order disputes. Although MI5 was a new element in the security apparatus, specifically focused on German spies, the means by which those spies were dealt with was markedly similar to the practice in other security spheres. By 1914 the development of Britain's security apparatus was entering a period of maturity. However, it would require a significant increase in the perceived level of threat, a Great War, to act as a catalyst to cement the central control of the Home Office, and the network focussed approach to British security.

against them by MI5 was dubious, see Hiley, 'Entering the Lists', pp. 53 – 54; and Hiley, 'Re-entering the Lists', pp. 415 – 452.

¹⁹² Andrew, *MI5*, p. 50.

¹⁹³ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 51.

Chapter Three. Searching for Subversion, 1916 – 1920.

Although the threat of German espionage would remain throughout the First World War, it was overshadowed by the potential of subversion. It is remarkable to note that this threat would dominate the time and resources of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. However, the subversive threat did not originate with the rise of Lenin, but with Germany. It was the combination of the industrial demands of the First World War, and the potential disruption caused by industrial action that caused the threat of subversion to rise to prominence.

The enemy within notion was a central component which motivated British policy makers and security officials to remain vigilant. Unlike the efforts to identify potential German agents within the UK, distinguishing between loyal and disloyal members of the population was far more difficult. Instead of identifying foreign individuals who appeared to be acting suspiciously, Britain's security apparatus was now tasked with uncovering revolutionary plots among the entire population.

The threat of subversion especially that which was sponsored by the Soviet communism, posed the greatest challenge for Britain's security apparatus. However, it also poses a similar challenge for the analyst of intelligence history. The first of these challenges is merely defining what is meant by subversion. Merlyn Rees, Home Secretary (1976 – 1979), defined subversion as 'activities ... which threaten the safety or well-being of the state, and which are intended to undermine or overthrow parliamentary democracy by political industrial or violent means'.¹⁹⁴ Until this point,

¹⁹⁴ R. Spjut, 'Defining Subversion', *British Journal of Law and Society*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1979), p. 254; HC Debs., ser.5, col.6 (6 April 1978).

there was no official definition of subversion. Significantly, no leading political or intelligence officials of the period under study offered their interpretation of what subversion actually was. Although Rees' definition is useful, it must be recognised that Rees' understanding of the subversive threat was based upon the security environment of the 1970's. As such, for Rees' definition of subversion to be useful, it must be analysed critically.

In this climate of enhanced vigilance and exaggerated threat, British policy makers took on a similar role to that of the intelligence analyst. Rather than be provided a carefully analysed, or 'finished', intelligence product, they received a variety of often contradictory 'raw' reports.¹⁹⁵ As a result, policy makers were left to fill in the missing areas with their own prejudice and bias. These prejudices are clear in the parallels drawn between the Socialist movement in Britain and cancer.¹⁹⁶ The greatest impact these prejudices had was upon threat perception. When policy makers were conducting 'mirror-imaging' techniques to gain an insight in the 'thought processes' of suspected revolutionaries and subversives, they did so without the tools to separate their own beliefs from that of the intelligence available.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, the degree of threat which these individuals posed was greatly exaggerated.

¹⁹⁵ S. Marrin, 'Adding value to the intelligence product' in L. Johnson (ed.) *Handbook of Intelligence Studies*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 199 – 211; and J. Callaghan and K. Morgan, 'The Open Conspiracy of the Communist Party and the case of W. N. Ewer, Communist and Anti-Communist', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (2006), pp. 549 – 564.

¹⁹⁶ Victor Madeira has conducted research into the use of 'cancer' by British politicians to describe the Communist movement, see: V. Madeira, 'Excising the "Cancer": British and Imperial Intelligence and the Struggle against Communist "Subversion", 1917 – 1924', (Unpublished M.Phil thesis, Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, 2001); Madeira, 'No Wishful thinking', pp. 1 – 20; and Madeira, *Britannia*, pp. 5 – 9, 11, 18, 34, 43, 78, 79 – 82, 115, and 194. See also: Thomson, 'Report 25: A Monthly Review of revolutionary Movements in British Dominions and Foreign Countries', TNA, CAB 24/117; Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 376; R. Ullman, *The Anglo-Soviet Relations Vol III: The Anglo-Soviet Accord*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 276; A. Mayer, *Politics and Diplomacy of Peace-making: Containment and Counterrevolution at Versailles, 1918 – 1929*, (London: Vintage, 1968), pp. 27 – 28.

¹⁹⁷ Jackson, 'On Uncertainty and the Limits', pp. 456 – 453; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 120 – 122; and Gill, 'Knowing the self, knowing the other', pp. 82 – 90.

The key aspect Rees' definition of subversion which illuminates the challenge which subversion posed to Britain's security and policy officials is intent. A group of individuals could plot subversive activities, but have no intention to overthrow British democratic institutions – their contemplation being an expression of their discontent. The security apparatus had to distinguish a dividing line between discontent and a revolutionary challenge. Subversion, therefore, posed a potential threat to the state. It is because of the great potential of subversion and the heightened perception of threat, that British politicians tasked its security apparatus with searching and uncovering it.

Subversion gained a much greater importance following the Russian Revolutions in 1917, but its origins can be traced back to 1916 when it was believed that Germany was attempting to sponsor labour unrest. Yet, what is most interesting about this period is not just the shift in perceived threats, but how a range of political, military, and intelligence officials reacted to this change. The newly formed Ministry of Munitions aimed to uncover what it believed to be undesirable elements within the labour force, utilising officers of MI5 – through PMS2 – to control a collection of infiltrators who employed provocative and ethically questionable tactics to uncover plots.¹⁹⁸

Although the shift towards the Special Branch, 1917, as the lead department investigating what was then termed 'pacifist and revolutionary movements' can be considered a return to a more traditional approach to British security, the perceived level of threat which faced Britain did not decline.¹⁹⁹ Instead, a series of collegial

¹⁹⁸ N. Hiley, 'British Internal Security in Wartime: The Rise and Fall of P.M.S.2, 1915 – 1917', *Intelligence and National Security*, 3, 1 (1986), pp. 395 - 415; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 96; and B. Porter, *Plots and Paranoia: A History of Political Espionage in Britain, 1790 – 1988*, (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p.145.

¹⁹⁹ 'Pacifist and Revolutionary feeling was the first title given to the reports compiled by Thomson in 1917. See: 'Report No. 25: Fortnightly Report on Pacifism and Revolutionary Organisations in the

connections between policy makers and intelligence officials manifested itself into the most influential network: the political.

There were intermittent efforts between 1918 and 1939 to increase the formality and improve the efficiency of the dissemination process. The lack of official safeguards to prevent potential abuses of intelligence is another central feature of the relationship between Britain's security apparatus and policy makers.²⁰⁰ This mixture of unofficial and official communication between security officials and policy makers resulted in a fluctuating network of influential figures and policy officials, who often manipulated policy in pursuit of their own interest.

As the dissemination of intelligence became more liberal, the opposite occurred in the employment of HUMINT techniques. The use of intrusive surveillance operations as the primary method to collect intelligence on labour unrest, and revolutionary agitators illustrates that Britain's approach to maintaining internal security was far more similar to its European counterparts than the traditional liberal perspective would imply.²⁰¹ While the previous chapter has illustrated that the structure of the police's intelligence collection practices was still in its infancy, it became far more sophisticated in this period. The First World War, and the range of industrial disputes between 1916 and 1920 influenced the formalisation and centralisation of these processes.

This marked a distinct change in the traditional role of the police. Previously, the police's intelligence role had been conducted in times of crisis or widespread disorder. The great increases in the perceived level of threat resulted in the police's

United Kingdom, and Morale in France and Italy', 4 November 1918, TNA, CAB 24/69. These reports became 'Revolutionary Organisation in the UK' following the Armistice.

²⁰⁰ E. Poteat, 'The use and abuse of intelligence: An intelligence provider's perspective', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 11, No. 2, (2000), pp. 1 – 16.

²⁰¹ Porter, B. *The Origins*, pp. 15 – 19.

intelligence role being used far more often. Instead of only fulfilling a traditional role of deterring and detecting perpetrators of crime, regional police constabularies also formed an important network within the security apparatus. This network, with each hub controlled by the Chief Constable, was responsible for collecting intelligence on a variety of perceived threats to British security. It was at the discretion of the Chief Constable to determine how intrusive these operations were, and when to report back to Special Branch or the Home Office. However, as the frequency and severity of industrial disputes increased, so too did the central control exerted by the Home office.

The conduct of the police in responding to these perceived threats reveals a degree of similarity with twenty-first-century intelligence practices – albeit in their infancy. Because of the variety of HUMINT techniques employed by the police, and their proactive nature, it can be argued that they were ‘hunters’ as well as ‘gatherers’ of information.²⁰² The all-encompassing nature of threats facing Britain at this time, and the role of the police in investigating them, the police can be considered Britain’s front-line in the counter-subversive effort. The combination of this front line and the diverse HUMINT techniques employed further reinforces the view of intelligence being police informed.

A network focussed approach to the study of British security, in this period, is particularly effective in highlighting the subtle features of the apparatus that the strains of war and the challenges of peace exacerbated. In order to explore this network approach to British security, the following portion of analysis will be divided into two sections. The first will examine the relationship between intelligence officials and policy makers. It will be argued that certain arrangements increased the efficiency of British

²⁰² Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p.78.

counterintelligence, but safeguards to prevent abuses of intelligence were not implemented.²⁰³ This perspective will be illustrated through Basil Thomson's relationship with a number of policy makers. It was a result of this environment, the pressure to 'successfully prosecute the war', and the revolutionary challenge posed by the radical left which allowed the security apparatus to flourish.²⁰⁴ This will be complemented with an examination of the dissemination process. While the preceding section highlights the flaws of the intelligence policymaker relationship, the analysis of the dissemination process illustrates the degree of proficiency that existed.

The second section will analyse the apparatus for collecting intelligence on the greatest perceived subversive threat towards British security: labour unrest. This section will detail how increasingly political British counterintelligence became – particularly the role of regional Police Constabularies during the police railway and coal strikes between 1918 and 1919. It will explore organisational changes that occurred following the Armistice in 1918, and detail how the fear of the subversive threat and impending revolution caused further centralisation and influenced the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1919. A secondary feature of this section will be an investigation of the respective roles of individual agencies. This will be utilised to assess their relative importance. It will also chart the increasing sophistication of the series of interconnected intelligence networks – the intelligence mechanism – which provided ever increasing amounts of intelligence to the Home Office.²⁰⁵

²⁰³ Poteat, 'The use and abuse of intelligence', pp. 1 – 16.

²⁰⁴ The necessity to successfully prosecute the war is taken from Regulation 42 of the Defence of the Realm Act, for more information, see: 'E. Troup to Chief Constables', 18 August 1917, TNA, HO 45/10884/346578.

²⁰⁵ This feature of counterintelligence is one of the four basic features of high policing, see: Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 513; L. Radzinowicz, *A History of English Criminal Law and its*

The political dimension of the security apparatus, and the influence of the burgeoning political network is evident when Thomson's appointment to investigate Pacifism and Revolutionary Movements in 1916 is examined. One example which illustrates the extent of the political dimension of the security apparatus is Thomson's meeting with Lloyd George and a deputation of Conservative M.Ps. Lloyd George instructed the group to keep in touch with Thomson because he was Lloyd George's 'authority for what is going on'.²⁰⁶ Thomson's explanation of the implications of this instruction reveals the lax attitude regarding intelligence at this time. Thomson claimed: 'this seemed to satisfy them, but it added considerably to my daily correspondence; most these members were my personal friends.'²⁰⁷ This incident illustrates how freely intelligence was disseminated during the First World War.

Another example of the political dimension of the security apparatus is present in Thomson's relationship with Walter Long. This relationship illustrates that the proximity of intelligence officials and policy makers led to the possibility of manipulation. Thomson detailed how, while Long was Secretary of State for the Colonies, he informed Long of the 'organisation for obtaining confidential news from Ireland of which he had never heard ... He was rather indignant that he was intrusted with Irish Affairs ... but was kept so much in the dark ... It has now been arranged that Long is to get a copy of the "Q" report every week'.²⁰⁸ The previous example illustrates Lloyd George's contradictory approach to intelligence dissemination. This displays

Administration from 1750. Volume Three: Cross Currents in the Movement for the Reform of the Police, (London: Stevens and Sons Limited, 1956), p. 555.

²⁰⁶ Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 387.

²⁰⁷ Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 387.

²⁰⁸ The 'Q' report Thomson refers to is the report on revolutionary movements in the UK. Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, pp. 366 – 367.

that access to intelligence reports was dependent upon their inclusion within his political network. Together these incidents highlight a neglect of security procedures, but, Thomson and Long's relationship had far greater ramifications.

Long's support for a reorganised civilian intelligence department further illustrates, under the conditions prevalent, intelligence officials were in a position to manipulate M.Ps. The impetus for the Secret Service Committee to meet in 1919 and discuss the problems of civilian intelligence and the threat from Bolshevism came from a memorandum written by Long. Long's memorandum detailed his belief that civilian intelligence should be under the control of one individual.²⁰⁹ However, Long emphasised that the weakness in the system related to the portion of the intelligence cycle where intelligence was disseminated to the Cabinet.²¹⁰ Crucially, however, Long was not relying on the information he was privy to as First Lord of the Admiralty. Instead, Long desired that the views he was expressing 'be taken as those formed before' he joined the Admiralty.²¹¹

Long's evidence originated from an unnamed intelligence officer. A series of Thomson's reports on 'revolutionary movements in the United Kingdom, and morale abroad', present in Long's private papers, which cover the two months prior to Long's memorandum to the Secret Service Committee suggests that Thomson was the intelligence officer.²¹² What is unclear is Long's motivations for not revealing the actual source of information that led to his conclusion that civilian intelligence required

²⁰⁹ W. Long, 'The Secret Service: Memorandum for the War Cabinet by the First Lord of the Admiralty', TNA, CAB 24/73/65 p. 3.

²¹⁰ Long, 'The Secret Service', TNA, CAB 24/73/65, p. 2; Hulnick, 'What's wrong with the Intelligence cycle', pp. 959 – 979.

²¹¹ Long, 'The Secret Service', TNA, CAB 24/73/65, p. 3.

²¹² As well as receiving four of Thomson's reports on Revolutionary Movements in the United Kingdom; Thomson also sent a report on Bolshevism in Russia and a report on affairs in Holland, for these report see: Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre (WSHC), 947/595.

reorganisation. This act provides evidence that Long was involved in a political network supporting Thomson. Whether Long was manipulated by Thomson is not definitive, but the episode does reveal that the informal relationship between intelligence officials and M.Ps left British policy, open to manipulation.

Yet, despite the presence of this political network, it would be unjust to depict Britain's security apparatus as a tool manipulated by a small number of individuals. Various incidents reveal that there were limitations on the excesses of the intelligence and security apparatus. Moreover, the investigations into revolutionary movements highlight that Britain's intelligence network exhibited numerous qualities which are sought after by contemporary intelligence agencies.

A key individual in maintaining a more effective intelligence policymaker relationship was Edward Shortt. Shortt was Home Secretary between 1919 and 1922. As Home Secretary, Shortt was responsible for maintaining oversight of civilian intelligence in the UK. Evidence of Shortt's ability to perceive what was reasonable can be seen in Shortt's response to Walter Long's initial recommendation to reform civilian intelligence. Shortt noted how it would be near impossible for Long's envisaged civilian intelligence department to competently respond and act on issues as they arose without interfering in other departments – a key issue raised by Long.²¹³ Rather than succumbing to the hysteria surrounding the threat of Bolshevism, Shortt maintained a critical approach to the region of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus

Thomson's flamboyant nature and spectacular fall from power in 1921, has led many to assess his role negatively. The argument is asserted that Thomson was

²¹³ E. Shortt, 'Secret Service: Memorandum for the War Cabinet by the Home Secretary', 23 January 1919, TNA, CAB 23/73/90, p. 1.

choosing to manipulate officials. This assumes that following the collection and analysis of intelligence Thomson had possession of both the accurate and inaccurate assessment of the threats which Britain was facing. Assessments of Thomson which present him as manipulating officials for his own gain imply that this was an active choice by Thomson. Little consideration has been given to the possibility that Thomson was simply incorrect – and he like many of his contemporaries exaggerated the threat. It is this in this regard that hindsight has a great effect. While it is possible now to conclude that Britain was not as close to the edge of revolution as many believed, it would have been much harder to feel so secure in 1920.

The method of conveying intelligence to policy makers was also a positive feature and improved the efficiency of the decision making process. Considering the fear, or red peril, which spread through official circles following the increase in revolutionary activity following the Russian Revolution, an effective method to provide an accurate interpretation of the threat which faced Britain was essential. In this regard, Thomson's presentation of his reports was appropriate. Although the above argument has presented Thomson at times when he possibly took advantage of his position within the political network, or when his assessments were incorrect, he was persistent in providing a balanced interpretation of the threat posed by British revolutionaries.²¹⁴

These reports, fall into Sherman Kent's current-reportorial category of intelligence reports – which describe 'what has just happened and what is happening now'.²¹⁵ Thomson was appointed to investigate Pacifism and Revolutionary

²¹⁴ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 110.

²¹⁵ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 105; and Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 88 – 89. Sherman Kent is recognized as the single most influential contributor to the analytic doctrine and tradecraft practiced by the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence', See: J. Davis, 'Sherman Kent's Final Thoughts on Analyst-

movements, and later, as Director of the Directorate of Intelligence to monitor subversion and revolutionary threats to Britain. In these roles, Thomson was required to report directly to the Cabinet. It is apparent that this put him in a position to adversely affect policy decisions, or that the intelligence provided by Thomson was manipulated by officials, and he was providing 'intelligence to please'.²¹⁶ However, there is evidence to support the perception that Thomson persisted in presenting a balanced interpretation of events.

A suitable example of Thomson's balanced approach is illustrated in his response to his initial task of investigating pacifist and revolutionary organisations in the U.K. during the First World War. Thomson recounts that he submitted a report 'on the activities of pacifism revolutionary societies for the War Cabinet, who are not disposed to take doses of soothing syrup in these matters ... I [Thomson] feel certain that there is no German money, [supporting the Pacifists], their expenditure being covered by the subscriptions they receive from cranks'.²¹⁷

Evidence of Thomson's balanced appreciation of the revolutionary and subversive threat is also evident in his early reports to Cabinet. These reports cover a multitude of topics from the efforts of extremists within Trade Unions, to the propaganda of the *Daily Herald*.²¹⁸ A significant benefit of the reports provided by Thomson, opposed to the agent provocateur tactics of PMS2, was the wide array of overt and clandestine HUMINT sources which allowed a more rounded appreciation

Policymaker Relations', *The Sherman Kent Centre for Intelligence Analysis: Occasional Papers*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2003); for Kent's distinction between different types of intelligence reports, see S. Kent, *Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy*, (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965) p. 8.

²¹⁶ Shortt to Thomson, 17 April 1919', TNA, HO 144/1590/380368. For information on 'intelligence to please', see: Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 140.

²¹⁷ Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 359; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, pp. 145 – 146; and Thurlow, *The Secret State*, pp. 109 – 111; and Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

²¹⁸ Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Report No. 6, 28 May 1919, TNA, CAB 24/80/68, p. 1 and pp. 4 – 6.

of the situation to be developed.²¹⁹ Instead of searching for evidence to support the fears of government officials, Thomson explained how examples of discontent could have been caused by other factors.

A succinct example of Thomson's appreciation for the factors which would affect the support for revolutionary movements is displayed by his appreciation of the weather. Thomson highlighted that 'the prevailing East wind has been unfavourable to outdoor or large audiences'.²²⁰ While this is not a ground breaking example of intelligence analysis, poor weather would have impacted the number of people likely to spend time outdoors listening to others speak.²²¹ Although attendance at similar meetings was likely higher previously, this example shows that the numbers in attendance at public meetings are not always an accurate portrayal of the amount of public support such meetings attract.

Another example can be cited from Thomson's first report as Director of Intelligence. In this report, Thomson informed the Cabinet that his correspondents from the Midlands and the North commented that the re-opening of race meetings and other sports have had a great effect.²²² Furthermore, Thomson's Midlands's correspondent claimed that 'the tone in his area is "happy and contented."' He Mentions that the demand for tickets for the Calcutta Sweepstake ... is far greater than supply, and says that the workers have not yet lost hope that the Government may be

²¹⁹ This accords with the theory of all-source fusion: Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 101; Russell, 'Achieving all-source fusion in the Intelligence Community', p. 189 – 198; and Simms, 'Intelligence to counter terror: The importance of all source fusion' pp. 38 – 56.

²²⁰ Thomson, 'Fortnightly Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom and Morale Abroad', 7th April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/77/93, p.1.

²²¹ Support for this perception can be seen in the attendance of a meeting of the Shop Stewards Movement, see: Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Report No. 1, 30 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/78/95, pp. 3 – 4.

²²² Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Report No. 1, 30 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/78/95, p. 2.

persuaded to issue Premium Bonds at some future time'.²²³ Both of these examples show appreciation for the finer details which have aided the cause of the revolutionary minority. In the latter of the cases cited, it is the absence of traditional past times such as racing and gambling.²²⁴ It is observations such as these which Thomson presented to the Cabinet as evidence of the general cause of discontent amongst the British public. Instead of a great hatred for the British Government, the British public were only 'voting for the extremists as long as they think that they can obtain concessions for them'.²²⁵ This balanced presentation of events provided the Cabinet with a greater perception of the actual threat which Britain was facing.

The conduct of the intelligence network during the First World War offers a number of examples of the flaws in the formalities which governed how intelligence officials operated, and how they communicated with policy officials. Although the lack of official safeguards permitted officials to transgress what can be considered the limits of their position, there was also significant liaison and cooperation within the intelligence network at this time. The examples of Roger Casement and Jack Tanner display that the freedom permitted to the intelligence network, coupled with the pressures of British security during the First World War, permitted it to overreach and to liaise effectively.

The investigation and arrest of Roger Casement illustrates that members of the intelligence network endeavoured to pursue a single-minded policy and transgress the

²²³ Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Report No. 1, 30 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/78/95, p. 2.

²²⁴ Thurlow notes that Thomson made similar observations during the War, see: Thurlow, *The Secret State*, p. 109; Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

²²⁵ Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Report No. 1, 30 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/78/95, p. 2.

boundaries of the relationship between the intelligence and security apparatus and policy makers. These officials, Admiral Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence; Basil Thomson; and Vernon Kell, Director-General of MI5 neglected to inform policy officials in Dublin of the threat posed by Irish rebels planning the Easter Rising. This episode also highlights the proficiency of intelligence liaison within the intelligence and security apparatus, notions on the optimal level of secrecy with government departments, as well as the powers of oversight or accountability investigations during the First World War.

Roger Casement was born in Sandymount, near Dublin, in 1868. He held a variety of positions with the Foreign Office, including Consul General in Rio de Janeiro. Casement's support for an Irish rebellion originated with the prospect of Home Rule and his membership of the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteer Force. Intelligence relating to Casement's connection with Germany originated from a myriad of sources. In support of the theory that intelligence is often 'fragmentary and incomplete', the investigation conducted by Britain's intelligence and security apparatus displays an appreciation for 'all source' collection.²²⁶

Primary among the intelligence collection methods utilised was the interception of correspondence. The correspondence intercepted was not the traditional mail interception overseen by MI5, but signals intelligence (SIGINT) intercepted by Room 40 – the cryptanalysis section of naval intelligence.²²⁷ This instance of SIGINT and its

²²⁶ For the theory that intelligence is fragmentary and incomplete, see Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2. For more information on 'all-source fusion', see: M. Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 101; Russell, 'Achieving all-source', pp. 189 – 198; and Simms, 'Intelligence to counter terror',: The importance of all source fusion', pp. 38 – 56; and P. Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence and British Internal Security, 1919 – 1921', (unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Salford, 2013).

²²⁷ N. Hiley, 'The Strategic Origins of Room 40', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (1987), pp. 245 – 273; and Ferris, 'The Road to Bletchley Park', pp.58 – 72.

subsequent use by Britain's security apparatus is one occasion where British policy makers did not interfere. Instead, the lack of involvement of policy makers removed oversight from those controlling the investigation.

The SIGINT collected by Room 40 was supplemented by HUMINT. The source of this intelligence was Casement's 'manservant and lover' Alder Christensen who accompanied Casement on a journey to Germany, via Oslo.²²⁸ It was in Oslo where Christensen passed documents to a British minister, Mansfeldt de Carbonnel Findlay. These documents included a ciphered letter of introduction from the German ambassador in Washington to the German Chancellor Bethman Hollweg.²²⁹ These two sources together provided credible evidence that the German government was utilising Roger Casement as a conduit to channel their support for an Irish rebellion. However, British intelligence did not have access to the details of this planned rebellion. At this point in the investigation, there was little evidence to illustrate what form the rebellion would take. It is evident that while collecting further intelligence Britain's security apparatus was experiencing how fragmentary and incomplete intelligence often is.²³⁰

The often sought solution to fragmentary and incomplete intelligence is to gather more. However, this process often has the opposite effect. Instead of having a limited perspective of events or a target, increasing the volume of intelligence gathered can lead to 'information glut'.²³¹ Information glut refers to the issues facing intelligence agencies in the digital age. Although Britain's security apparatus did not need to intercept, store, and sift through vast quantities of digital communications, there was

²²⁸ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 86

²²⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 86; and Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, pp. 241 – 242.

²³⁰ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2.

²³¹ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 72.

still a plethora of sources of intelligence which made it difficult for officials to distinguish between the signals, reliable intelligence, and background noise, unreliable intelligence.²³²

As well as intercepts collected by Room 40, there was also mail from Casement in Holland to contacts in London – which was duly intercepted by postal censorship.²³³ The Irish police also had two agents, ‘Chalk’ and ‘Granite’, who had infiltrated the Irish Volunteer Force. However, as has been argued, these agents were only able to acquire low-level intelligence and not gain insight into the ‘thought processes’ or what the leaders intended.²³⁴

Interviews with Irish prisoners of War reinforced the perception that Germany was committed to supporting Casement. Importantly, however, the reports of the interviews reveals that some statements were viewed as unreliable and needed further corroboration.²³⁵ This supports the view that it was difficult for the intelligence and security apparatus to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources. Although hindsight reveals that the statements made by Irish prisoners of war contained valuable intelligence, because of information glut, they were deemed to be unreliable.

The most sensational operation to collect intelligence on Casement’s involvement in the planned Irish uprising was carried out by the Admiralty under the

²³² Thurlow, *Secret State*, p.86; S. Marrin, ‘Preventing Intelligence Failures by Learning from the Past’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 17, No. 4, (2004), pp. 655 – 672; Byman, ‘Strategic Surprise and the September 11 attacks’ pp. 164 – 168; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 128 – 129; R. Betts, ‘Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable’, *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (1978), pp. 61 – 89.

²³³ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 86.

²³⁴ E. O’Halpin, ‘British Intelligence in Ireland’, in C. Andrew and D. Dilks, (eds.) *The Missing Dimension: Government and Intelligence Communities in the Twentieth Century*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 69; E. O’Halpin, *The Decline of the Union: British Government in Ireland, 1892 – 1920*, (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd, 1987), p.109; Thurlow, *The Secret State*, p. 86; Sloan, ‘The British State and the Irish Rebellion of 1916’, p. 481; and Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 82.

²³⁵ The official record has been somewhat disturbed, and there appears to be little order. However, all references to Roger Casement, and his attempts to create an Irish Brigade are highlighted in red. See: TNA KV 2/6; and Thomson *The Scene Changes*, p. 241.

direction of Captain Reginald Blinker Hall. Hall's scheme involved a large yacht, the *Sayonara*, whose crew would pose as pro-German Americans – searching for information relating to Casement. Hall's failure to liaise with government departments had a considerable impact upon the outcome of the operation.²³⁶

The *Sayonara* crew, despite their efforts to infiltrate the Sinn Fein movement, were stoned by loyalists, and were required to be rescued by the police. The crew were eventually detained by Captain F. Le Mesurier, of HMS *Cornwallis*.²³⁷ The detention required Hall to intervene to secure the release of the crew, which was followed by the Marquess of Sligo travelling to protest to Hall. Andrew recounts that in order to prevent Lord Sligo raising the matter in the House of Lords, Hall had to, 'after swearing him to secrecy, reveal that the crew was British'.²³⁸

As well as highlighting Hall's overreach of his position, this episode highlights that intelligence officials could act unilaterally without informing the relevant government departments – reinforcing the perception that intelligence in Ireland was poorly organised.²³⁹ Limiting the number of individuals who are aware of an operation is considered good practice. In some cases, it is considered necessary to prevent the target's counter-intelligence apparatus from discovering the objectives of the operation. However, Hall's failure to include the Admiral commanding at Queenstown dramatically affected the possible outcomes of the operation once the crew had been identified by the Irish police. Hall's universal approach to secrecy prevented any possible contingency plan to be formulated in case the initial attempt failed.

²³⁶ O'Halpin, *Decline of the Union*, p. 109; O'Halpin, 'British Intelligence in Ireland', p. 58; and Sloan, 'The British State and the Irish rebellion', p. 468.

²³⁷ Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 115.

²³⁸ Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 115.

²³⁹ For the perspective that British intelligence in Ireland was disorganised, see: J. B. E. Hittle, *Michael Collins and the Anglo-Irish War: Britain's Counterinsurgency Failure*, (Washington: Potomac, 2011), pp. 22 – 28.

Moreover, despite the centralisation of some components within Britain's security apparatus, the same process was not applicable to the apparatus as a whole. It was this unorganised haphazard environment which allowed Hall to pursue operations without the consultation of local policy officials, or even the Admiralty staff commanding in the area. This blind pursuit of Hall's perceived notion of what was necessary highlights the ability of intelligence officials to abuse their power.

Although the example of the arrest of Roger Casement depicts the intelligence network as rather self-serving; there are also examples of efficient liaison. One such example is the investigation into Jack Tanner. Tanner had deserted the Royal Navy in 1908, and came to the notice of authorities during the War, while engaged in munitions work, for distributing a revolutionary pamphlet known as *Solidarity*.²⁴⁰ Threats to the supply of munitions were perceived as a direct threat to the 'successful prosecution of the War'.²⁴¹ The intense demands to supply the Western front with munitions was seen as vital. Tanner's attempt to disrupt this effort made him a threat to national security.

The record of the investigation into Tanner, and his brother Percy Edward Tanner, concentrate on their connection to the publication of Lenin's pamphlet *Lessons of the Revolution*.²⁴² The record of the investigation into Tanner's brother reveals that during the aftermath of the War, MI6 were liaising effectively with other agencies within Britain's security apparatus – a feature which was not to remain persistent throughout the interwar period. However, the level of intelligence liaison and

²⁴⁰ 'M.I.5 to M.I.1.C' [MI6], 6 January 1919, TNA, KV 2/3754.

²⁴¹ E. Troup to The Chief Constable, 18 August 1917 HO 45/10884/346578.

²⁴² Tanner resurfaced as an individual of importance when the intelligence network was attempting to uncover the extent of Soviet intelligence operations prior to the raid on the All-Russian Co-operative Society (Arcos) in 1927.

collection extends much further. The extent of this liaison reveals that despite the lack of central control the intelligence network was able to cooperate effectively.

With regard to intelligence collection, the index of Tanner's record reveals multiple Home Office Warrants (HOWs) that were taken out by Scotland House, the Directorate of Intelligence, allowing the interception of Jack Tanner's mail.²⁴³ Significantly, Vernon Kell, Director General of MI5, corresponded with Thomson about the address of Tanner and enquires whether a Home Office Warrant (HOW) should be taken out. This suggests that Kell liaised with Thomson, and discussed the best options to proceed, while intelligence was gathered.²⁴⁴ This contradicts the typical view of Thomson and Kell's rivalry. While there may have been a rivalry between the two, the investigation into Tanner reveals that Thomson and Kell could effectively work together.

As well as display liaison within the intelligence network, the investigation into Tanner also illustrates that Special Branch and the police were an integral component of Britain's security apparatus. The statement of Sergeant Edward Billet indicates that some form of surveillance was carried out on Tanner's London residence, and the premises of the Solidarity Press. With regards to Tanner's London residence, Billet stated that he was 'reliably informed that he [Tanner] was seen to leave the above address this morning'.²⁴⁵ While in reference to the premises of Solidarity Press – the suspected location used by Tanner to print pamphlets, Billet reported: 'having kept

²⁴³ Although the index of KV 2 3754 does not indicate when the Home Office Warrant on Jack Tanner was taken out, intercepted mail is contained within the file, and a HOW was cancelled on 26 October 1920, and a second taken out on 2 April 1921, see: 'cancellation of H.O.W. on Jack Tanner', 26 October 1920, and 'H.O.W. taken out by Scotland House on Jack Tanner', 2 April 1921, TNA, KV 2/3754.

²⁴⁴ 'Kell to Thomson', 17 April 1920, TNA, KV 2/3754.

²⁴⁵ E. Billet, 're: J. F. Tanner', 5 March 1919, TNA, KV 2/3754.

observation on the offices ... and made enquiries respecting the supposed reprinting of the "Lenin Pamphlet" ... nothing has come under notice'.²⁴⁶

As well as police enquiries, there is an account of two Police Officers who infiltrated a meeting of the 'Willesden Freedom League', at which Tanner spoke.²⁴⁷ The use of the police also offers examples of a range of HUMINT. While Sergeant Billet could have feasibly made enquiries in uniform, it is likely that the two officers who infiltrated the Willesden Freedom League were in plain clothes. These two officers were likely adopting the notional cover employed when officers infiltrated meetings prior to the First World War.

The investigation into Tanner displays a high level of intelligence liaison as well as a range of collection techniques. Significantly, the three principal intelligence agencies were involved and effectively exchanged intelligence. Moreover, the range of intelligence collection techniques utilised reinforces the perception that Britain's security apparatus, in the aftermath of the First World War, sought to achieve 'all source fusion'.²⁴⁸

While this episode displays how effective liaison was within the intelligence network, the lack of central control over the intelligence network permitted individuals like Hall and Thomson to negatively impact policy. The latter example also highlights another important component of the security apparatus: the police. The importance of police surveillance of a political meeting gains more significance when a broader appreciation of police surveillance of political protest is considered. The role of the

²⁴⁶ E. Billet, 're "The Lenin Pamphlet"', 28 March 1919, TNA, KV 2/3754.

²⁴⁷ New Scotland Yard, 'Liberty Press and Freedom Press', 18 March 1919, TNA, KV 2/3754.

²⁴⁸ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 101; R. Russell, 'Achieving all-source fusion in the Intelligence' pp. 189 – 198; Simms, 'Intelligence to counter terror', p. 38 – 56; and Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

police was further enhanced when it was intertwined with the broader security apparatus.

The police network was devoted entirely to the collection of intelligence and the maintenance of law and order. Each Chief Constable was responsible for maintaining the security of their area. This resulted in a responsibility to conduct 'high' and 'low policing' operations.²⁴⁹ A second distinguishable network was controlled by the armed forces, General Headquarters Great Britain (GHQ GB). Unlike the police who were constantly present in their given area, GHQ GB mobilised in response to a crisis of threat and formed a network – the military network.²⁵⁰ Together these networks formed a central resource for the British government to prevent subversive elements exploiting disturbances associated with industrial action. The success of these networks, however, owed much to the experiences prior to the outbreak of the First World War.

In the aftermath of the First World War, the military maintained many of the best practices highlighted by Macready in 1910. During times of crisis, the military network would dispatch forces to maintain order in a given area, the Commanding Officer of these forces would be responsible for collating and disseminating intelligence gathered to various government departments. Much like the police network, the military networks maintained a second intelligence function alongside its aid to the civil power duties. While there were other institutions that also operated networks to gather intelligence, such as the Ministry of Labour's Special Intelligence Branch, the police and military network were the most prominent components of Britain's intelligence

²⁴⁹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 513.

²⁵⁰ See Appendix A: A Hierarchy of Networks, p. 312.

mechanism during this period. These two networks were not mutually exclusive, as they had been previously. Instead, they were integrated and shared intelligence collected with one another and disseminated their results back towards their respective departments and the Home Office.

The potential for this web of intelligence networks to abuse its position is underlined when the response to the wave strikes which occurred between 1917 and 1920 is considered. During this time, the whole range of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus was engaged, and rather than observing and collecting intelligence, it is evident that the intelligence network operated as an autonomous mechanism – laying the foundations for what became the emergency mechanism. Moreover, it can also be observed that different departments acted as both 'hunters' and 'gatherers' of intelligence.²⁵¹ Instead of being directed by the Home Office, Britain's security apparatus identified and responded to threats as they arose.

Until 1917, the Home Office exerted greater degrees of control, and influence over British security. By the end of the First World War, the Home Office controlled a series of centralised intelligence networks. Analysts of this period would highlight the ambitions of Basil Thomson, and claim that his desire to control all of civilian intelligence was a primary driving force behind this centralisation.²⁵² Yet, Basil Thomson was not always the focal point of intelligence gathered, or always included in the circulation of reports. The central control which the Home Office exerted over British internal security was part of a gradual process. Commentators on the development of the British police note that towards the end of the Nineteenth Century

²⁵¹ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 78 – 79

²⁵² For information of the claim that Thomson wished to control British intelligence, see: C. Andrew, *MI5*, pp.106 – 109; and Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p.146, and Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 377.

the Home Office exerted greater control over Britain's regional police forces.²⁵³ Thomson's appointment to investigate pacifism and revolutionary movements, and later Director of Intelligence can be interpreted as the Home Office's attempt to gain further control of civilian intelligence, or 'high policing'.²⁵⁴

The remit of the series of interconnected networks extended much further than investigating conspiracies and revolutionary movements, but also included sedition, sabotage, and labour unrest – under the umbrella of subversion – all coordinated by Thomson's Directorate of Intelligence from 1919.²⁵⁵ It is with the last assignment that the political task of the intelligence network is truly evident. Not only did it seek to counter those actors it believed wished to subvert and overthrow the British State, but also to monitor legitimate acts of protest. The Police, Railway and Coal Strikes which occurred between 1917 and 1920 illustrate the autonomous centralised nature of these networks. Most significantly, however, is the evidence which presents the British police as the central component of Britain's security apparatus.

The Police Strikes of 1918 and 1919 offer a suitable starting point to illustrate that counterintelligence practices became more sophisticated, intrusive, and closer to the 'high policing model' after the Armistice.²⁵⁶ The 1918 strike was a result of the dismissal of Metropolitan Police Officer Thiel. Thiel was a prominent member of both the Metropolitan Police and the banned National Union of Police and Prison Officers (NUPPO). The police were banned from joining the NUPPO, and Thiel's dismissal was

²⁵³ Emsley, 'The Birth and Development of the Police', pp. 72 – 75; Morgan, *Conflict, Wall, The Chief Constables of England and Wales* pp. 44 – 56.

²⁵⁴ Brodeur, 'High Policing Low Policing', see also Porter, *Origins*, p. 46 – 51'; E. Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151; Kiernan, 'Directorate of Intelligence', pp. 15 – 28.

²⁵⁵ Troup to Thomson, 17 April 1919, TNA, HO 144/1590/380368.

²⁵⁶ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 513.

a result of his activities in connection with his union membership. The demands of the strikers were the reinstatement of Officer Thiel and official recognition of the NUPPO. The 1919 strike revolved around the same grievance - official recognition of the NUPPO, the strike was sparked by the Police Act, 1919, which forbade membership or association with any trade union, and, instead, proscribed membership of the Police Federation. The grievances of the Officers also extended, as they did in 1918, to working conditions and rates of pay.²⁵⁷

A comparison of both strikes reveals that there was an increased effort to gather intelligence on the striking police officers. The official record of the 1918 Police Strike displays numerous reports carried out by superintendents, or acting superintendents, reporting on the numbers of officers on strike in their division. These reports were typically supplemented by a commentary of the actions committed, and the number of officers that were on strike.

The report of Blackheath Road Division is typical of 1918 strike. It noted the numbers of men who joined the strike and their actions. A significant feature of the report is the level of analysis it contains. Instead of merely relaying information, as one would assume if the police were reporting on incidents, the report details the motivations of the rioting officers. In particular, the report notes that the Police Union was not the instigator of further officers joining the strike, but that 'the Division was visited by a number of Constables from other Divisions who succeeded in bringing out many men who would have otherwise remained on duty'.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Emsley, 'The Birth and Development of the Police', p. 74.

²⁵⁸ 'Strike of members of the Metropolitan Police Force', Blackheath Road Station, 'R' Division, 14 September 1918; TNA, MEPO 3 257a.

The detail of the report displays a degree of analysis. This would suggest that the police were not simply relaying information to the Commissioner, but were assessing its reliability as well the ‘thought processes’ of those they had observed.²⁵⁹ Although these reports appear advanced, in terms of the analysis that they contain, this report, like the others contained within the official record, were sent some time after the strike. The delay between the end of the strike, 31 August 1918, and the receipt of the report, 14 September 1918 implies that the investigation into the strike was reactive. This is more akin to the Police Force’s detective role, responding to an incident rather than attempting to pre-empt it.²⁶⁰

The Police Strike of 1919, on the other hand, witnessed a greater range of HUMINT practices. These operations were pro-active and, unlike the Police Strike in 1918, closer to ‘High Policing’.²⁶¹ This increase in the severity of the official response to revolutionary movements and labour unrest was the same as their reasons for increased activity: European revolutions. The increase in the fervour of revolutionary and paramilitary groups in the aftermath of the Great War was due to groups embracing, what has been termed, ‘the “militaristic spirit.” War had convinced such apostles of militaries that any problem, whether domestic or imperial, could best be solved by the mobilization ... of overwhelming force’.²⁶²

The revolutions which toppled authoritarian governments throughout Europe, particularly the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 not only inspired British revolutionaries to attempt similar, but also alerted the British government to the potential

²⁵⁹ See: Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 82; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 82 – 90; Jackson, ‘On Uncertainty and the Limits of Intelligence’, pp. 456 – 453; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 60 – 62; and Gill, “Knowing the self, knowing the other”, pp. 82 – 90.

²⁶⁰ Porter, *Origins*, pp. 4 – 6.

²⁶¹ Brodeur, ‘High Policing and Low Policing’, p. 513.

²⁶² J. Lawrence, ‘Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence and fear of Brutalization in Post First World War Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 75, No. 3, (2003), p. 558.

consequences of public unrest. Even Lloyd George, who is not coupled with government ministers of this period who were prone to alarmist opinions commented that the 1918 Police Strike was the closest that Britain had come to Bolshevism.²⁶³

The reasons behind this increased sense of insecurity are apparent when it is remembered that the British police were the Government's primary resource to counter civilian unrest and maintain law and order. Considering the perceived unreliability of the armed forces at this time, the importance of the police is increased significantly.²⁶⁴ The importance of the Metropolitan Police is not only that it is the largest Constabulary, but that it was the department which reinforced other during times of emergency, such as the reinforcement of Glamorganshire Constabulary during the South Wales Miner's Strike, 1910.²⁶⁵

Although the NUPPO's pursuit of industrial action was a threat to British security, the officers involved were also performing a legitimate act of protest to what they perceived as an unfair use of government authority. However, British policy makers and security officials were unable to separate legitimate acts of protest against working conditions and wages from a direct attack on one of the pillars of British internal security.²⁶⁶ As a result of this increase in the perceived threat, the techniques employed during the investigation into the Police Strike of 1919 were far more intrusive.

²⁶³ G.W. Reynolds and A. Judge, *The Night the Police went on Strike*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968); p. 5; Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'; and Thurlow, *The Secret State*, pp. 110 – 111.

²⁶⁴ K. Jeffery, 'The British Army and Internal Security 1919 – 1913', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 2, (1981), pp. 377 – 397.

²⁶⁵ Home Office, *Colliery Strike Disturbances in South Wales: Correspondence and Reports, November 1910* (London: HMSO, 1911), TNA, HO 144 1553 199769.

²⁶⁶ The inability of policy makers and security officials to separate legitimate protest from a revolutionary channels was akin to their inability to interpret the level of threat posed by the Communist movement, see: Jackson, 'On Uncertainty and the Limits of Intelligence', pp. 456 – 453; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 120 – 122; and Gill, "Knowing the self, knowing the other", pp. 82 – 90.

The reports of the numbers of officers on strike were provided by telegram on the same day, and the response from the Commissioner was swift. All '240 men in 17 Divisions [who had] ... absented themselves' were 'summarily dismissed from the Force'.²⁶⁷ Such a strong stance not only acted as a deterrent, but also served to remove the Officers of the Metropolitan Police who could be sympathetic to strikers during future periods of industrial unrest.

These reports addressing the progress of the strike were collated into a series of memoranda. These memoranda were also supplemented by surveillance carried out at the meetings of the NUPPO. One such report detailed that, at the meeting of Tower Hill, plans of how the strikers should proceed were discussed. Officers were to picket certain stations, members of the London City Police were joining the strike at 15:00, and the Liverpool Police were awaiting the signal.²⁶⁸ Moreover 'a member of the National Union of Railwaymen also spoke', claiming: 'the whole of the Labour Movement was behind their cause'.²⁶⁹ This was likely to raise fears that numerous unions, such as the National Union of Railwaymen, would join the NUPPO in sympathetic strike action.

However, this level of intelligence collection was only going to provide easily accessible OSINT. OSINT typically consists of information which is easily accessible but is often necessary to provide background information on the process of events. Although the memorandum which detailed surveillance of the Tower Hill meeting would have required some form of deception, it is best categorised as a grey area of OSINT.²⁷⁰ This is because it would have been relatively straightforward for any Police

²⁶⁷ Commissioner of Police, 'Special Police Order', 1 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁶⁸ 'Special Branch Memorandum', 1 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁶⁹ 'Special Branch Memorandum', 1 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁷⁰ W. Bowen 'Open-source intelligence a valuable national security resource', *Janes Intelligence Review*, Vol. 11, No. 11, (1999), p. 2.

Officer to attend, even a member of Special Branch did not fear being recognised as the NUPPO would probably relish the support of high ranking officers of the Metropolitan Police.

The infiltration of this meeting was facilitated by the outdoor location, and open attendance to members of the public. Moreover, evidence from a meeting held at Tower Hill on the 17 August reveals that the branch secretary of the NUPPO, Ex. P.C. Jackson, was aware that the Superintendent in attendance was loyal to the Police Force. Jackson is noted to have informed the Superintendent that meetings were being discontinued because 'something was about to happen which would result in the reinstatement of the strikers ... I must not say any more I know a great deal more than you do'.²⁷¹ While this information was essential in forming a rounded picture of the development of the strike, it is best categorised as the grey area of OSINT and unlikely, in isolation, to provide a clear picture of the intentions and capabilities of the Officers on strike.

However, what significantly added to the sophistication of the HUMINT collection effort was the use of an informant within the NUPPO.²⁷² The use of an informant gave the Special Branch access to two different types of intelligence, observations and measurement and through processes.²⁷³ The combination of the surveillance of NUPPO meetings, observations, and the informant within the NUPPO, thought process, provided a rounded perspective - 'adding value' – to the understanding of the ambitions and realities of the strike.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ 'Police Strike Meetings', Blackheath Road Station 'R' Division, 18 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁷² See Reports from a Special Branch Superintendent: 2 August 1919 and 3 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁷³ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 82.

²⁷⁴ Marrin, 'Adding value', pp. 199 – 211.

The early surveillance of NUPPO meetings implied that the number of divisions and constabularies within the UK who were joining the strike was steadily spreading and that other Unions, were sympathetic to strike. However, reports from the 'reliable source', who was either a member of the NUPPO who had defected and was providing intelligence to Special Branch or an Officer who deliberately infiltrated the NUPPO to gain information, alleviated these fears. Reports of proceedings within the NUPPO after meetings revealed that the rhetoric of the NUPPO speeches contained some exaggeration. Reports also portrayed the doubts that NUPPO officials had about the promises of the National Union of Railwaymen to join the Police Strike in sympathy, the disappointment they felt towards the inaction of the Licenced Vehicle Workers and Electrical Trades Union, as well as a general sense of disheartenment amongst the officials of the NUPPO.²⁷⁵

Although it is unclear under what circumstances Special Branch gained access to the inner circle, the scale of Special Branch's penetration of the Trade Union movement was much greater. While the initial reports from a 'reliable source' chart the inner workings of the NUPPO, and the faltering support of the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), a typescript of 'informants notes' reveals that another informant had also penetrated the National Union of Railwaymen.²⁷⁶ Special Branch's infiltration of the NUPPO and NUR illustrate that Special Branch conducted sophisticated, albeit ethically questionable, HUMINT collection operations in 1919.²⁷⁷

²⁷⁵ 'Special Branch Report', 2 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786; and 'Special Branch Report', 3 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786; and Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'

²⁷⁶ 'Informants notes', 12 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786

²⁷⁷ While there is little evidence of similar operations by Special Branch between 1910 and 1919, the use of such tactics here reveals that the infiltration of private meetings was still active, and did not stop in 1919. See: Porter, *Origins*, p. 176.

The notion that this kind of counterintelligence operation was not the work of an isolated unit, and instead formed part of a wider network can be seen when other areas affected by the Police Strike are examined. The reports provided by regional Police Constabularies are the only instance during the Police Strike that Basil Thomson and his Directorate of Intelligence played a central role. Reports from Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester Police Forces highlighted that members of the NUPPO were frequently exaggerating the numbers of Police officers who were on strike. Notably, at a meeting in Liverpool, representatives claimed that there was not a Police Officer on duty in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Birmingham, Birkenhead, Newcastle, Durham, Leeds, Sheffield, Bristol, Cardiff, or Bootle.²⁷⁸

However, reports provided from Birmingham displayed a large degree of resentment on the part of the strikers.²⁷⁹ This same degree of exaggeration was also present during the London meetings at Tower Hill and Hyde Park.²⁸⁰ As a result of intelligence collection in a number of major cities, it was possible to identify that a large portion of the Police Force was still loyal. Importantly, it was the intelligence gathered by regional Constabularies that highlighted the inaccuracies in the strike leaders' statements as well as the growing opposition to the strike. This not only displays the central role of the police but also the efficient dissemination of intelligence.

Further support for the centrality of the regional police constabularies in Britain's security apparatus can be seen when the focus is shifted from the Police Strikes to the Railway Strikes and threatened strikes between 1917 and 1919. Reports provided by Lionel Lindsay, Chief Constable of Glamorganshire, reveal a very subtle but effective

²⁷⁸ Chief Inspector Fyles, Seaforth to Detective Superintendent, Headquarters, 'RE. Police Unrest', 3 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786, p. 4.

²⁷⁹ 'National Union of Police & Prison Officers', 11 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

²⁸⁰ 'Special Branch Report', 2 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786; and 'Special Branch Report', 3 August 1919, TNA, MEPO 3/1786.

method employed by the Police to discover how likely the local population would support the actions of strikers. Lindsay informed Troup that local Officers had made enquires as to who would join the Special Constabulary during a potential disturbance of the railways. Although these enquiries revealed 'the usual strong dis-inclination to become a Special Constable during times of Labour Unrest' Officers were able to infer that 'a good portion of the industrial population would be hostile to the strikers ... [and] they would, at any rate, preserve a benevolent neutrality towards the forces of Law and Order'.²⁸¹

This example illustrates the central role which the police played in enriching the intelligence assessment made of an area during times of threatened unrest. A particularly significant asset of the police is the local knowledge they possess. Exercises such as the above are only likely to be conceived, and be effective, if the instigator possesses a great deal of insight into the intended target. Given the great number of Police Constabularies across the UK, it is apparent how great a resource the British Police were.

This further reinforces the view that regional police constabularies were pioneering innovative approaches in their front-line role, and the prominence of a police informed approach to intelligence. This exercise was particularly significant for Glamorganshire because of the previous unrest which had erupted in the area during 1910.²⁸² Given the resources required to police the area in 1910, it would have proved to be difficult to manage while Britain was still engaged in the First World War. Moreover, the correspondence was not only sent to Troup, but it was also sent to

²⁸¹ Lionel Lindsay, Chief Constable of Glamorganshire Constabulary, to Sir Edward Troup, Under-Secretary at the Home Office, 21 August 1917 TNA HO 45/10884/346578, p.1.

²⁸² See: Thurlow, *The Secret State*, pp. 26 – 36; and TNA, HO 144/1551/199768.

numerous departments and officers, such as the O.C. Home Forces, the Secretary of the War Office, and Basil Thomson who would be centrally involved in the maintenance of security during a strike.²⁸³ The number of departments receiving police reports illustrates the importance attached to them by Government officials. It also supports the web like properties of Britain's intelligence networks. Rather than a hierarchical approach to the dissemination of intelligence, reports were sent directly from regional constabularies to specified departments.

The influence of wartime regulations was also evident during the threatened Railway strike in 1917. In correspondence with all Chief Constables and Chief Officers of the Police, Troup drew their attention to Regulation 42 which made it an offence 'to impede, delay, or restrict the production, repair, or transport of war material or any other work necessary for the successful prosecution of the war'.²⁸⁴ This regulation made it an offence for striking workers to picket or to 'induce men to abstain from working' even if the means were peaceful.²⁸⁵ The restrictions on picketing, in contradiction to the Trade Disputes Act, were deemed necessary in order to minimise the detrimental effects which were perceived to be a likely consequence of a railway strike.²⁸⁶ Because of this threat, it was perceived a necessity to have military forces ready to provide aid to the civil power should an emergency arise.

²⁸³ Lindsay, to Troup, 21 August 1917 TNA HO 45/10884/346578, p.2; Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

²⁸⁴ E. Troup to The Chief Constable, 18 August 1917 HO 45/10884/346578.

²⁸⁵ E. Troup to The Chief Constable 18 August 1917 HO 45/10884/346578; and 'Opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, Mr A.E. Bodkin and Mr G.A.H Branson', 19 February 1916 TNA HO 45/10884/346578

²⁸⁶ G.A. Anson, Chief Constable of Staffordshire, 'Staffordshire Constabulary: Railway Strike – Defence of the Realm Act', August 1917, TNA, CAB HO 45/10884/346578

However, further supporting the notion that Britain's security apparatus operated as an automated mechanism, particularly the military network, the assignment and despatch of military forces was not always under the control of the civil power, typically the Chief Constable, or the Home Secretary. Instead, General Headquarters Great Britain (GHQ GB) had the authority to identify potential vulnerability and despatch military forces according to the perceived threat.²⁸⁷ This was in contradiction to the traditional practice of waiting until the resources of the civil power had been significantly depleted before requesting military aid – and conformed with the practices employed during the Transport Workers Strike, in 1911.²⁸⁸

In order to fulfil this role and, 'protect the working of the railways for the purposes of the war', GHQ GB required an efficient method to receive reliable intelligence on the severity of labour unrest.²⁸⁹ The collection of intelligence throughout the Railway Strikes of 1918 and 1919 further emphasise the role that local Police Constabularies played as 'intelligence collectors'.²⁹⁰ Moreover, similar to the surveillance carried out by Officers of the Metropolitan Police during the Police Strike of 1919, the intelligence collected by the local Constabularies was coordinated by Special Branch and later the Directorate of Intelligence. However, from the records of the Railway Strikes it is evident that local Constabularies, and the Special Branch/Directorate of Intelligence were integrated into GHQ GB intelligence gathering apparatus forming what best can be described as a web of intelligence networks.

²⁸⁷ Shortt raised the issue of whether this practice should return to its pre-1911 norm, E Shortt, 'Use of troops during the threatened Strike', TNA, CAB 24/76/98.

²⁸⁸ Shortt raised the issue of whether this practice should return to its pre-1911 norm, E Shortt, 'Use of troops during the threatened Strike', TNA, CAB 24/76/98.

²⁸⁹ E. Troup to Chief Constables, 'Railway Strike', 24 September 1918, TNA, HO 45/10884/346578

²⁹⁰ Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

This web of intelligence networks had a coordinator, typically a member of the intelligence or political network. This coordinator harnessed the collection capabilities of the lower networks to gather intelligence. An example of one strand within this web of intelligence revolved around Basil Thomson and Special Branch's role as analyst and coordinator of intelligence on labour unrest and revolutionary movements within the United Kingdom. Thomson's role, particularly during the 1918 Railway Strike, at first appears to be minimal, or non-existent, but telegrams from Chief Constables to the 'Resident Clerk Home Office' provides a link to Thomson's coordinating role during the First World War.²⁹¹ Moreover, complementing the intelligence collected by regional Constabularies, Superintendents of the Metropolitan Police also conducted surveillance of political meetings - providing evidence of the intrusive nature of police surveillance.

As this collection of networks grew, so too did the efficiency of the intelligence mechanism and Thomson's influence. With the wide range of police officers, military officials, and Thomson's agents, the mechanism was able to pool an ever-increasing volume of intelligence on a variety of developing situations around the UK. The results of the intelligence mechanism were essential in making up the fortnightly reports which Thomson provided to policy makers. However, the collection effort of the intelligence mechanism was not contained to the benign gathering of surveillance and OSINT, it also included the invasive hunting for intelligence.²⁹²

Contained within a Scotland House report is a brief overview of an operation which infiltrated a meeting of London Southwest Railway workers at a Liberal Club in

²⁹¹ Thomson is identified as the 'Resident Clerk' when Troup requests that Chief Constables address their reports to Thomson as Scotland House, following the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1919, see: E. Troup to Chief Constables, 22 April 1919, TNA, HO 144/1590/380368

²⁹² For hunters vs gatherers of intelligence, see: Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 78.

Teddington.²⁹³ While this is not as severe as operating informants within trade unions, it did involve infiltrating a Superintendent, and possibly another officer, into an indoor meeting.²⁹⁴ The difficulty of such an operation was high because those present were likely members of the Union – as opposed to the surveillance of open air meetings which also contained members of the public.

The second strand of this web of intelligence networks centred on GHQ GB. GHQ GB not only had access to intelligence gathered by Police, as well as reports from Thomson and Special Branch, but also operated its own intelligence gathering apparatus. GHQ GB's 'secret reports' during the 1918 Railway Strike involved regional Commanding Officers reporting daily on the progress of the strike.²⁹⁵ Unlike the Police strikes, there is no noticeable increase in the sophistication of the counterintelligence effort conducted against the strikers. This is partly because the organisation which GHQ GB utilised evolved from practices employed during the South Wales Miner's Strike, 1910.²⁹⁶

However, the production of reports appears to have been refined during the Railway Strike of 1919. Resembling what best can be described as a 'finished intelligence product', the report is informative; but the origin of the intelligence collected is difficult to decipher.²⁹⁷ The separation of areas such as Northern Command and Western Command suggests that GHQ GB was still utilising Commanding Officers to report on their respective areas, and assessments of the London District reveals that GHQ GB was still in receipt of intelligence from

²⁹³ 'Railway Strike', 27 September 1918, TNA, HO 45/10885/346578.

²⁹⁴ Officers conducting surveillance operations typically acted in pairs.

²⁹⁵ GHQ Great Britain, 'Evening Report – Railway Strike – 7 p.m. 27 September 1918', TNA, HO 45/10884/346578; and GHQ Great Britain, 'National railway Strike: 10 p.m. Sunday, 5 October to 8 a.m. Monday, 6 October 1919', TNA, Kew, HO 144/1679/390500.

²⁹⁶ Home Office, 'Colliery Strike Disturbances in South Wales', TNA, HO 144/1553/199769.

²⁹⁷ Marrin, 'Adding value', pp. 199 – 211.

Superintendents of the Metropolitan Police.²⁹⁸ The ‘Special report of intelligence officer’ also illustrates that the practice of utilising undercover officers to conduct surveillance of political meetings was still in use.²⁹⁹ Together these examples demonstrate that a range of HUMINT practices were being ‘fused’ into the intelligence reports to provide a clear perspective on the progress of the strike.³⁰⁰

The records of the Coal Strike, 1919, add further to the understanding of the web-like properties of Britain’s intelligence network. Much like the Police and Railway strikes, intelligence gathered by regional Constabularies was involved in informing the Home Office of developments in their respective area.³⁰¹ Much like 1919 Railway Strike, the majority of the official record contains finished reports as opposed to telegrams and initial reports. However, the most intriguing feature of the Coal Strike is the involvement of another department: the Special Intelligence Branch.³⁰²

Many government departments, at this time, had their own intelligence departments. The Special Intelligence Branch was the intelligence department for the Ministry of Labour – its role in investigating the Coal Strike being a result of the Government ownership of the UK’s coal mines. Despite the difficulty of analysing the methods of an intelligence department with only access to its finished intelligence reports, it is evident that the Special Intelligence Branch operated a similar model to the Directorate of Intelligence and GHQ GB.

²⁹⁸ ‘Situation Report, No. 55’, 3 October 1919, TNA, HO 144/1679/390500.

²⁹⁹ ‘Situation Report, No. 54’, 2 October 1919, TNA, HO 144/1679/390500, p. 2

³⁰⁰ Simms, ‘Intelligence to counter terror’, p. 38 – 5.

³⁰¹ ‘Reports received from the Police to 11 a.m. 13 August 1919’, TNA, HO 144/1534/387000

³⁰² Although the Special Intelligence Branch was responsible to the Ministry of Labour, the only record of its activities is contained within the Home Office’s record of the Coal Strike.

A 'special bulletin' from the Special Intelligence Branch reveals they placed Chief Investigation Officers in areas such as Leeds and Manchester.³⁰³ Although this does not give details of the entire network operated by the Special Intelligence Branch, it does suggest that a Chief Investigation Officer was placed in areas perceived to be centres of unrest, or importance, in a disturbance of the Coal Mines. This highlights that the organisation of networks was not the exclusive design of the Home Office or one particular department.

The pervasive nature of the various networks which collected intelligence is clear. Their role in monitoring legitimate acts of protests enforced the political role of the British police. Moreover, from the evidence of the Police, Railway and Coal Strikes, it is evident that the police acted as intelligence collectors. Considering their primary target was labour unrest, the British police can be considered a political police. This political role does not detract from the sophistication of the intricate networks within the larger intelligence mechanism. During a time when accurate and reliable intelligence was at a premium, the police formed an essential component in Britain's internal security apparatus.

The First World War witnessed a rise of insecurity, and a failed experiment with total secrecy. What is surprising is the disregard of the total secrecy embodied in departments such as MI5 for the semi-secret Special Branch. Although the agents employed by Thomson and the Special Branch did not provoke acts to entrap their targets, they still used varying level of intrusive surveillance – particularly the infiltration of the NUPPO and the NUR. The public would have responded with the same level of

³⁰³ Special Intelligence Branch, 'Special Bulletin – 11 August 1919: Latest information as to unemployment caused by the Coal Shortages', TNA, HO 144/1534/387000

disdain to either forms of department conducting surveillance operations. Yet, the resemblance of accountability and oversight mechanisms contained within the roles of Home Secretary and Commissioner of Police made the use of Special Branch more palatable to the government.

The level of interaction between intelligence and security officials and policy makers was also significant in this period. Although there are numerous instances of collusion, officials being unduly influenced, or intelligence overreach, there were also examples of effective intelligence dissemination. At a time when access to current intelligence was considered vital, the security apparatus was able to liaise and harness various sources to create an intelligence product for policy makers. However, the cost of this product, the reduced proximity between intelligence officials and policymakers increased the likelihood that either party would influence the opposite negatively.

Despite the clear connection with the strains caused by the First World War, these changes were part of much broader developments in British security. A clear example of this can be seen in the ready deployment of military forces where GHQ GB perceived a threat, as opposed to the request of the regional Chief Constable. Significantly, this occurred not as a result of the First World War, but the wave of industrial unrest between 1910 and 1913. Yet, one area which did see a dramatic rise in importance, and one which was to remain a dominant feature was the importance of the law.

The Defence of the Realm Regulations, particularly regulation 42b, were effectively used as a tool to minimise disturbances related to industrial unrest. As Thomson observed: 'the police had greater powers conferred upon them [during the

First World War] than they are ever likely to have again'.³⁰⁴ This tone may have been a result of Thomson's fall from grace and, apparently forced, retirement. Despite the role of the police reducing, it was relative to the reduction experienced by other departments.³⁰⁵

With the introduction of the Emergency Powers Act (1920) the government secured its ability to invoke powers reminiscent of the 'Defence of the Realm Act', (DORA). An essential requirement of these powers becoming active involved the local authority, typically a Chief Constable declaring a State of Emergency. The motivation for this declaration changed from the need to successfully prosecute the War, to maintaining the 'essentials of life'.³⁰⁶ Thus, instead of the role of police reducing, it actually returned to its pre-War function. While Thomson claimed the role of the police had diminished, the role of the Police to declare a State of Emergency and request aid from the military increased the autonomous features of intelligence mechanism, and the relative importance of the police to the effective functioning of that network.

As well as this development, the political network continued to expand. New organisations were also created, the Supply and Transport Organisation, with their own source of intelligence: the Civil Commissioners. Crucially, however, in order to maintain the essentials of life these new components of the security apparatus had to continue the surveillance which had begun with their predecessors.

By 1920, the security apparatus was firmly entrenched. It had a range of political, military, and intelligence officials pursuing their pre-conceived ideals of British security. It also had a host of new threats, such as the Communist Party of Great

³⁰⁴ Hiley, 'Rise and Fall of PMS2', p. 395,

³⁰⁵ For the reductions faced by MI5, see: Andrew, *MI5*, pp.113 – 139.

³⁰⁶ Jeffrey and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3.

Britain, and the sponsorship of British Communism by the Soviet Union. It would be the latter of these that would cause the next transgression of the security network. Again, it involved Admiral Hall and Basil Thomson, however, the military and political component played a much larger role.

Chapter Four. The Dissolution Solution, 1920 – 1924.

This chapter will chart the development and adjustment, through the committee chaired by Sir Warren Fisher and the Secret Service Committee, of the security apparatus in Britain between the establishment of the 'Emergency Powers Act' (1920) and the election of the first Labour Government in 1924. The reason for this adjustment to the security apparatus was the prevailing friction amongst the various components of the security apparatus. This friction, which remained throughout the 1920s, can be traced back to the events of 1921. Neither the Fisher Committee nor the Secret Service Committee properly fulfilled an intelligence oversight function during the reorganisation of the Special Branch. Moreover, they failed to take a broad review of the security apparatus, and its flaws, prior to suggesting organisational changes. At the same time, the transition from war to peace saw the security apparatus' scope for action broadened. This broadening of scope was enabled by the 'Emergency Powers Act'.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. It will first assess Thomson's attempt to increase his powers. This will be followed by an analysis of the introduction of the 'Emergency Powers Act', and its use during the Coal Strike in 1921. The second section will then evaluate the engagement of the security apparatus and the influence of the political network against Communism, particularly during the negotiations with the Russian Trade Delegation. The analysis will show that despite the centralised control of the Home Office and a newly defined legal framework, Britain's security apparatus was bedevilled by the overreach of intelligence and security officials as well as excessive political influence on intelligence policy.

The third section will focus on the burgeoning oversight mechanism and the investigations into the intelligence and security apparatus in 1921. As well as highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the attempts at intelligence oversight during these committees, and the attempts to reform the intelligence and security apparatus, this section will also address the limitations of the political network following the resignation of Basil Thomson in 1921.

The desire to maintain features of the DORA following the termination of the War was evinced by numerous officials, its most vocal proponent was Basil Thomson. Not content with his already grandiose position Thomson sought further powers. His preferred way forward was by means of legal reform rather than organisational change. In a special report, Thomson argued that his office should be granted the powers which had been bestowed on the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police by the Restoration of Order Act (1920).³⁰⁷ These powers included the ability to arrest, intern, or deport suspected individuals. Thomson was supported, as ever, by Walter Long. Following a meeting of the Home Affairs Committee, Long wrote to Fisher, head of the Committee, and warned him of the dangers of 'legislating separately for Ireland in a punitive form'.³⁰⁸ Thomson's plea for powers similar to those of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police was not without precedent. A similar claim was made by Jenkinson, while he was the Home Office's intelligence officer in the 1880s.

³⁰⁷ See Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Special Report, 28 November 1920, TNA, HO 317/48; and 'Thomson to Shortt', 2 December 1920, TNA, HO 317/48; and Troup to Thomson, 4 December 1920, TNA, 317/48. For the Restoration of Order Act, see: P. Hart (ed.) *Irish Narratives: British Intelligence in Ireland, 1920 – 21. The Final Reports*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), p. 11 and p. 94.

³⁰⁸ 'Long to Fisher', 4 June 1919, TNA, CAB 24/81/41.

Thomson's attempt to convince policy officials of the need for legal reform was portrayed in a special report, on 'Sinn Fein activities in the U.K'.³⁰⁹ One feature of this report was the presentation of circumstantial evidence. Even by the standard of previous reports, the special report was extremely tendentious. Thomson informed the Cabinet that, on the 27 November 1920, six men were found loitering near a timber yard, in Finsbury. Fire-raising items were found, along with two pistols.³¹⁰ Thomson cited the Finsbury loiterers, along with a fire in Liverpool, as the final proof of why he needed extraordinary powers. Yet, in the enquiries that followed, no Sinn Fein literature was found, and no connection to the movement could be established.³¹¹ The singular use of this event to support policy change without further, more credible, evidence was recognised as an ill-conceived attempt to gain further powers.

The incident highlighted a weakness in Thomson's approach to the intelligence officer-policymaker relationship. It also highlighted the effective oversight role carried out by the Home Office. The intelligence network had the ear of some policymakers but it was far from being able to exert complete control over policy decisions. Like Jenkinson, Thomson's plans for reform were dismissed. Nevertheless, political support for the continuation of certain features of the DORA extended, much further.

The 'Emergency Powers Act' marked a significant change in the British government's approach to security. Under the DORA, the main focus had been the 'successful prosecution of the War'.³¹² However, the 'Emergency Powers Act' focused

³⁰⁹ Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Special Report, 28 November 1920, TNA, HO 317/48. Although this report is titled as 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', it contains no information on other revolutionary organisations which is typically found in these reports.

³¹⁰ Thomson, 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', Special Report, 28 November 1920, TNA, HO 317/48.

³¹¹ Kiernan, 'The Directorate of Intelligence'.

³¹² 'E. Troup to Chief Constables', 18 August 1917, TNA, HO 45/10884/346578

upon the maintenance of the 'essentials of life'.³¹³ The aim was to prevent any widespread disorder that would threaten the essentials of life while facilitating the retention of some of the powers enabled by DORA.

The motivations of government ministers in creating the 'Emergency Powers Act' were laid bare during discussions in the War Cabinet. The discussions contemplating the desirability of the continuation of certain features of the DORA, began prior to the signing of the Armistice, on 19 October 1918.³¹⁴ Addison, who was then Minister for Reconstruction, circulated a memorandum detailing areas that would benefit from the continuation of emergency legislation. He warned that departments would have to deal with 'exceptional circumstances' arising from 'demobilisation and reconstruction'.³¹⁵ Addison's War Cabinet memorandum identified three general areas in which the continuation of Emergency Powers would be beneficial: 'Espionage and Aliens'; 'Maintenance of Public Order'; and 'Control of Materials, Means of Transport, and Food'.³¹⁶ Further discussion led to the continuation of various emergency powers, such as the 'Firearms Act' (1920) and the 'Dangerous Drugs Act' (1920). The main order of business, however, was public order and maintenance of transport and material. It was this strand that the 'Emergency Powers Act' was designed to address.³¹⁷

The 'Emergency Powers Act' was not a reincarnation of the DORA. The stress laid on undoubtedly shaped by the requirements made evident during the rise of industrial activity during 1918 and 1919, however, influenced many similarities between the two pieces of legislation. One principal feature of the Act which was a

³¹³ *Emergency Powers Act, 1920*, [10 and 11 Geo 5] S1; and Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 5

³¹⁴ C. Addison, 'Continuation of Emergency Legislation', 19 October 1918, TNA, CAB 24/67/51.

³¹⁵ Addison, 'Continuation of Emergency Legislation', TNA, CAB 24/67/51, p. 1.

³¹⁶ Addison, 'Continuation of Emergency Legislation', TNA, CAB 24/67/51, p. 2.

³¹⁷ Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 93.

move away from the previous incarnation under the DORA was the maintenance of the 'essentials of life'.³¹⁸ While the Act itself did not provide a definition of the 'essentials of life', it inferred that 'interfering with the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel, or light, or with the means of locomotion to deprive the community or any substantial portion of the community' would threaten the essentials of life of the population.³¹⁹

Significantly for the later use of the Act, it was stated that, following the declaration of an emergency, 'His Majesty, or officials acting on His Majesty's behalf', might 'confer or impose' any powers deemed necessary for the 'preservation of the peace'.³²⁰ The powerful combination of the 'essentials of life' and the 'preservation of peace' permitted officials to tackle any coal strike - an interference with fuel - or any railway strike - an interference with locomotion - with a weight of powers reminiscent of the wartime DORA.³²¹

These provisions did, however, have some limitations. The Act limited a state of emergency to a month unless a further proclamation was made. It forbade the creation of regulations that would prevent a person taking part in a strike, or 'peacefully' persuading other persons to take part in a strike.³²² Despite these limitations, the 'Emergency Powers Act', can be interpreted as an attempt to suppress civil liberties.

Attention had been focused particularly on 'Regulation 22, which provided chiefs of police with the power to prohibit meetings and marches with the approval of

³¹⁸ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 5.

³¹⁹ *Emergency Powers Act, 1920*, S1.

³²⁰ *Emergency Powers Act, 1920*, S2.

³²¹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 5.

³²² *Emergency Powers Act, 1920*, S2

the Home Secretary if the feared disorder would arise'.³²³ Richard Thurlow has claimed that 'the use of this state power' was 'the real extremism of the centre'.³²⁴ However, an overlooked aspect of this legislation that can be interpreted as an extreme innovation was the extension of the powers of the Home Secretary, and the precedent it set for future legislation. The requirement to gain the approval of the Home Secretary in the banning of processions imposed a degree of Home Office control over the jurisdictions of regional police constabularies. While this power was seldom used, it was followed by a similar expansion in Home Office power in the banning of uniforms and processions in the 'Public Order Act' (1936).

Although it was an extension of Home Office powers that caused protest, it was not with regards to the employment of the police. During the Coal Strike (1921), the declaration of a state of emergency, and the release of regulations caused an outcry in the House of Commons. Unsurprisingly, it was Regulation 22 which caused the greatest contention, particularly because it stated 'that members of the armed forces had to perform any service which a secretary of state "by order" had declared to be "of vital importance to the community"'.³²⁵

The controversy about the direct powers granted by the 'Emergency Powers Act' obscured its real importance. The Act provided the framework for a state security apparatus to act in any manner that the government deemed necessary to protect the security of the country. Historians of civil liberties have argued that the subsequent response to the formation of the CPGB was 'vicious'.³²⁶ The government did not hesitate to use 'relentless surveillance, infiltration by the secret service and Special

³²³ Channing, 'Blackshirts' p. 86; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 254.

³²⁴ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 9; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 86.

³²⁵ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 59.

³²⁶ Clark, 'Striving to Preserve the Peace', p. 25.

Branch, and the use of emergency powers' to 'crush such organisations'.³²⁷ Through the 'Emergency Powers Act,' the British government enacted greater means to centralise control over the security apparatus and extend Home Office control.

The effort to centralise control and influence was not without further additions to the security apparatus. The network that developed as a result of the requirements to organise the official response in times of widespread industrial dispute was the Civil Commissioners. Lloyd George had summarily inducted a number of individuals as Civil Commissioners in March 1920. Their efforts during the Coal Strike highlighted the importance of coordinating resources in response to a strike in order to mitigate the disruption.³²⁸ The Civil Commissioners were joined in this effort by the Supply and Transport Committee which shouldered the task of maintaining the 'essentials of life'.³²⁹ This coordinating function along with the intelligence collection capabilities of the security apparatus created an emergency mechanism as an official response to situations that would have disrupted the 'essentials of life'.³³⁰

Although the use of the 'Emergency Powers Act' was the focal point during times when the security apparatus faced instances of industrial dispute, its actual role outside of a declaration of emergency was somewhat limited. Instead, the reserve powers granted by the Act empowered a quotidian security apparatus, the emergency mechanisms development, and complimented the network focussed approach to British security.

³²⁷ Clark, 'Striving to Preserve the Peace', p. 25; Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, pp. 251 – 254.

³²⁸ 'Revised Memorandum for the Guidance of Civil Commissioners', 1921, TNA, HO 317/73, p. 1

³²⁹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3.

³³⁰ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3.

There are many examples which display the efficiency of the intelligence and security apparatus during this period. The investigations during the negotiations with the Russian Trade Delegation, however, highlight the potential for the intelligence network to overreach, and adversely influence decision making.³³¹ Keith Jeffery has characterised the apparatus as extra-legal and extra-constitutional. For Jeffery, the 'Emergency Powers Act' legitimised a strand of right wing patriotism that was separate from support for any particular government.³³² Victor Madeira, on the other, sees more political foresight at work in the creation of the new legal framework. The relationship between the security apparatus and politicians was symbiotic.³³³

The symbiotic nature of the security apparatus is most apparent in its flaws.³³⁴ There were few safeguards to prevent an abuse of power. Second, political leaders demonstrated a preference for a complex security apparatus over the more narrowly provision of intelligence. This preference was manifested in the absence of representatives from the department which collected the intelligence during policy making decisions. This was of crucial importance because these policy decisions significantly hampered later operations. The voice of the Government Code and Cypher School (GC & CS) – was nugatory.³³⁵

The meeting of the National Council for Action on the 13 August 1920 was the first time when a body collectively represented all of the members of the British labour

³³¹ See: Thomson, 'Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom', 26 August 1920, CAB 24/111/30; Lloyd George Papers, Parliamentary Archives, LG/F/203/1/11, Churchill Papers, CHAR 2/110/157 – 163 and CHAR 16/62.

³³² Jeffery, *M16*, p. 212.

³³³ Madeira, "No Wishful Thinking Allowed", p. 2.

³³⁴ Madeira, "No Wishful Thinking Allowed", p. 2.

³³⁵ Although the GC & CS was under the Directorate of Naval Intelligence at this time, accounts of the decision to publish decrypted Soviet messages reveal that little consideration was given to the repercussions on GC & CS if intercepted material was published. Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, pp.114 – 116, and p.289.

movement.³³⁶ Aside from the sheer number of delegates, the conference was significant because it passed a resolution to use industrial action to prevent military action against the Soviet Government.³³⁷ The Council of Action represented a challenge to British security – preventing the government making particular foreign policy decisions by threatening it at home. SIGINT acquired by GC & CS provided great insight into the aims of the Soviet Government and the Russian Trade Delegation with regard to the Council of Action. GC&CS provided almost complete coverage of this tripartite arrangement. The efforts of the cryptanalysts was a brilliant intelligence operation. To the security apparatus, however, intelligence was useful mainly as the ammunition for agitprop.³³⁸

Although intelligence is typically fragmentary and incomplete, the SIGINT gathered on the Russian Trade Delegation was not.³³⁹ In correspondence with Litvinov, (Deputy Commisar for Foreign Affairs) which was subsequently transmitted to Chicherin, (Commisar for Foreign Affairs) and Lenin, Kamenev (President of the Moscow Soviet) argued: ‘if we openly make a declaration about the arming of the workmen this might easily be considered as interference and direct “Sovietisation” ... I trust that you understand the importance I attach to ... preserve the strength and unity of the working anti-militaristic movement in England’.³⁴⁰ The intercepts also revealed that Lenin ordered Kamenev to ‘write articles for them [British labour movement] yourself ... teach them the theories of Marx ... teach them how to agitate among the masses. In this lies your chief task. But of course, all this must be done

³³⁶ Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 244.

³³⁷ Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 244.

³³⁸ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 144; Andrew, *Secret Service*, pp. 366 – 367; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 81; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 186; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 187.

³³⁹ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p.2; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 211 Andrew, *Secret Service*, pp. 260 – 264; and Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 193.

³⁴⁰ Kamenev (London) to Litvinov (Copenhagen), 15 August 1920, circulated 18 August 1920, Lloyd George Papers, LG/F/31/1/39; and Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 258.

absolutely unofficially and confidentially'.³⁴¹ The Soviet Government was not merely aiming to maintain the pro-Russian view of the British working class; it was committed to subverting British security.

The combination of this commitment, and the threat posed by a general strike organised by the Council of Action created a consensus between the intelligence and political networks that the expulsion of the Russian Trade Delegation was necessary. The consensus embraced Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Winston Churchill Secretary of State for the War Office; Basil Thomson, Director of the Directorate of Intelligence, General Thwaites, Director of Military Intelligence; Admiral Sinclair, Director of Naval Intelligence; Austen Chamberlain, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Alfred Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies; Edward Shortt, Home Secretary; and Earl Curzon, Foreign Secretary into one of the more influential of the collegial political networks.³⁴²

All of the above were determined to use active measures against the Soviet threat, rather than retain effective monitoring lest it became a serious threat. Their chosen weapon was the publication of the decrypted communications. Such was the strength of the consensus, the Prime Minister had to bow to its desires, despite himself being sceptical of the usefulness of such an approach to security.³⁴³ Officials did attempt to hide the origin of the intelligence; but, 'The *Times* began its story with the

³⁴¹ Chicherin to Kamenev (London), 20 August 1920, Lloyd George papers, LG/F/203/1/11; and Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 269; Aldrich and Cormac, *Black Door*, p. 38.

³⁴² For details of how this group of politicians and intelligence officials, at the instigation of Wilson, gathered together to support the expulsion of the Russian Trade Delegation, see Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 277 – 294; and Andrew, *Secret Service*, pp.268 – 269.

³⁴³ For the attempts of Lloyd George to present a more balanced view, see: Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 20; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 187. See also: Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations Part I', p. 686; and Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, pp. 272 – 273; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 144; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 70; Aldrich and Cormac, *Black Door*, p. 37; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 134.

words “The following wireless messages have been intercepted by the British Government”³⁴⁴.

A complete breach with Russia was avoided, and the attempted expulsion of the Trade Delegation was limited to Kamenev. This incident highlights many flaws in the intelligence policymaker relationship. The first flaw in the intelligence and policy relationship is evident with the number of politicians who were privy to the decrypts. This was particularly troublesome when one considers that politicians were reviewing raw or unprocessed intelligence.³⁴⁵ Because they were viewing such sensitive material, without the tools to assess it, the decision making process was understandably affected.³⁴⁶

However, blame for the exaggerated response to the Soviet misdeed cannot be placed with British policy makers alone. As Ullman and Andrew illustrate, Wilson was a leading member of the group of intelligence and security officials who sought to expose the Soviet delegation.³⁴⁷ Wilson, as Ullman demonstrates, became increasingly outraged at Lloyd George’s policy towards the Russian Trade Delegation, at one point recording his belief that Lloyd George to be a traitor.³⁴⁸ The ability of Wilson, in his enraged state, to still impact policy is expressive of the ability of the intelligence network to influence policy makers.

³⁴⁴ Andrew, ‘Anglo-Soviet Relations, Part I’ p. 686; Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 284; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 144; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 19; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 70; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 187; Aldrich and Cormac, *Black Door*, p. 37; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 134.

³⁴⁵ Gill, *Intelligence*, p. 101; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 90 – 96; and Marrin, ‘Adding value’, pp. 199 – 211.

³⁴⁶ Although many intelligence officials and policy makers were unaware of cognitive methods to interpret and analyse intelligence, in this instance it was the absence of the preservation of the source that was missing.

³⁴⁷ See Jeffery, ‘The British Army and Internal Security’, p. 377.

³⁴⁸ Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, p. 275 – 276, p. 278, and p. 279; and Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 267; Aldrich and Cormac, *Black Door*, p. 38; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 134.

Further compounding the overreach of officials, the plot to remove the Russian Trade Delegation occurred while Lloyd George was absent from Britain. This increased the effect which intelligence officials had upon policy decisions.³⁴⁹ Being able to bypass normal routes of communication, and the Prime Minister, greatly increased the capability of the intelligence and security officials to gain access to like-minded politicians. This reinforces the view that monitored lines of communication are essential in the intelligence policy maker relationship.

It is clear that the proximity of Britain's intelligence network was too close to policymakers.³⁵⁰ This proximity can be viewed as beneficial for Thomson and the Directorate of Intelligence to displace the apprehensions of officials, and prevent them from making some incorrect or exaggerated policy decisions. Yet, this incident reveals that the absence of safeguards, or oversight function to prevent intelligence officials taking drastic action far outweigh the benefits.³⁵¹ Although the intelligence and security apparatus did have some form of accountability, intelligence agencies were responsible to the Home or Foreign Secretary, there was no dedicated department which could oversee and assess actions of intelligence and security officials which could be considered an abuse of power.

The lack of safeguards to prevent an exaggerated response by intelligence officials relates to another serious flaw in the intelligence policy maker relationship. The way in which intelligence was presented to the Cabinet was not inclusive of the entire intelligence and security apparatus. This flaw arguably exacerbated the ability of some intelligence officials to take exaggerated action to a crisis. Significantly, in

³⁴⁹ Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations: Vol. III*, pp. 290 – 292; and Andrew *Secret Service*, pp. 267 – 268.

³⁵⁰ Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, p. 15.

³⁵¹ For more on accountability of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, see: I. Leigh, 'Accountability of Security and Intelligence in the United Kingdom', *Who's Watching the Spies: Establishing Intelligence Service Accountability*, (London: Potomac Books, 2005), pp. 79 – 99.

decisions which would drastically affect the future ability of SIGINT collection, GC & CS, the agency responsible for SIGINT collection was largely ignored.³⁵²

The conduct of the political and intelligence networks during the Russian Trade Delegation investigation reveals that the relationship between policy officials and Britain's intelligence and security apparatus was flawed because of the privileged position held by a number of intelligence and security officials – owing to their collegial relationships. Because of this privileged position, these officials were able to exert incredible pressure on the government to take a particular course of action.

Given the significant but haphazard move of the security apparatus into the inner counsels of the state, a review of that development was a potential subject for the 1921 SSC. However, the important underlying changes in the importance of security were all but occluded by the arguments about personality and the particular role of the Director of Intelligence. As it turned out the SSC's main task was to deal with the resignation of Basil Thomson. In some respects, the approach of the Committee, and policy officials who instructed the Committee, towards intelligence reform mirrored that displayed toward SIGINT during the attempted expulsion of the Russian Trade Delegation: a mixture of naivety, and short-sightedness. This focus resulted in a narrow concentration on first, his personality and second immediate fiscal retrenchment, instead of long term efficiency.

The Lloyd George government believed that state spending following the First World War had to be reduced substantially. This was closely associated with the perceived level of threat. Following the end of the First World War, the threat was perceived to

³⁵² Ullman, *Anglo-Soviet Relations, Vol. III*, p. 288.

have reduced. Because of this reduction, government spending could also be reduced. However, policy officials failed to appreciate that the turmoil and political upheaval of the First World War impeded any hope of returning to a pre-War norm. Nevertheless, savings had been made to the Secret Service Vote – which funded MI5, MI6, GC & CS, and the Directorate of Intelligence, apart from the Special Branch – during the 1919 meeting of the SSC. Despite these fiscal aims, the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence tended to increase rather than decrease spending.

In 1921, the Cabinet appointed a committee, under the leadership of Sir Warren Fisher, permanent secretary to the Treasury and Head of the Civil Service, ‘to examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping’.³⁵³ Most accounts of the Fisher Committee concentrate on the eventual fate of Basil Thomson. Indeed his singular personality made him a subject of endless commentary by contemporaries. However, the demise of Basil Thomson did not discommode the security apparatus in the least. What did discommode the security apparatus was retrenchment and the reduction in its immediately available resources.

Even this should not be overstated: the idea that Britain could return to pre-First World War security norms was rejected by the Committee.³⁵⁴ While each department

³⁵³ ‘Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping’, 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 1: see also: Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 160; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119; Hennessy and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 150; P. Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain, 1945 – 1951*, (London: Penguin, 2006), p. 225; and E. O’Halpin, *Head of the Civil Service: A Study of Sir Warren Fisher*, (London: Routledge, 1989).

³⁵⁴ Churchill references the pre-war intelligence spending of MI5, but emphasises that the threats facing Britain have increased, see: W. Churchill, ‘Extract from a Memorandum by the Secretary of State for War’, 19 March 1920, TNA, KV 4/159, pp. 2 – 3; and ‘Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments,

felt the impact of financial restrictions, the Fisher committee did reach a significant conclusion. The committee emphasised the difficulties facing the committee: 'to find means of reducing the Secret Service estimates by 40 percent, after the departments concerned had already set themselves to reduce their requirements to the lowest scale consistent, in their opinion with national interest, would presuppose the existence of culpable extravagance and mismanagement'.³⁵⁵

Despite its flaws, the 1921 Fisher Committee, and the later meeting of the SSC, it represents an early component of the oversight mechanism for Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. What is described as the new oversight of the US intelligence Community – which took place between the 1960's and 1970's can be seen as present throughout the meetings of the SSC.³⁵⁶ Even the SSC's minimal aim to create some form of savings to the Secret Service Vote is a form of oversight.³⁵⁷ There was also a number of features associated with oversight, both positive and negative, throughout the 1920s. An appraisal of the SSC throughout the 1920s highlights that features of intelligence oversight which were still developing during the Cold War were present in Britain during the interwar period.³⁵⁸ With regard to the Fisher Committee and the 1921 SSC, the narrow focus of the enquiry, and the limited commitment are particularly evident.³⁵⁹

and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping', 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 7.

³⁵⁵ 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping', 27 July - 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 13; Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. 157 – 159.

³⁵⁶ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 75; M. D. Mc Cubbins and T. Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols and Fire Alarms', *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (1984), pp. 196 – 179.

³⁵⁷ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', p. 61.

³⁵⁸ A particularly significant comparison is 'sporadic policing with various degrees of enthusiasm', in the US between 1975 – 2003 and the meetings of the SSC between 1919 and 1931. Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of the Angels', p. 60.

³⁵⁹ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 160.

It is often argued that the delegation of duties amongst the members of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus in the 1920s led to much overlap and confrontation. An often referenced remark was that made during the 1925 SSC, that a sailor may spend his weekday preaching subversion in Aldershot, and be the result of enquiries by MI5; but spend his weekends making speeches in Hyde Park, the remit of Special Branch.³⁶⁰ However, this quandary did not require organisational change; but, a greater depth of liaison. Because of the SSC's fire-fighting approach to oversight, it is best to analyse the reason for the Committee's creation, their meetings, and correspondence chronologically.³⁶¹

The Fisher Committee was tasked with increasing the financial efficiency of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. This reduction was to reduce opposition from the House of Commons, as well as the broader retrenchment of public spending following the Great War. The Committee believed: 'the presentation to the House of Commons of an estimate exceeding that for 1920 – 1921 would arouse determined opposition and demand for details which it would be most undesirable to grant, but extremely difficult to resist'.³⁶²

The Committee's only significant conclusion concerned Thomson's Directorate of Intelligence. As much as anything, it was a coup carried out by the Metropolitan Police against what it came to regard as a foreign body. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Brigadier General Sir William Horwood's dissatisfaction with the

³⁶⁰ Fisher, 'Report of the 1925 SSC', TNA, FO 1093/69, p. 9; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 71; Curry, *Security Service*, p. 4.

³⁶¹ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 60 – 61; Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols and Fire Alarms', pp. 196 – 179; and L. Johnson, 'A Shock Theory of Congressional Accountability', pp. 343 – 360.

³⁶² 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping', 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 3; and Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. 155 – 161; for the budget restrictions placed upon MI5, see: Andrew, *MI5*, p. 117 – 119.

Directorate of Intelligence had been a source of frustration since Horwood's own appointment in 1920. This change revolved around a re-appraisal of the position of the Directorate of Intelligence and possible reincorporation into the Metropolitan Police.³⁶³ Significantly for review of British intelligence oversight, Horwood's concern with Thomson's autonomy was an exact mirror of Commissioner Warren's disagreement with Monro in the 1880s.³⁶⁴

Horwood's concerns were first addressed in a meeting with Shortt and Thomson in November 1920. This resulted in a memorandum which highlighted steps which Thomson should take to keep the Commissioner informed of Special Branch activities.³⁶⁵ The principal source of conflict was, despite the Directorate of Intelligence's incorporation of Special Branch, the Commissioner was still responsible for any disciplinary action for those officers, as well as Thomson.³⁶⁶ The recommendations approved by Shortt included keeping the Commissioner informed of operations which concerned the protection of Ministers and the Royal Family, activities of Special Branch officers within Metropolitan area, distribution of officers outside of the Metropolitan area, and to facilitate this, meetings were to be held between the Commissioner and Thomson weekly.³⁶⁷ However, as Horwood noted, these arrangements did not resolve the problems of communication.³⁶⁸ As a result of

³⁶³ 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22', 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p14; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 159; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 98; G. Bennett, *Churchill's Man of Mystery: Desmond Morton and the World of Intelligence*, (London: Routledge, 2009), p. 58; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 102; Madeira, 'No Wishful thinking allowed', pp. 10 – 11.

³⁶⁴ Troup, 'The Home Office Secret Service', 28 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p.1.

³⁶⁵ Horwood, 'Memorandum on the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police', 26 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/9.

³⁶⁶ Horwood, 'Memorandum on the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police', 26 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/9.

³⁶⁷ E. Shortt, 'Memorandum', 15 December 1920, TNA, HO 532/9

³⁶⁸ Horwood, 'Memorandum on the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police', 26 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/9.

these failures, the Fisher Committee proposed to bring Special Branch back under the control of the Metropolitan Police.³⁶⁹

Horwood's comments to the Fisher Committee caught the attention of Shortt who requested he put them in writing.³⁷⁰ Horwood made a number of points, financial control, protection of ministers, employment of civilians, but the overarching point was the absence of any control over Special Branch, its activities, and its head – Basil Thomson.³⁷¹ The comments of Horwood to the Fisher Committee, and in the memorandum to Shortt began a chain of events that culminated in Thomson's departure and the re-convening of the SSC.³⁷²

Since 1919 Thomson had lost most of his elite allies. The only support offered by Thomson was the Chief Constable of Middlesbrough.³⁷³ The Chief Constable was not really on a par with Admiral Hall, Winston Churchill and Walter Long who had supported Thomson's appointment as Director of Intelligence. Horwood's tactic was not to concentrate on his own position but rather to discredit Thomson's competence.³⁷⁴ Horwood highlighted that the 'Monthly report on revolutionary movements abroad', contained misleading, if not absolutely erroneous, information regarding matters by no means invariably within the purview'.³⁷⁵

³⁶⁹ 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping', 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, pp. 13 – 14.

³⁷⁰ Horwood to Shortt, 28 July 1921, TNA, HO 532/7, p. 1.

³⁷¹ Horwood to Shortt, 28 July 1921, TNA, HO 532/7, pp.1 – 3.

³⁷² B. Thomson, 'Observations of Sir Basil Thomson on the report of Sir Warren Fisher's Committee and the Memorandum by the Commissioner', 4 August 1921, TNA, HO 532/9, p. 6.

³⁷³ Chief Constable Middlesbrough, 'Memorandum', 2 August 1921, TNA, HO 532/9, pp. 1 – 2.

³⁷⁴ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 160; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 97; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 101.

³⁷⁵ W. Howards, 'Memorandum', 7 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/7, pp. 2 – 3; and 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22, To examine the expenditure on Secret Service by the several departments, and after hearing all the necessary evidence, to report their recommendations to the Cabinet for reducing expenditure and avoiding overlapping', 27 July 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 3.

The accusations against Thomson not only centred on inaccuracy, but also on his extravagant operations. One such operation involved an expedition to Poland to photograph peasants for a propaganda film, a particularly ‘farcical and expensive’ operation.³⁷⁶ Horwood alleged, that if Thomson’s reports could be incorrect regarding information that could be easily clarified, such as the attendance at a meeting of the unemployed, it is likely to be far less reliable with ‘Foreign information, the accuracy of which is not so easily capable of investigation’.³⁷⁷

Horwood had little real interest in the reports or their contents that caused Thomson the most discredit; they were merely another tool to undermine Thomson. The accuracy of the monthly foreign report was an area specifically highlighted by the Fisher Committee for its inaccuracy; however, there is evidence to support that Thomson was not responsible for writing the reports. Employee lists of the Directorate of Intelligence note that Cuthbert Headlam, a clerk in the House of Lords, and, later, Captain Miller, were responsible for the writing of the monthly report. Headlam’s diary confirms this appointment.³⁷⁸ The informality surrounding intelligence appointments is once again evident with the arrangement between Thomson and Headlam, which Headlam described as ‘an entirely private arrangement’.³⁷⁹

Headlam’s diary offers a rare glimpse into the production side of intelligence during this period. Considering the criticisms made of Thomson’s foreign reports by the Fisher Committee, Headlam’s comments are important. Headlam repeatedly made

³⁷⁶ E. O’Halpin, ‘Sir Warren Fisher and the Coalition, 1919 – 1922’, *the Historical Journal*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (1981), p. 923 – 924; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119.

³⁷⁷ W. Horwood, ‘Memorandum’, 7 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/7, p. 3.

³⁷⁸ Many thanks to Dr. Jim Beach for this reference, and information regarding Cuthbert’s association with Thomson and the Directorate of Intelligence. C. Headlam, ‘Diary Entry’, 1 July 1919, Durham County Record Office (DRO), D/He/15; S. Ball, (ed.), *Parliament and Politics in the age of Churchill and Attlee: The Headlam Diaries*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and J. Beach, (ed.), *The Military Papers of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Cuthbert Headlam, 1910 – 1942*, (London: History Press, 2005).

³⁷⁹ C. Headlam, ‘Diary Entry’, 1 July 1919, (DRO), D/He/15

reference to the difficulties he endured when writing the monthly reports; just thirteen days after agreeing on a *modus operandi*, Headlam was already contemplating not continuing the 'Thomson work'.³⁸⁰

Numerous references were also made to the quality of the intelligence received by Headlam when preparing his monthly reports. Headlam described the intelligence as 'stale', and 'dull', and the intelligence agents as 'futile fellows'.³⁸¹ Headlam's main frustration, however, was the 'fragmentary and incomplete' nature of intelligence, and how it was impacting his ability to 'add value' to his reports.³⁸² Thomson made a major error in franchising his main product to a disillusioned hired hand. In doing so he provided Horwood with a highly effective means of attacking him.³⁸³

Thomson's attempt to maintain his position failed. Rather than experience the loss of independence associated with the Directorate of Intelligence's incorporation into the Metropolitan Police, he resigned. However, he did not receive the same treatment as Monro. Instead, his fall from power was absolute. Rather than ameliorate him, the SSC focussed on finding a replacement. Thomson's resignation caused an uproar but did not significantly affect the functioning of the security apparatus. If anything the apparatus was strengthened by the merger of the Directorate of Intelligence and Special Branch. The subsequent failure of that arrangement was more to do with a series of poor personnel choices following Thomson's departure.

The various supporters of Thomson who had been absent during the examination of his role by the Fisher Committee and Horwood became vocal following

³⁸⁰ See 'Diary Entry', 1 July 1919 and 'Diary Entry', 13 July 1919, (DRO), D/He/15.

³⁸¹ 'Diary Entry', 13 July 1919, 'Diary Entry', 6 November 1919, 'Diary Entry', and 4 September 1919, (DRO), D/He/15; and 'Diary Entry', 9 January 1920, (DRO) D/He/134/72.

³⁸² 'Diary Entry', 6 November 1919, (DRO), D/He/15. Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 3; and Marrin, 'Adding value to the intelligence product', pp. 199 – 211.

³⁸³ 'Diary Entry', 6 November 1919, (DRO), D/He/15.

the announcement of Thomson's resignation. The most vocal advocate of Thomson following his departure was Blinker Hall. Hall alleged that Thomson had been forced out because of extremists and a secret plot.³⁸⁴ Thomson elaborated on the secret plot by claiming that he was a victim of the normal intrigues associated with intelligence officers.³⁸⁵ These intrigues have been interpreted into two different causes: the extension of the Irish troubles to the UK and the disagreement with Horwood. The extension of the Irish troubles involved an incident at Chequers where four Irish men 'Chalked the slogan "Up Sinn Fein"'.³⁸⁶

It is possible that an amalgamation of these explanations is the most accurate, although some deserve more weight than others. The Chequers incident, while it did highlight definite security flaws, has to be discounted because it occurred the day before Thomson's resignation. If this incident did have a significant impact on the decision, there would have been a longer period between the incident and Thomson's dismissal. On the other hand, the likely fallout from the incident could have been the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back and was the eventual incident which forced Thomson to resign.

Given the documentary evidence displaying Horwood's dissatisfaction with the independence of Thomson, it appears as the most logical explanation for Thomson's resignation. However, this does not rule out Thomson's accusations that he was the victim of the typical intrigues that intelligence officers are subjected to. Instead of interpreting the decision of the Fisher Committee as a sinister plot, however, it can be viewed as the actions of the newly established political network – one which was not

³⁸⁴ Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 283.

³⁸⁵ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 159.

³⁸⁶ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 119; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 156; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 159; and Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 98.

inclusive of those politicians who had supported Thomson in the past. This new network, in which Fisher had a leading role, would play a significant part in the attempts to oversee and reorganise Britain's intelligence and security apparatus throughout the 1920s. The resignation of Thomson and Hall's new role as an MP left a vacuum within the intelligence network. This void would be filled by C, the head of MI6.

Despite the complaints of Thomson's allies, the attention of policy makers was drawn to the problem of identifying the 'character and scope of the information required by the government and the best form to give to the organisation appointed to secure it'.³⁸⁷ Although the scope of this enquiry appears to be quite broad, there was little appetite amongst policy officials to take a broad review of British security. Instead, they focussed on the narrow task of patching up the hole left by Thomson in the security apparatus.

The greatest turmoil facing the reappointed SSC was not a result of the discussions surrounding the best form to give the organisation, although this was a primary reason for the resurrection of the SSC. Neither was it the consideration given to the type of information required by the government, which largely concerned the remit to give the organisation.³⁸⁸ It is evident that the real source of turmoil, which took four months to resolve, was the person that would succeed Thomson's intelligence role.

The first meeting of the SSC highlighted that 'the matter had been discussed at the Conference of Ministers of November 8th', and 'it had been tentatively decided to

³⁸⁷ 'Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the Secret Service Committee appointed by the Conference of Ministers held in Mr. Chamberlain's room at the House of Commons on Tuesdays, November 8, 1921', TNA, KV 4/151.

³⁸⁸ Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151.

divide the post between two officers ... The intelligence officer would be subordinate to the executive officer. The former post had been provisionally offered to Lt. Colonel Sir Vernon Kell'.³⁸⁹ The official history of MI5 presents Commissioner Horwood resisting Kell's appointment; however, the documentary evidence suggests that Kell refused.³⁹⁰ The absence of a suitable person to take on the intelligence officer's role resulted in a four month delay to the planned amalgamation of the Special Branch and the CID.³⁹¹

However, before the Commissioner would eventually approach Colonel Carter to take on the responsibilities of the intelligence officer, a number of discussions took place. During these discussions, a number of possible variations to the remit of both officers were discussed – these variations would have a lasting impact and prove to be a source of friction within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.

Prior to the first meeting of the SSC, the committee members had tentatively decided to divide Basil Thomson's role between two officers: one executive and one intelligence. The records of the first meeting of the SSC highlight that the separation of Thomson's role had already created a problem: efficiency. Shortt emphasised that of the arrangements under 'Thomson's tenure ... promptitude of action was absolutely essential'.³⁹² By separating the role, the SSC was creating a gap between the two officers. This gap would inevitably, even under ideal conditions, have some form of delay to the execution of action.

³⁸⁹ 'Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the Secret Service Committee', 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 3.

³⁹⁰ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 159; and Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 3.

³⁹¹ Commissioner Horwood approached Colonel Childs and Colonel Carter about Carter becoming the intelligence officer on 11 March 1922. See Horwood to Shortt, 'Personal', 15 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3.

³⁹² Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 4.

The SSC believed that one possible solution to the problem, unification of the role of Commissioner with the intelligence officer, would be impractical. Shortt believed that 'the qualities required in the man who was to collect information would never be found in a good Commissioner of Police'.³⁹³ As a result, the committee was forced find an alternative solution because their preference for a singular individual to fill the void did not exist.

It is equally likely that Shortt's scepticism regarding the unification of the roles of Commissioner and intelligence officer was the result of a desire to keep the intelligence officer's identity secret.³⁹⁴ Significantly, the SSC, at this point, failed to recognise that the problems with the previous arrangement was Basil Thomson's autonomy. The incorporation of the intelligence apparatus under the supervision of the Commissioner would have been the ideal compromise. Thomson's unwillingness to surrender his independence was the main barrier to such a compromise.

Following Thomson's departure, the remaining barrier was that the members of the SSC wished to divide the post. Churchill's comments on the matter continued the theme of division of responsibilities. Not only did Churchill agree that the Director of Intelligence should be independent of Scotland Yard, but he also argued that the pooling of intelligence 'should not be the Directorate of Intelligence ... MI5, C's [Sinclair's], and other similar organisations'.³⁹⁵ In this endeavour, Churchill was pursuing a more radical approach to the reform of Britain's security apparatus. Shortt offered a potential for compromise, which would reduce the likelihood of future confrontation between the Commissioner and new intelligence officer by suggesting

³⁹³ Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 4.

³⁹⁴ Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 4.

³⁹⁵ Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, pp. 5 – 6.

that one officer should combine the intelligence and executive functions. Shortt cited the lack of a firm decision, by of the previous Conference of Ministers, that the role of Basil Thomson had to be divided between two officers.³⁹⁶

Between the first and second meetings of the SSC, Shortt circulated a memorandum on the development of the Home Office's intelligence apparatus. While on the surface this memorandum can appear to have great value, it must be highlighted that Shortt was also pursuing his own agenda. Considering the memorandum alongside the disagreement between Shortt and Churchill regarding the separation of the executive and intelligence functions, this memorandum can be seen to be emphasising the problems associated with having an intelligence officer outside of the Metropolitan Police. As useful as scepticism is when analysing intelligence related material, it is also worthwhile to consider that Shortt may have just been stating facts – and that the incorporation of the Home Office intelligence apparatus with the Metropolitan Police was the most efficient arrangement.

Churchill's enthusiasm for continued discussion can be seen to have wavered following the first meeting. It is recorded that he questioned the grounds for discussions, considering that Childs had been appointed as Assistant Commissioner (SB).³⁹⁷ However, because the role of intelligence officer had not been decided, or more accurately accepted, Shortt believed that the matter still warranted discussion.³⁹⁸

The Committee went into greater detail regarding the practicalities of the proposed division of labour, and identified the role of executive and intelligence officers

³⁹⁶ Draft Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 7.

³⁹⁷ Sir Trevor Bingham maintained responsibility for the CID until March 1922 when Carter was appointed Deputy Assistant Commissioner (C). See Horwood to Shortt, 'Personal', 15 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3. See also: 'Secret Service Committee: Draft Minutes of the Second meeting, held in Lord Curzon's room at the Foreign Office, on Thursday December 8th, 1921', TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2.

³⁹⁸ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2.

as 'A' and 'B'; although, because Childs had already accepted the role of 'A' the majority of the discussion centred on the relationship which 'B' would have with 'A' and the rest of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.³⁹⁹

In a somewhat prophetic observation, Shortt drew attention to an individual who would play a large part in the future of Britain's security apparatus, and who would have, in theory, been the logical successor of Basil Thomson: Colonel Carter. Carter had held a variety of positions within the Directorate of Intelligence: beginning in the Foreign Branch, Captains Miller and Liddell, Carter was transferred to Irish Branch in March 1920, and finally as Assistant Director.⁴⁰⁰ Despite this experience, and Carter's 'marked ability since Sir Basil Thomson's departure, [Carter] was not really good enough to be appointed in a permanent capacity as B, nor would he be likely to work well with General Childs'.⁴⁰¹ Although Carter was later appointed as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner (SB), Shortt's notion of his inability to work well with others was quite accurate.

The committee, seemingly without giving the possibility of Carter's incorporation into any future reorganisation any consideration, returned to the prospect of offering the post of B to Kell. Churchill identified that in the original offer, Kell's new role as intelligence officer would have involved him becoming subordinate to Childs, with no increase in status or salary.⁴⁰² It was decided that, before exploring other options, a new offer should be made to Kell that would involve a financial incentive and the union of Special Branch and MI5. However, the SSC decided that it would be

³⁹⁹ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 2 – 3.

⁴⁰⁰ Although this record is the only available list which breaks down the members, and their respective roles, within the DI, it must be treated with caution because of the lack of corroborating information. B. Thomson, 'Appendix: Directorate of Intelligence', 30 September 1921, TNA, HO 532/7, p.1.

⁴⁰¹ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3.

⁴⁰² Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 4.

best to firmly agree on the specifics of Kell's new role, prior to offering it to him for the second time.⁴⁰³

The Committee agreed that in Kell's new role, he would submit all necessary information to the Commissioner, through Childs, but for disciplinary purposes would remain independent of the Commissioner, and be responsible to the Home Secretary.⁴⁰⁴ Although reorganisation along these lines would have maintained the Home Secretary's accountability function, it would have undermined the role of the Commissioner and of Childs – who would essentially be acting as Kell's messenger for the Commissioner.

Another weakness, highlighted by Shortt, was that the separation of the CID from Special Branch would maintain a weakness of the organisation under Basil Thomson.⁴⁰⁵ Furthermore, Churchill added that the War Office would be unlikely to agree to a too close identification of MI5 with a civil authority.⁴⁰⁶ Shortt and Churchill were aiming at ensuring two different, and not always compatible goals: efficiency and secrecy. Shortt believed that efficiency and 'promptitude of action were of the highest importance' his repeated recommendations for the possible unification of both role in one person, and the inclusion of the Commissioner's accountability function highlight this.⁴⁰⁷ Churchill, however, wished to ensure the secrecy of MI5 and the possible intelligence officer. At this point, Shortt and Churchill's differing goals reached an impasse. The Committee could not agree on a possible compromise which would combine Shortt's desire to ensure efficiency, and Churchill's desire to ensure secrecy

⁴⁰³ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁴ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 5.

⁴⁰⁵ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁶ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁷ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6; and Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, KV 4/151, p. 7.

– principally because Churchill promoted the idea of housing the new intelligence department far from the CID.⁴⁰⁸

Shortt's summary of the SSC's recommendations also contained a number of anomalies which would have likely been a source of friction. The first of these anomalies was in reference to the independence of the intelligence officer, now referred to as x.⁴⁰⁹ This independence would be limited both in terms of scope of enquiry, and resources. Shortt noted that Childs would collect intelligence within the Metropolitan Police district.⁴¹⁰ This restriction on the activities of the intelligence officer had already caused friction when a similar arrangement was in place when Monro was the Assistant Commissioner, and Jenkinson was the Home Office's intelligence officer.

It was short-sighted of the SSC members to suggest that the investigation of individuals could be satisfactorily divided along the geographical lines of those in the Metropolitan district, and those outside of it. The problem is clear when one considers the investigation of individuals, such as Walter Hannington, leader of the National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM), who would lead scores of people from all over the United Kingdom into the heart of London.⁴¹¹

The second anomaly is connected to the resources available to the intelligence officer. Considering that a reason for the incorporation of Thomson's Directorate of Intelligence into the Metropolitan Police was to reduce the Home Office's intelligence budget, it is not surprising that the SSC was not proposing to grant the new intelligence officer the personnel which Thomson had access too. Although the intelligence officer

⁴⁰⁸ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 8 December, 1921, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 5 – 6.

⁴⁰⁹ Shortt, 'Draft, Home Office Intelligence Service', TNA, HO 532/7.

⁴¹⁰ Shortt, 'Draft, Home Office Intelligence Service', TNA, HO 532/7, p. 1.

⁴¹¹ For the 1927 Hunger March, see: TNA HO 144/12143.

would employ his own personnel, when requiring further resources, he would have to appeal to the Commissioner for the use of police officers.⁴¹²

The third anomaly revolves around the duty of the intelligence officer to solely collect intelligence. The note emphasises that X, and his agents, will have no powers of arrest. Surprisingly, the note also suggests that police officers who were employed by the intelligence officer would also lose their powers of arrest.⁴¹³ While this arrangement did raise some practical issues – particularly the practicalities of officers employed for intelligence functions regaining their power of arrest following intelligence duties. It also highlights that the government was aware of the vast intelligence resource which police officers offered.

Taking into account the dual ‘high’ and ‘low policing’ role of the British police, the issues of separating these roles while the officers were engaged in intelligence activities is significant.⁴¹⁴ Of central importance to this study is the identification of this ‘high’ policing role carried out by the police. It is evident that the dual nature of the police’s role was not viewed as ideal – hence the need to separate the ‘high’ from the ‘low policing’.⁴¹⁵ Despite the unwillingness that policy had towards the continuation of these practices, the absence of ruling out this dual nature supports the view that the police informed approach to intelligence was viewed as necessary.

The failure to address this issue was likely due to the same reason that a suitable alternative to Colonel Carter was not found: difficulty. Although there was correspondence regarding further details, attention turned again to offering the intelligence role to Colonel Carter. Considering Kell’s second refusal to take on the

⁴¹² Shortt, ‘Draft, Home Office Intelligence Service’, TNA, HO 532/7, p. 2.

⁴¹³ Shortt, ‘Draft, Home Office Intelligence Service’, TNA, HO 532/7, p. 1.

⁴¹⁴ Brodner, ‘High Policing and Low Policing’, p. 507.

⁴¹⁵ Brodner, ‘High Policing and Low Policing’, p. 507.

post, it is unsurprising that Carter had to be reconsidered. However, almost prolonging the agony which the SSC had undergone, Carter initially refused the post. Carter's reasoning for refusing the post revolved around his appointment as a Deputy Assistant Commissioner.⁴¹⁶ The identification of the post as 'little x' could have also been a factor.⁴¹⁷

However, the objections held by Shortt and Fisher passed, and Carter was permitted to become Deputy Assistant Commissioner (SB), the changes coming into effect on 1 April 1922.⁴¹⁸ Although there had been a lot of discussion about the ideal relationship between the Commissioner, Special Branch, and the intelligence department, little attention had been given to the internal structure of the intelligence organisation, and how, if it was absorbed into the Metropolitan Police, it would be organised. The lack of such discussions resulted in these discussions being left in the hands of the Commissioner who requested to use his judgement to absorb remaining officers of the Directorate of Intelligence into the Metropolitan Police.⁴¹⁹ However, this decision permitted a division of labour to remain, which became a source of friction inside the Metropolitan Police and between the Metropolitan Police and the broader security apparatus.

⁴¹⁶ Horwood to Shortt, 'Personal', 15 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3. There was precedent for the Commissioner appointing an individual not already part of the MEPO to the post of DAC; but this was subject to the Home Secretary's approval, see: Unknown, 'memorandum', 19 July 1933, TNA, MEPO 2 7430.

⁴¹⁷ Horwood to Shortt, 'Personal', 15 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3, p. 1.

⁴¹⁸ Shortt to Horwood, 4 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3, p. 2; 'Horwood to Shortt', 6 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3.

⁴¹⁹ 'Horwood to Shortt', 1 March 1922, TNA, MEPO 10/3.

Chapter Five: The security apparatus and the first Labour Government.

The 1921 SSC attempted to reorganise the division of responsibilities between MI5 and Special Branch, but there was little fundamental change to the fabric of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. This, in part, can be attributed to the short-sighted remit given to the SSC. As a result of this lack of change, the same features which allowed networks to operate unchecked, and without oversight, were permitted to continue. The existence of these networks had both positive and negative connotations. The networking of Chief Constables allowed the centralisation of intelligence collection and dissemination of that intelligence by the Home Office. However, the political network permitted intelligence officials to negatively impact policy.

The increased centralisation of the intelligence network was fundamental to the development of the emergency mechanism. The emergency mechanism permitted a continual surveillance of industrial disputes, harnessing the potential of the intelligence mechanism, prior to the despatch of police resources, and a constant state of readiness to minimise disruption following the commencement of a strike or large disturbance. However, the existence of the political network permitted the continued collusion between members of the intelligence network and policy makers, and their negative impact upon policy.

This chapter examines how the security apparatus conducted itself between the establishment of the first Labour government in 1924 and the meetings of the SSC in 1925. It is divided into three sections. It will first assess the prevalent fears of many officials to a prospect of Labour government, and then the response to the Railway

and Dock Strikes of 1924. This will demonstrate that alterations to the parties involved, the apparatus continued to function as an autonomous mechanism, deploying resources when necessary. This will also emphasise that the networks which were in place prior to the election in January 1924, continued unabated.

The second section details the background and fallout from the Zinoviev letter. Much as the Railway and Dock strike will demonstrate, the Zinoviev letter highlights the continued presence of the political network, and that this network continued to function as it had done previously. Significantly, the lack of safeguards permitted one of the most significant examples of intelligence overreach to occur.

The final section details the official response to the Zinoviev letter, the resurrection of the SSC. The SSC was reconvened in 1925 as an official response to the Zinoviev letter. However, due to the complexities of the letter, and the difficulties associated with intelligence reform, the 1925 SSC failed to foster significant change. This is an important example of the practicalities of intelligence oversight. Although the Zinoviev letter was a significant 'fire alarm', which still persists, it failed to prompt substantial reform to the intelligence apparatus.⁴²⁰

The election of a minority Labour Government made manifest the fears of some politicians, civil servants, and intelligence officials.⁴²¹ The likelihood of a Labour government coming to power was one reason why the SSC had objected to combining

⁴²⁰ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 75; and Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 196 – 179.

⁴²¹ For an appraisal of the fears of a possible Labour government, see: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 79; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 215, Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 78 – 80; Madeira, *Britannia*, pp. 131 – 132; Quinlan, *Secret War*, pp. 31 – 32; K. Middlemas, *Thomas Jones Whitehall Diary: Volume One, 1916 – 1925*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 267; and R. R. James, *Memoirs of a Conservative: J.C.C. Davidson's Memoirs and Papers, 1910 – 1937*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), pp. 179 – 180.

all of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus in one organisation.⁴²² Many members of the apparatus believed it would be harder to remove multiple organisations than one. This belief was reasserted by Horwood in 1925.⁴²³ There is some evidence to support the view that, had the first Labour government lasted longer, they would have sought to dissolve Britain's intelligence and security apparatus and reveal its past activities; yet, there is equal evidence to support the opposite perspective.⁴²⁴

Despite the speculative nature of the accusations of policy makers and intelligence officials, it must be recognised that this speculation was considered a genuine threat to British security. Members of the security apparatus interpreted the revolutionary rhetoric of some members of the Labour party, particularly Leonard Woolf and C. P. Trevelyan as a sign of possible Labour policies towards the security apparatus that could lead to a reduction in their effectiveness, or abolition.⁴²⁵ Evidence to counter this anti-establishment perception of the first Labour government originates from a Labour slogan: 'we must not annoy the civil service'.⁴²⁶ Owing to Labour's minority position, the pursuit of radical policies would have encountered resistance from Labour's coalition partners.

⁴²² Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations p.1', p. 695; S. Roskill, *Hankey: Man of Secrets, II*, (London: St Martin's Press, 1972), pp. 353 – 354; L. Chester, S. Fay, and H. Young (eds.) *The Zinoviev Letter*, London: Heinemann, 1967), p. 108; Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 78 – 80; James, *Memoirs of Conservative*, pp. 179 – 180.

⁴²³ 'Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the third meeting', 24 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 8; Hankey believed that Macdonald would 'cut the throat of the Committee of Imperial Defence', see: Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations Anglo soviet relations p.695

⁴²⁴ Some observers interpreted the inclusions of Leonard Woolf and C.P. Trevelyan, who favoured dismantling the intelligence and security services, as a possible future policy of the Labour government. Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations p.1', p. 705; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 298; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 146. See also: D. Wilson, *Leonard Woolf: A Political Biography*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1978); and A. James and A. Morris, *C.P. Trevelyan, 1870-1958: Portrait of a Radical*, (London: Blackstaff Press Ltd, 1977); Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 215; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 79.

⁴²⁵ Wilson, *Leonard Woolf*; and James and Morris, *Trevelyan*.

⁴²⁶ Jeffery, *MI6*, p.215; Morris, *Portrait of a Radical*, p.164; and J. Wedgwood, *Memoirs of a Fighting Life*, (London: Hutchinson, 1941), p. 186.

Nevertheless, the perception that the new Labour government would approach Britain's intelligence and security apparatus with some form of hostility persisted. This view gains further credibility when Macdonald's first appraisal of Special Branch's 'Revolutionary Movements in the UK', is considered.⁴²⁷ Macdonald commented that the reports, in their 'present scope', would not 'prove very edifying or interesting reading for the Cabinet' because much of the material was gleaned from the *Workers Weekly* and other papers.⁴²⁸ Macdonald continued, in a hostile tone:

That it might be made at once attractive and indeed entertaining if its survey were extended to cover not only communistic activities but also other political activities of an extreme tendency. For instance, a little knowledge in regard to the Fascist movement in this country ... or possibly some information as to the source of the *Morning Post* funds might give an exhilarating flavour to the document and by enlarging its scope convert it into a complete and finished work of art.⁴²⁹

Childs responded to the criticism by suggesting that he would extend his operations, if the Prime Minister instructed him to do so, but that he had never 'thought it right to investigate movements which wishes to achieve their aims peacefully'.⁴³⁰ Such a stance signalled Childs determination to not conduct surveillance on organisations pursuing political aims that he considered unthreatening to British security.

This confrontation between Macdonald and Childs illustrates the extent to which the relationship between intelligence officials and politicians can change. A similar disagreement existed between Thomson and Lloyd George regarding the legitimacy of the threat posed by pacifists during the First World War. Although Thomson disagreed with Lloyd George's assessment of the pacifist threat, he consented to compiling reports on their activities until the armistice in 1918. Childs, on the other

⁴²⁷ 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom: Report No. 240', 24 January 1924, TNA, PRO 30/69/220.

⁴²⁸ D. Marquand, *Ramsay Macdonald*, (London: Johnathan Cape Ltd, 1977), p.314; Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations part one', p. 697.

⁴²⁹ Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations, part one', pp. 697; Andrew, *Secret Service*, pp. 299 – 300; Andrew, *MI5*, p.146; and Marquand, *Ramsay Macdonald*, pp. 314 – 315.

⁴³⁰ Marquand, *Ramsay Macdonald*, pp. 314 – 315.

hand, stood firm with his assessment of the fascist threat, and did not carry out surveillance operations against fascist groups.

Childs was not alone in having apprehensions about the new Labour government. Days after the government was formed, Herbert Creedy, Permanent Under-secretary at the War Office, 'signed a letter to all home GOCinCs (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief) requesting them to bring up to date their lists of officers and *private individuals* available for army intelligence work during an emergency'.⁴³¹ This fear was exacerbated by the reports on revolutionary organisations in the UK that continued to be produced by the Special Branch. Of particular significance were the claims that the CPGB were organising a 'secret service', and the perceived connection between the CPGB and the NUWM.⁴³² Despite the level of threat illustrated in these reports, the lack of response suggests that it was not interpreted as a significant threat.

Concerns of the possible ramifications of a Labour government extended to the Supply and Transport Committee (STC). It is evident that the STC was fearful that all of the machinery, the emergency mechanism, to counter the disruptive effects of a strike, would be revealed to someone who may have been, or worse still, would in the future be, a promoter of industrial action. The fears of the STC are encapsulated in a letter received by J. C. C. Davidson, the Chancellor Duchy of Lancaster and Deputy Chief Civil Commissioner from Lancelot Storr, Davidson's aide. Storr, argued: 'It is possible that, if the Labour Government decided that the present organisation, designed to meet industrial crisis, should be continued, the Chief Civil Commissioner, appointed under that Government, might well be a prominent Trade Unionist ...

⁴³¹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 78; and James, *Whitehall Diary, Volume one*, p. 267.

⁴³² James, *Memoirs of a Conservative*, p.179; 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom: Report No. 186', 21 December 1922, TNA, CAB 24/140/75, pp. 6 – 10; and 'Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom: Report No. 187', 4 January 1923, TNA, CAB 24/158/4, pp. 9 – 10.

whoever was appointed would at once become acquainted with all the machinery for quelling that very crisis which he himself, when in opposition, may have done his best to foment'.⁴³³

The prospects of prominent trade unionists or those who had sought to foment industrial unrest posed an interesting challenge for the civil service. Those members of the Labour Party who were entrusted with the knowledge of how the intelligence and security apparatus operated would likely be in a position to dismantle it while in power, or effectively counter its activities later.⁴³⁴ The response of some civil servants to this dilemma was secrecy – a staple approach by British officials to sensitive intelligence matters.

The secretive approach was taken towards the work of GC and CS and MI6. Arthur Ponsonby, Macdonald's under-secretary at the Foreign Office, alleged that he was 'refused access to intelligence material ... because of his subordinate position'.⁴³⁵ Churchill later claimed that Macdonald was 'long kept in ignorance of them [the intercepts] by the Foreign Office'.⁴³⁶ It would seem that the only intelligence which Macdonald had ready access to, Special Branch reports, he did not want. Although Childs' and Macdonald's interaction suggests that they may have had a reasonable degree of distance, the relationship between Ponsonby and the Foreign Office suggests the opposite.

A similar suggestion was made by Storr in a letter to Davidson in regards to the STC. Storr suggested that it may be better to wrap the organisation 'in temporary

⁴³³ James, *Memoirs of a Conservative*, pp. 179 – 180.

⁴³⁴ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 79 – 80.

⁴³⁵ Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations, part one', p. 696; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 299 – 300; Andrew, *MI5*, pp. 146 – 147.

⁴³⁶ Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations, part one', p. 696; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 299; Andrew, *MI5*, pp. 146 – 147.

obscurity and silence, and the various papers handed over – not to your successor – but to Sir John Anderson, (Home Office Under-Secretary) or Mr. Roundell' (Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade).⁴³⁷ Such a suggestion far exceeded the mandate of civil servants, and emphasised the capability of civil servants – as well as politicians – to overreach their position. It is not surprising that Storr would seek to protect the STC from possible dismantlement or ruin under Labour leadership. The STC represented the culmination of the advances the Home Office had made, particularly in the centralisation of information and resource management during a crisis. Under Davidson's leadership, the STC had developed a nucleus which could be employed to mitigate the disruptive consequences of mass industrial activity.⁴³⁸

However, Davidson did not cloak the STC in secrecy. Instead, he informed his successor as the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Josh Wedgwood Labour MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme, and an acquaintance of Davidson, that it was 'his duty to protect the Constitution against a Bolshevick-inspired General Strike [and] begged him not to destroy all I had done and not to inform his Cabinet of it'.⁴³⁹ However, developments within the UK prevented any further attempt to cloak the STO: the first challenge of the Labour Government: was a Railway strike.⁴⁴⁰

Although the Railway strike of 1924 was not as severe as the strike of 1919, or 1921 – lasting only nine days – it does provide an opportunity to analyse how Britain's security apparatus had developed since the reorganisation in 1921. The addition of

⁴³⁷ James, *Memoirs of a Conservative*, p. 180; Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 79 – 80.

⁴³⁸ 'Revised Memorandum for the Guidance of Civil Commissioners', 1921, TNA, HO 317/73; and James, *Memoirs of a Conservative*, p. 179.

⁴³⁹ James, *Memoirs of a Conservative*, p.180; and Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 79.

⁴⁴⁰ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 79.

the Dock Strike permits an analysis of how the Labour government attempted to alter this structure following their appraisal in February 1924. The SSC had paid little attention to the apparatus which supplied intelligence on industrial activity, subversion and sedition throughout the UK and this portion of the security apparatus continued to operate as it had done previously.

When the initial reports concerning the railway strike are considered, a significant increase in the importance of the 'essentials of life' is immediately evident, supplies of milk, flour, and coal supplies were raised at Macdonald's first Cabinet meeting, 23 January 1924.⁴⁴¹ The autonomous response of Britain's security apparatus to respond to events as they unfolded also continued. Considering that the Railway strike occurred while the government was in transition, the process of commencing the audit of supplies and beginning intelligence collection ran smoothly.⁴⁴²

The central role of the Home Office and the Home Secretary is also apparent. Arthur Henderson, Home Secretary for the new government, was instructed to keep the Cabinet informed of developments. The central role of the Home Office in keeping the Cabinet updated, again, was a continuation of practices which had been in use since 1910. During this strike, however, the STC obtained the role of a 'clearing house' for the information which had previously been sent to the Home Office, War Office, Ministry for Transport, as well as the Ministry for Labour. The stream of intelligence reports disseminated during previous strikes was significant, and had led to a high volume of paperwork to be digested by ministers. The STC's reports, on the other

⁴⁴¹ 'Conclusion', 23 January 1924, TNA, CAB 23/47/1.

⁴⁴² 'Memo: of Meeting held at Board of Trade', 18 January 1924, TNA, HO 144/3984.

hand, were comprehensive, easier to read, and as a result, more likely to be read by Ministers.

Nineteen twenty-four proved to be a turning point in the demilitarisation of British security. The 1919 guidelines on 'military support for the civil power' reinforces this perspective. It stipulated that the military were only to be employed when local resources had been depleted.⁴⁴³ In 1924 the need to resort to military resources was minimised due to the cooperation between police forces in sending reserves from one area to another. Keith Jeffery suggests that 'some aspects of emergency planning may have been less emphasised than others and it seems clear that, under the Labour government, the War Office rather "soft-pedalled" the use of soldiers as strike breakers or to maintain public order.⁴⁴⁴

By 1924, however, the civilian component of the security apparatus had become more effective. Another factor which also played a part in the requirements for military support was the severity of the strike. A cursory appraisal of the reports provided by the STC illustrates that, in the majority of areas, the Chief Constables frequently reported 'all [was] quiet'.⁴⁴⁵ The lack of severe disturbance to public order, aside from an explosion in Middlesbrough which was described as mischievous rather than malicious, helped the new civilian apparatus to bed in.⁴⁴⁶

Much like the Railway strike, the conduct of Britain's security apparatus during the Dock strike was much similar to that of previous strikes. The emphasis again was on how the strike would impact the availability of foodstuffs, fuel: the 'essentials of

⁴⁴³ 'Duties in Aid of the Civil Power', TNA, WO 279/467.

⁴⁴⁴ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 79.

⁴⁴⁵ See 'police reports', TNA, HO 144/3984.

⁴⁴⁶ Chief Constable, Middlesbrough to Home Office Under-Secretary, 30 January 1924; H.M. Chief Inspector of Explosives to Home Office Under-Secretary, 24 January 1924; and Chief Constable, Middlesbrough to F.C. Johnson, Home Office, 30 January 1924, TNA, HO 144/3984.

life'.⁴⁴⁷ Another similarity is the lack of evidence of aggressive intelligence collection practices employed by Special Branch and the regional Chief Constables. Although this is accredited to the security apparatus being fearful of the ramifications following aggressive intelligence gathering techniques, it is likely a result of the lack of significant threats to public order.

The analysis of the Railway and Dock strike has highlighted that Britain's security apparatus continued to operate in the manner that had become established in the immediate post-War period. The positive aspects of Britain's security apparatus were also accompanied by the negative. In response to a threatened strike, the emergency mechanism evaluated its position and resources, and mobilised assets to gather intelligence and prepare for a worst case scenario. Although this displays the proficiency of the emergency and intelligence mechanisms within the security apparatus, there also remained a distinct lack of oversight which permitted intelligence officials to overreach their position and negatively impact policy.

As 1924 unfolded, the Labour government was confronted with two further crises. The handling of these crises, the John Campbell case, and the Zinoviev letter, undermined their credibility on the eve of the general election. The conduct of the security apparatus and policymakers during the period sowed the seeds for one of the most enduring conspiracy theories in British intelligence history.

The Campbell case followed Labour's conclusion of two treaties with the Soviet Union. This policy re-emphasised many of the apprehensions which officials had held prior to Labour forming their government in January 1924. These treaties preceded

⁴⁴⁷ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 5.

the arrest John Campbell under the 'Incitement to Mutiny Act' because of a seditious article 'An Open Letter to the Fighting Forces', contained in the *Workers Weekly*.⁴⁴⁸

Disregarding the assessment of the security apparatus, Macdonald and the Labour government decided that the charges against Campbell were insufficient to warrant prosecution. It was the belief of members of the Labour Cabinet that to charge Campbell for the comments within the *Workers Weekly* article, would lead many of them liable for prosecution. If this explanation is taken in isolation it would have evoked frustration among members of the security apparatus, and in consequence, form part of the reason why some individuals would have been motivated to highlight the unwillingness of the Labour government to confront the perceived threat of Communism.⁴⁴⁹

A crucial flaw in the totality of the approach suggested by security officials is the precedent set during the investigation into speeches made by Sylvia Pankhurst in 1919.⁴⁵⁰ The case of Sylvia Pankhurst highlights a deviation from a previous practice. Although it was interpreted that Pankhurst's language made her liable for prosecution, the severity of the threat, and that the prosecution would give her a great deal of publicity negated the benefits of pursuing the arrest. Concluding that Pankhurst arrest would cause more harm than good, it was decided to 'leave her alone'.⁴⁵¹

Unlike the Pankhurst case, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and Special Branch had decided to proceed with the arrest. Although both parties were acting

⁴⁴⁸ See Minute 4 a: 'Copy of *The Workers Weekly*, containing 'An Open Letter to the Fighting Forces', 25 July 1924, TNA, KV 2/1186.

⁴⁴⁹ Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations Part I', pp. 673 – 706; Andrew, MI5, p. 148; Jeffery, MI6, p. 216; and Bennett, Churchill's, pp. 82 – 84.

⁴⁵⁰ Thomson, 'Fortnightly Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom and Morale Abroad', 7 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/77/93, p. 4.

⁴⁵¹ Thomson, 'Fortnightly Report on Revolutionary Organisations in the United Kingdom and Morale Abroad', 7 April 1919, TNA, CAB 24/77/93, p. 4.

within their respective mandates when carrying out this arrest, it does seem clear that the *Workers Weekly* article represented the same level of threat that Pankhurst had represented. Nevertheless, the publicity which the raid on the CPGB HQ, on 5 August 1924, and the subsequent arrest of Campbell, had upon the case, prior to its deliberation, seriously undermined the government's credibility.⁴⁵² The decision to prosecute, therefore, was intertwined with an evaluation of the threat posed. Instead of only evaluating the threat of the article causing sedition, the security apparatus also appears to be evaluating the threat posed by a government which it perceived to be pro-communist.

This lack of credibility resulted in a loss of Liberal support and, as a result, Macdonald called for another General Election. The election was planned for October 1924, but any hope for Labour success was derailed by the publication of the infamous Zinoviev Letter. Described as a bombshell it is alleged to have won the election for the Conservative Party, and began a longstanding conspiracy theory that the intelligence services and the Conservatives orchestrated the Zinoviev letter to remove the Labour government.⁴⁵³ The letter claimed the stabilisation of the relations between the Soviet Union and the UK paved the way for a revolution in Britain, expanding the influence of communist propaganda significantly. This political bombshell is unlikely to be definitively settled for all of the respective parties; however, analysis of the Zinoviev letter has arrived at some tenable conclusions.

⁴⁵² 'Press Cutting: Communist Headquarters Raided 6 August, Editor of *Workers Weekly* arrested', 6 August 1924, TNA, KV 2/1186.

⁴⁵³ Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet Relations Part I', pp. 673 – 706; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 148; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 216; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 82 – 84.

The first of these conclusions is that the letter was a forgery.⁴⁵⁴ For many investigations, the debate regarding the authenticity of the letter was of central importance.⁴⁵⁵ From these studies, it is evident that the Zinoviev letter was just one of numerous intercepted communications, both genuine and forgeries, that SIS passed to British officials. The Director General of MI5, Kell, believed that ‘the note contained nothing new or different from the [known] intentions and propaganda of the’ Soviet Union.⁴⁵⁶

The Zinoviev letter reinforces the informality of the relationship between policy makers and intelligence officials with regards to secret intelligence. This informality, particularly with the dissemination of intelligence that should have been considered highly secret and circulated to a small number of individuals, greatly increased the ability and number of individuals to overreach their position. The extent to which any particular person, or group, can be definitively identified as the sole culprit for leaking the letter to *The Daily Mail* is a clear example of this. However, attention has been drawn to a number of prominent intelligence officials, some of whom were retired at the time of the letter’s publication.

Unsurprisingly, former Director of Naval Intelligence turned MP for Eastbourne, Blinker Hall, is among those identified; as well as former MI5 officer Im Thurn. Thurn apparently alleged that he received the text from a business friend with Communist connections. This explanation, likely an attempt to cover the true source of the letter, is unlikely considering that the letter was not circulated by the CPGB, or even

⁴⁵⁴ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 148; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 216; Bennett, *Churchill’s*, pp. 82 – 84; Bennett, *Mysterious Business*, pp. 31 – 37; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 124; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 31.

⁴⁵⁵ Andrew, ‘Anglo-Soviet Relations Part I’, pp. 673 – 706; E. H. Carr, ‘The Zinoviev Letter’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (1979), pp. 209 – 211; C. Andrew, ‘More on the Zinoviev Letter’, *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (1979), pp. 211 – 214; and Chester, Fay, Young, *The Zinoviev Letter*.

⁴⁵⁶ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 149.

discussed at a CPGB meeting, as MI6 initially claimed.⁴⁵⁷ Thurn and Hall are joined by Sinclair, who succeeded Cumming as C following the latter's death in 1923, and Lieutenant-Colonel Freddie Browning, former deputy of Hall at the Directorate of Naval Intelligence, as alternative culprits.⁴⁵⁸

Andrew depicts these alleged individuals as part of a conservative and patriotic establishment network who shared 'state secret between themselves: "Feeling themselves part of a special and closed community, they exchanged confidences secure in the knowledge, as they thought, that they were protected by that community from indiscretion"'.⁴⁵⁹ These individuals can be identified as the new intelligence networks, filling the void left by Thomson, Wilson, and Hall. Although this thesis has so far illustrated the potential of the political network to circumvent typical procedures, the possibility that members of the political network manufactured or exploited the Zinoviev letter would be one of the most controversial examples of overreach in British intelligence history.

The Zinoviev letter was a clear depiction of how far British security networks had spread during the 1920s. This spread had equal positive and negative connotations. The encompassing formal organisations such as police forces and intelligence agencies the proficiency of intelligence collection and dissemination was instrumental in the establishment of an emergency mechanism that could respond to an instance of industrial activity proactively. However, the political networks which consisted of policy makers, former officials, and the associates of the British elite severely undermined British security.

⁴⁵⁷ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 149; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 216.

⁴⁵⁸ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 150.

⁴⁵⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 150; and Bennett, *Mysterious Business*, p. 26

The absence of safeguards to prevent abuses of intelligence permitted the unofficial sharing of intelligence, which began between Lloyd George and Basil Thomson. The reach of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus had grown considerably. The intertwining of official intelligence organisations, such as MI5, connected with independent organisations like the Industrial Intelligence Bureau which succeeded in infiltrating the CPGB, and whose membership included Maxwell Knight.⁴⁶⁰

The oversight and accountability functions that had been established were of little consequence. They proved inadequate in sorting truth from fiction. One of the last acts of the Labour government was to launch an inquiry into the Zinoviev letter, in an attempt to uncover the truth behind its origins. No definitive conclusions were reached.⁴⁶¹ Some Labourites believed that the letter itself was not only a forgery, but a fabrication – either by the intelligence services, or the Conservative Party. To have fabricated the Zinoviev letter and subsequently disseminated it would have been an extreme transgression of any doctrine of democratic or ministerial control. There is little chance of definitively separating truth from fiction. However, the sheer enormity of the task of fabricating and, subsequently proving a document's validity makes the chances of its successful execution slim. One must also bear in mind the audacity it would have taken for a number of MI6 officers to risk careers, reputations, and the continuation of their organisation on the destabilisation of a government which was not pre-destined to win. If any of the intelligence services wished to conduct a smear campaign against the Labour party it would have been far more effective, in terms of

⁴⁶⁰ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 123.

⁴⁶¹ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 220.

minimising risk to the individual and to the intelligence services, to opt for a more subtle approach.

The 1925 SSC was one of the more detailed examinations of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. The largest number of officials were interviewed, and an internal enquiry was launched. However, the infancy of Britain's oversight mechanism prevented a solution to the flaws present within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. The limited direction given to the Committee, as well as the power to enact real change, and being responsible for following the short-term solution proposed by the 1921 SSC, left many problems with little scope for resolution. The only solution was large scale overhaul of the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, without guarantees that such an overhaul would not invite future problems along similar lines. Although intelligence reform typically accompanies a 'shock', the fallout from the Zinoviev letter was not sufficient to influence the new Conservative government to pursue significant intelligence reform.⁴⁶²

It was not just Labour that now wished to investigate the security apparatus. The re-elected Conservative Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin re-convened the SSC to report 'on the existing organisations and their relationship to one another and they will make recommendations to him as to any changes which in their opinion would conduce greater efficiency of the system.'⁴⁶³ Although Fisher had not been part of the

⁴⁶² Johnson, 'A Shock theory of congressional accountability', pp. 343 – 361.

⁴⁶³ S. Baldwin, 'Secret', 10 February 1925, TNA, FO 1093/67; and TNA, CAB 127/365. The 1921 SSC was appointed by a Conference of Ministers, following Thomson's resignation in November 1921; the Fisher Committee, on the other hand was appointed to assess a possible financial reduction, and the avoidance of overlapping. See 'Report of the Committee appointed by the Cabinet on March 22', TNA, KV 4/151; and Minutes of the First meeting of the SSC, 8 November 1921, TNA, HO 532/7. The confusion surrounding the latter's identification as a SSC is a result of a pencil annotation on a copy of the minutes of the Fisher committee contained within KV 4/151. Considering that the origin of this collection of papers is surrounded in mystery, the annotations have to be treated with some

1921 SSC, he was an integral member of the committee responsible for reducing intelligence budgets. It was in the latter respect that the Fisher Committee had a significant impact upon Britain's security apparatus. It was appropriate, therefore, that Fisher's committee, because they observed a recourse to greater efficiency and prevent overlapping, would be resurrected to investigate possible changes to increase efficiency.

This direction given to the Committee is the first piece of evidence to support the view that the direction given to the SSC was flawed. Rather than provide detail on what was considered by efficiency, broad statements were utilised. This prevented the Committee exploring the intricacies of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Instead, because of the infancy of Britain's oversight mechanism, the SSC focussed on the surface layer liaison between the organisations and not on the problems that had permitted the Zinoviev letter to occur.

The trio of Fisher, Hankey, and Crowe were joined by John Anderson representing the Home Office, and Neville Bland acting as Secretary. Although they were given a broad aim of improving efficiency, their focus was drawn to one specific aim: amalgamation. This concentration was, to a degree, influenced by Crowe's correspondence with Sinclair the day before the first meeting of the SSC. Sinclair not only suggested the main question that the SSC should ask those interviewed; he also provided the list of witnesses to be called.⁴⁶⁴ Although Crowe's role within the Foreign

scepticism. This perspective is further supported by a similar marking annotation is absent from the Home Office record of the minutes contained within HO 532/10. For more information on the origin of KV 4.151, see: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C11050214>, [Accessed 3 October 2016].

⁴⁶⁴ Sinclair to Crowe, 25 February 1925, TNA, FO 1093/67. See also: Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 88 – 89.

Office suggests that a working relationship with Sinclair existed, the proximity and degree of influence in this example is comparable to Thomson and Long in 1919.

The focus upon amalgamation is evident during the minutes of the first meeting when the committee met to 'discuss existing arrangements of the three Secret Service organisations'.⁴⁶⁵ The committee 'agreed that their broad aim should be to secure greater concentration both administrative and geographical', which as Bennett argues: 'seemed in principle favourable to Sinclair's plans'.⁴⁶⁶

Although an effective amalgamation of the various branches of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus could lead to an increase in efficiency, the focus on Sinclair's perspective unnecessarily biased the Committee to a broader range of faults that, Sinclair perceived were present within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. These faults, if they had been addressed during the 1925 SSC, could have prevented or halted, the infiltration of Special Branch by the informants controlled by William Norman Ewer.⁴⁶⁷

Despite the Committee's favourable adoption of Sinclair's suggestions, Sinclair wasted little time during his interview in portraying the extent of his contempt for the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Sinclair argued that 'all the different branches ought to be placed under one head and in one building in the neighbourhood of Whitehall, and made responsible to one Department of State ... the

⁴⁶⁵ 'Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the first meeting', 26 February 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 88.

⁴⁶⁶ Minutes of the First meeting of the SSC, 26 February 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p.2; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 88.

⁴⁶⁷ See chapter six for an appraisal of Ewer's network and its penetration of Special Branch; see also: V. Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration of British intelligence', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 46, No. 4 (2003), pp. 915 – 933; Madeira, *Britannia*, pp. 174 – 179; Callaghan and Morgan, 'The Open Conspiracy', pp. 549 – 564; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 106.

Foreign Office'.⁴⁶⁸ Sinclair continued by emphasising that the distance between the various branches involved a great expenditure of time going to and from the different departments, and a reliance on the telephone which led to a danger of compromise'.⁴⁶⁹

Sinclair's comments, despite their limited impact, deserve appraisal. They can be summarised into two categories: amalgamation under a unified leadership, and Ministerial responsibility. Having an amalgamated Secret Service under a unified leadership had many potential benefits. From Sinclair's remarks, it is evident that his main concern was time. Sinclair wished to remove the need to travel across London in order to gain personal contact with a counterpart in an adjacent department. However, Sinclair possibly overlooked the impact an amalgamated Secret Service, occupying one building, would have upon the secrecy of the Secret Service – particularly the most secretive of the secret service organisations, MI6.

There was also the practical difficulties of whether to separate Special Branch from the Metropolitan Police – as the SSC had done with the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence. Either choice of separating the Special Branch, or just SS1, responsible for liaison with MI6, and SS2, responsible for liaison with the Home Office, would have inevitably resulted in some delay owing to distance between either Special Branch and the CID – as had occurred under the Directorate of Intelligence – or between the amalgamated Secret Service and Special Branch.

The second category, the suggestion that the Foreign Office should assume control of an amalgamated secret service, is a clear portrayal of Sinclair's bias.

⁴⁶⁸ Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the second meeting', 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 88; Bennett, 'Secret Service Committee', pp. 45 – 46; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 222; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 120; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 131; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 34.

⁴⁶⁹ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 88 – 89; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 214 and 223; and Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 131.

Fortunately for the Committee, Anderson was among its members. As the Permanent Under-Secretary for the Home Office, Anderson correctly perceived the fundamental flaw in Sinclair's proposal: sooner or later, the secret service would be concerned matters directly affecting the 'internal security of the UK'.⁴⁷⁰ In such an event, the Home Secretary would need supreme control over Britain's security apparatus.

The debate between C and Anderson also covered the liaison with the regional Chief Constables. Anderson highlighted that C's plans for an amalgamated service would still encounter difficulty considering the number of police forces in the UK; however, C countered by suggesting the new amalgamated service would incorporate the liaison role which MI5 currently possessed.⁴⁷¹ However, Anderson was strongly opposed to the connection between the Secret Service and the police force.⁴⁷²

Despite Sinclair's best efforts, Anderson maintained the opinion that:

There were two separate and distinct aspects of secret service: that which was concerned with our relations with foreign powers and that which dealt with security at home. The relative importance of these must vary from time to time, but if and when an internal crisis arose, the importance of the latter would be paramount.⁴⁷³

These comments echo a common understanding on the delegation of intelligence duties. Anderson's comments also raise an interesting perspective on the definition of intelligence, specifically, where the defining line between internal security and foreign intelligence gathering should be drawn. Although Sinclair's perspective theoretically would lead to a more efficient intelligence gathering organisation, there would little use for such an organisation, focused on foreign intelligence, if the nation it served was facing a threat from within.

⁴⁷⁰ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 11 – 12.

⁴⁷¹ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 9.

⁴⁷² Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 9.

⁴⁷³ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 12.

The steady development of Britain's security apparatus had culminated in a series of networks and mechanisms which were finely tuned to meet a crisis and provide the government, through the Home Office, with sufficient intelligence to maintain the security of the state. Although these networks and mechanism were not without fault, Anderson believed that the preservation of this apparatus was the primary goal of any review of intelligence.⁴⁷⁴

Commissioner Horwood was the second member of the intelligence and security apparatus to be interviewed.⁴⁷⁵ Horwood was influential in the reorganisation that took place in 1921, and was in a key position to assess the benefits of current arrangements.⁴⁷⁶ In answer to this query, Horwood expressed his opinion that there was 'close and satisfactory' liaison between the constituent components of the intelligence and security apparatus.⁴⁷⁷ Crucially, Horwood proved an important counter-weight to Sinclair.

When questioned on the viability of an amalgamated secret service, Horwood argued that an amalgamated service would need to be 'guided by the Special Branch'.⁴⁷⁸ Horwood was not deliberately aiming to undermine Sinclair's plans for amalgamation, or the leading role which Sinclair was advocating for MI6 in the amalgamated secret service, but he did undermine the value of MI5. The official history of MI5 highlights that Horwood: 'supported much of Sinclair's argument', because 'now that the war was over', MI5's duties could be absorbed by MI6.⁴⁷⁹ While evidence of Horwood's agenda is not completely evident, it is apparent that he had a vested

⁴⁷⁴ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 12.

⁴⁷⁵ Sinclair to Crowe, 25 February 1925, TNA, FO 1093/67.

⁴⁷⁶ Horwood to Shortt, 28 July 1921, TNA, HO 532/7; Horwood, 'Memorandum on the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police', 26 October 1921, TNA, HO 532/9.

Minutes of the Third meeting of the SSC, 5 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2.

⁴⁷⁸ Minutes of the Third meeting of the SSC, 5 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 9.

⁴⁷⁹ Sinclair to Crowe, 25 February 1925, TNA, FO 1093/67.

interest in supporting the success of the amalgamation which he advocated for, and preventing other agencies encroaching upon his jurisdiction.

While Horwood may have supported some degree of amalgamation, it is clear that he envisaged Special Branch remaining separate and taking a leading role.⁴⁸⁰ He came out in favour of an amalgamated intelligence service, as long as it did not interfere with the Metropolitan Police. This concern revolved specifically around changes that would 'interfere with the machinery for taking prompt action when necessary'.⁴⁸¹

Vernon Kell, Director General of MI5, supported Horwood's cautious tone, and echoed his belief that the maintenance of the status-quo was ideal. Kell favoured the maintenance of the current organisation, and described the 'liaison with C and Scotland Yard' as 'excellent', and explained that MI5 and Special Branch managed the dividing line between civil and military matters.⁴⁸² Kell described the process of passing information as:

[If Kell] encountered an individual or a group of individuals concerned exclusively with civil disturbance, he would pass his information on to Scotland Yard and leave that department to deal with it. Scotland Yard, on its side, would at once refer to him any matter which came its way affecting armed forces.⁴⁸³

Kell also attempted to display the value of MI5 and its functions, and argued that there was little overlap between MI5 and Special Branch. After being through a similar process in 1919 and 1921, as well as the attempts to reduce financial expenditure, Kell was likely aware that MI5's future form and influence, could likely be decided by how well it was portrayed during this interview.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸⁰ Minutes of the Third meeting of the SSC, 5 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 8 – 9.

⁴⁸¹ Minutes of the Third meeting of the SSC, 5 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 9.

⁴⁸² Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the fourth meeting', 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3 and p. 9; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 121.

⁴⁸³ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3

⁴⁸⁴ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p.90; and Andrew, *MI5*, p. 121.

In the defence of MI5's role, Kell sought to distance the organisation from its counter-espionage origin. Kell argued that the term counter-espionage as a description of its work was no longer entirely applicable' because it formed only a small part of MI5's duties. Kell believed a more apt term to describe the duties of MI5 was 'home security'.⁴⁸⁵ The term home security does not aid in defining the boundaries between MI5 and Special Branch. There is no evidence that Kell explained the extra dimension of home security, other than 'the safety of the armed forces of the Crown in this country, both in respect of foreign espionage and communist interference'.⁴⁸⁶ Therefore, the use of home security would appear rather redundant only serving as an attempt to elevate the importance of MI5's role. Considering the power SSC had upon the future organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, this was an apt tactic.

However, it would have been more accurate of Kell to describe his role as military security, encapsulating his counter-espionage, and counter-sedition roles. When attention was turned to the potential overlap between MI5 and Scotland Yard, as well as explaining how either agency passed a case to the opposite if it was relevant to them, Kell aimed to further present himself and MI5 in a unique position, Kell argued: 'Scotland Yard ... were not in a position to carry out the work which he did with the armed forces. He had free and direct access to all commands, could see anyone wishes and give advice as to the action to be taken'.⁴⁸⁷

Major-General Burnett-Stuart, Director of Military Operations and Intelligence, at a later meeting of the SSC, weighed in on the same point. Burnett-Stuart explained

⁴⁸⁵ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p.2; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 121; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 34

⁴⁸⁶ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2.

⁴⁸⁷ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 4; and Andrew, *MI5*, p. 121.

that communism must be treated far more seriously in the army than in the civil population' and any association of MI5, as part of a central organisation, with civil as well as military personnel would warrant a loss in confidence.⁴⁸⁸ There was no room for compromise between the roles of the Foreign Office and the War Office. If the Foreign Office, or civil authority, were given a leading role, then it would likely reduce the confidence in the investigation of sedition.⁴⁸⁹

The actual dynamics of the security apparatus were played out, in greater detail, before the committee by Childs. Childs also had the opportunity to refute C's arguments to his face. Child's evinced a visible sense of pride in the alterations he made to the relationship between Special Branch and the Chief Constables. According to Childs, his liaison with the Chief Constables was excellent.⁴⁹⁰ Although Childs viewed his liaison with SIS as satisfactory, he believed they were less important in the security apparatus. Child's observed that his responsibilities, as Assistant Commissioner C (Crime), he was not only responsible for the 'special and secret service branches', but also for the Criminal Investigation Department (CID).⁴⁹¹ Owing to these responsibilities, Childs delegated the responsibility for dealing with SIS documents to the liaison section, SS1.

Child's further discredited the intelligence collected by MI6 by highlighting its minimal use in Special Branch investigations. Crucially, Child's highlighted the importance of 'high policing' activities having a physical impact upon low policing.⁴⁹²

⁴⁸⁸ Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the tenth meeting', 15 June 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6 – 7

⁴⁸⁹ Minutes of the Tenth meeting of the SSC, 15 June 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 6 – 7

⁴⁹⁰ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p.3; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, pp. 108 – 109.

⁴⁹¹ Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the SSC, 17 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p.4 - 5. When referring to the Special and secret service departments, Childs was referring to the collective Special Branch which included what was referred to as the secret service sections SS1 and SS2.

⁴⁹² Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507

Childs argued that SIS documents were not very important because 'he was never able to prove the receipt of Bolshevist communications in this country', because of the diplomatic immunity afforded to Soviet couriers.⁴⁹³

Childs' became defensive when the focus shifted to the Zinoviev letter. Although Childs had stated his liaison with C was satisfactory, he informed the SSC that C had never seen Childs in connection with the Zinoviev letter, nor had C informed C that 'he proposed to employ an agent'.⁴⁹⁴ Child's was not forthwith with these criticisms, but he did express his scepticism regarding SIS's claims that the letter was genuine because he could not verify the letters receipt in the UK.⁴⁹⁵

Childs also addressed the necessity of secrecy, especially when dealing with informants. Child's believed 'one of the most essential points in the employing of agents was their actual names should not be on record' this policy of ensuring the secrecy afforded to agents is one which is universally held and still maintained by MI6.⁴⁹⁶ This significantly undermined the criticisms C had expressed regarding a register of informants. But, Childs did not attempt to enlarge his position at the expense of C. Instead, he maintained the view that the current arrangement was satisfactory.

The meeting between Childs and the SSC did not address all of the concerns which C had raised. As a result, the following meeting on 19 March was devoted to exploring, in greater detail, the list of examples of a lack of cooperation and overlapping. The criticisms raised by C focussed on the time wasted in communicating

⁴⁹³ Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the SSC, 17 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 5 – 6.

⁴⁹⁴ Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the SSC, 17 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6.

⁴⁹⁵ Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the SSC, 17 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 6 – 7.

⁴⁹⁶ Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the SSC, 17 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 6 – 7; and J. Sawers, 'Forward', in Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. vii - viii

with officers in multiple departments and locations.⁴⁹⁷ Of these complaints, the time that an enquiry took to be completed was a particular source of frustration to C.

The most significant of C's examples of overlapping and lack of cooperation which displays a general sense of irritation towards the organisation of British intelligence in 1925 concerned the typical exchanges between Special Branch and MI6. C argued:

the distances between departments removed the possibility of officers having numerous conversations regarding cases; and when a request for information is submitted to Special Branch (SS1) MI6 has to wait a number of days, often with the relevant information missing.⁴⁹⁸

These criticisms levied at Childs and Special Branch were not actually the result of work carried out by Special Branch officers. In the majority of cases, the criticisms arose from the work of the liaison section of Special Branch, which dealt with all foreign intelligence, SS1. With regards to the time which it took to transmit a list of names from the Central Committee of the CPGB, it must be remembered that SS1, the department responsible for this task, only consisted of four individuals, two officers and two clerks.⁴⁹⁹ This list was an attempt to add credibility to the notion that there were serious organisational flaws in the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Although there is little doubt that faults were present within Special Branch, MI6 and MI5, it was more likely, as Horwood argued, a result of personalities.⁵⁰⁰

There was a widely held view that the main consideration for the SSC was the prospects of creating an amalgamated intelligence service.⁵⁰¹ The committee reacted favourably to Col. Carter's suggestions for an amalgamated and reorganised secret

⁴⁹⁷ Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the seventh meeting', 19 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 2.

⁴⁹⁸ R. R. Scott, 'Confidential', TNA, FO 1093.67, p. 3.

⁴⁹⁹ R. R. Scott, 'Confidential', TNA, FO 1093.67, p. 3.

⁵⁰⁰ Minutes of the Third meeting of the SSC, 5 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10

⁵⁰¹ Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925: Minutes of the eighth meeting', 24 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3.

service – even requesting that Carter ‘draw up a scheme for reconstituting secret service on an ideal basis’.⁵⁰² Some members of the group, especially Maurice Hankey and John Anderson, had never believed in the suitability of this outcome.⁵⁰³ Although the witnesses disagreed with one another about countless points of detail, the whole committee had been exposed to the existence of a firm consensus in favour of a separate internal security and external intelligence gathering apparatus and against a unified intelligence service.⁵⁰⁴

There was a significant gulf between the relative satisfaction of most of the witnesses, and the dissatisfaction expressed by Sinclair. The 1925 SSC failed to reach any conclusive suggestions for reducing overlapping and improving the efficiency of Britain’s intelligence and security apparatus.⁵⁰⁵ It hoped for some form of geographical concentration of all the services.⁵⁰⁶ Much more so than in 1919, the Committee declined to support the creation of a grandiose department with one centralised officer in control of an amalgamated service.⁵⁰⁷

The SSC did not rule out the possibility of future reorganisation and believed it should ‘remain in existence on paper’, as if it were a ‘sleeping partner’ so it could be referred to for advice or settlement’.⁵⁰⁸ Acknowledging that the SSC should remain to counter an outbreak of friction between the officers of the intelligence and security apparatus highlights that it had failed to address the flaws which had permitted the

⁵⁰² J.F.C. Carter, ‘A scheme for the re-organisation of the British secret service’, TNA, HO 532/7.

⁵⁰³ M. Hankey, ‘The Prime Minister’s Secret Service Committee: Note by Sir Maurice Hankey’, 27 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10.

⁵⁰⁴ Minutes of the Eighth meeting of the SSC, 24 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 2 – 3.

⁵⁰⁵ For Kell’s comment about the security risk posed by his visitors see: ‘Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 10 March 1925. TNA, HO 532/10 p. 9. For General Burnett-Stuart’s observations on the security risk posed by Kell’s visitors, see: ‘Minutes of the Tenth meeting of the SSC, 15 June 1925. TNA, HO 532/10 pp. 5 – 6.

⁵⁰⁶ ‘Secret Service Committee: Report’, 1925, 1 December 1925, TNA, FO 1093/69, p. 17.

⁵⁰⁷ SSC Report’, 1 December 1925, TNA, FO 1093/69, p. 13.

⁵⁰⁸ SSC Report’, 1 December 1925, TNA, FO 1093/69, p. 22; Bennett, *Man Of Mystery*, p.90; and Bennett, ‘Secret Service Committee’, p. 48.

overreach, and the minor outbreaks of friction, that had occurred in 1924. This failure can be attributed to the impact of Sinclair's statement at the beginning of the SSC's assessment, or an unwillingness of the SSC members to look beyond the personal rivalries and traditions which they believed would hamper any serious consideration to reorganise Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.⁵⁰⁹

The apparatus as a whole had developed significantly by 1924, the most significant difference being the commitment to the use of police, instead of the military, to maintain law and order. These networks, which now included Civil Commissioners and the STO took on the autonomous functionality of the military network in an attempt to maintain a readiness for major industrial action. The interlocking of these networks and their role to counter mass disturbances formed the emergency mechanism.

Despite the proficiency of the emergency mechanism, the faults which permitted intelligence officials and policy makers to abuse their positions of power continued. Despite the severity of the overreach that was the Zinoviev Letter, the 1925 SSC failed to rectify faults in its approach to intelligence oversight. While some members, such as Anderson, were critical of the current delegation of duties and wary of plans to amalgamate the intelligence and security apparatus, there was still no inclination for the SSC to take a measured approach, and identify problems in a proactive manner. Instead, the SSC invited its recall following a future rupture in liaison with the 'fire alarm' approach to intelligence reform.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁹ For the comments made by the SSC regarding the impact tradition and personal rivalry, see: 'SSC Report, 1 December 1925, TNA, FO 1093/69, pp. 12 – 13.

⁵¹⁰ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 75; and Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 196 – 179.

Chapter Six. Security Mobilised: The General Strike, 1925 – 1927.

A General Strike was regarded by security officials and politicians as one of the most dangerous threats to British security. Many of the developments and amendments to the intelligence and security apparatus following the First World War were focussed on mitigating the effects of a General Strike. Analysis of the conduct of the security apparatus prior to and during the General Strike (1926) reveals two different, but complimentary, observations.

The first observation concerns the ability of the security apparatus to operate harmoniously. In the event of a significant strike, all of the mechanisms, and networks: MI5, MI6, the STO, the Civil Commissioners, the police and the Home Office, could focus their efforts towards the common goal of British security. The second observation highlights the exaggeration of British officials on the severity of the threat posed by communist and revolutionary groups. While there was an element within the British population that desired change, the ability of this element was far less than officials believed.

This chapter acknowledges that the threat to British security was greatly exaggerated. However, a fundamental requirement of a security apparatus is the ability to plan for and respond to a worst case scenario. Through an analysis of the raid on the CPGB HQ in 1925, the conduct of the security apparatus during 1926, and the self-reflection that followed this chapter will illustrate that the security apparatus

was able to liaise, operate efficiently, pursue both 'high' and 'low policing' objectives, and evaluate its conduct so that similar levels of efficiency could be repeated.⁵¹¹

Following the meetings of the 1925 SSC, Special Branch carried out a considerable raid of the Communist Party Headquarters on 14 October 1925. If the raid had occurred earlier in the SSCs deliberations, it may have had a positive impact upon the perceived efficiency of both Special Branch and the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), Archibald Bodkin QC, was one individual who recognised the proficiency of the raid on the CPGB HQ. Bodkin commented: 'in a case so strenuously defended by Counsel of experience, no complaint is or could be made to any single step taken by the officers engaged' would have aided in the defence of their conduct.⁵¹² Horwood elaborated on the efficiency of the raid, stating: the officers of Special Branch had been conducting the investigation into the CPGB and 'waiting for the order "to go" for the last three and a half years', the officers involved were able to execute their duties with the 'cunning', as well as 'tactful and prudent handling' that the case required.⁵¹³ Although the raid was preceded by one in 1924, Horwood's comments suggest a continued attempt to uncover criminal offences committed by the CPGB.

⁵¹¹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

⁵¹² Sir Archibald Bodkin QC, Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), to Commissioner Horwood, 'The Communists Prosecution', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20 (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵¹³ For Horwood's comments see; Horwood to Bodkin, 'The Communists Prosecution', 27 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, p. 2, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA); for the observation that the raid required 'tactful and prudent handling, see: Bodkin to Horwood, 'The Communists Prosecution', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

The raid on the CPGB HQ in 1925 was just one occasion when the offices of the CPGB, as well as others associated with the CPGB, such as the YCL, and the National Minority Movement were investigated by Special Branch. The 1925 raid stands out for a number of reasons, two of which being the number of arrests made and the quantity of documents seized.⁵¹⁴ Despite this quantity of official data, there are no publicly available records relating to the investigations made prior to the arrests.⁵¹⁵ This presents a significant barrier to assessing the role of intelligence networks, the efficiency of intelligence liaison, as well as possible instances of overlapping. However, using information contained within MI5 records, and access to privately released MEPO 38 records, it is possible to recreate certain aspects of the investigation.⁵¹⁶

The motives for the investigation have been explained as the result of intercepted communications 'from Moscow to the CPGB' informing them to establish a Lenin School', this school, it was feared, would be a precursor to 'Russian attempts to undermine the discipline of the armed forces'.⁵¹⁷ However, another explanation for the increased interest in the CPGB and their efforts to undermine H.M Forces was the Zinoviev Letter. Following the attempt to charge Campbell with sedition in 1924, both MI5 and Special Branch maintained an investigation into the *Workers Weekly*, and those associated with it.⁵¹⁸ Significantly for the appraisal of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, the information available supports the perception that there was

⁵¹⁴ For the seized documents, see: TNA, KV 3/18 – KV 3/33.

⁵¹⁵ Numerous personal, KV 2, records relating to the individuals make reference of the full account being available in 'PF.38181 "*The Workers Weekly*"' which is currently unavailable.

⁵¹⁶ The role of Special Branch is partially uncovered by access to redacted versions of MEPO 38 records.

⁵¹⁷ Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 142.

⁵¹⁸ HOWs were taken out on numerous individuals connected with the CPGB during 1925. Although interest in the communications of leading CPGB officials existed prior to initial investigation of Campbell, renewed interest is evident during 1925.

sufficient levels of liaison necessary to investigate communist inspired efforts to undermine the armed forces, and that an overlap was occurring.

The dissemination of intelligence regarding Campbell's visit to Aldershot is credible evidence that the division of duties was efficient. Childs brought Campbell's activities to the notice of Kell, following his return from Aldershot.⁵¹⁹ Childs also requested the Chief Constable of Hampshire maintain the surveillance of Campbell, and transmit any reports to Kell.⁵²⁰ This information was supplemented by a continued discussion of Campbell's involvement in an article discussing the mistreatment of soldiers.⁵²¹ The exchange of intelligence illustrates that liaison and the delegation of duties were sufficient for multiple departments to cooperate. Moreover, this case illustrates that the role of Chief Constables was important during the early stages of an investigation. This reinforces the perspective that Chief Constables acted as intelligence collectors and disseminated that intelligence to other components within the intelligence mechanism.

This example undermines Kell's testimony regarding his relationship with the Chief Constables to 1925 SSC. While there are instances where Chief Constables instigated enquiries and passed the information directly to Kell, in this instance, it was Childs who instigated the enquiry and decided to share the intelligence with Kell. This adds further credibility to the interpretation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus operated as a network – rather than singular institutions – and that these networks, despite the criticisms of Sinclair during the 1925 SSC, could yield results.

⁵¹⁹ 'Childs to Kell', 24 March 1925, TNA, KV 2/1186.

⁵²⁰ 'Childs to Kell', 24 March 1925, TNA, KV 2/1186.

⁵²¹ For the article, see QT Gunner, 'Aldershot notes', *The Workers Weekly*, 27 March 1925. For the discussion between Childs and Kell see: 'Childs to Kell', *The Workers Weekly*, 30 March 1925; 'Kell to Childs', 'J.R. Campbell', 8 April 1925, TNA, KV 2/1186

However, while the investigation into Campbell supports the view that liaison was sufficient, the investigation into Ernst W. Cant, the London organiser of the CPGB, during July 1925 highlights that liaison was far from perfect. Through Special Branch's investigation, a connection was uncovered between Cant and a seaman identified as 'Comrade Wolf'. Wolf requested pamphlets to be produced so that he could distribute them amongst sailors on HMS Oak.⁵²² Because this case involved someone in the Navy, it was transferred to MI5. Upon receipt of the intelligence, Oswald Harker, part of MI5's B division, responsible for security intelligence relating to communism, questioned why the intelligence was not conveyed to MI5 promptly. Harker's criticism revolved around SS2 sending the information to MI5 the day after it was sent to the Admiralty.⁵²³

A similar overlap occurred when MI5 applied for a HOW on Cant's home address, only to discover that Special Branch already had one in place.⁵²⁴ Although this is a clear example of overlap, it is minor in its severity. The delay in sending MI5 the details of the correspondence was a result of its provenance, and the duplicate HOW submission a result of a lack of communication. The comparison of the investigations into Campbell and Cant reveals that the level of liaison was sufficient, but had the potential for occasional overlap, and a lack of communication.

Further support for the potential of Britain's security apparatus to operate effectively, as well as the proficiency of the intelligence mechanism to hunt for intelligence, is found in the available records of the investigation preceding the raid of CPGB HQ.⁵²⁵ The inclusion of information from Special Branch records, until recently

⁵²² D.B. Saunders to A. Harker, 15 September 1925, TNA, KV 2/1053

⁵²³ See 'Minute (18a): Copy of a letter from The Admiralty and enclosure' 14 September 1925; and 'Minute 19' 15 September 1925, TNA, KV 2/1053

⁵²⁴ See 'minute 33' 6 May 1926; and 'minute 34', 17 May 1926, TNA, KV 2/1053

⁵²⁵ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 78

retained by the Metropolitan Police, however, aids in gaining a broader perspective. This perspective supports the view that when the apparatus was engaged in a focussed operation and the various components of Britain's security apparatus increased in efficiency, particularly when the severity of the threat to British security was high.

Although Childs stated that to the 1925 SSC the CID and Special Branch were separate, the Special Branch records of the raid on the CPGB HQ illustrate that both departments worked together seamlessly. Just as the regional Chief Constable cooperated with Special Branch during broader investigations, the CID was a vital component within the police network. Significantly, Police Constables in the CID played an important role in carrying out the surveillance of the King Street headquarters of the CPGB.⁵²⁶ Moreover, both officers of the CID and Special Branch were involved in the OSINT operation to collect issues of the *Workers Weekly*, and other publications of the CPGB.⁵²⁷ Together these instances further erode at the perception of a dividing line between 'high' and 'low policing' in Britain.⁵²⁸

While the latter component of the operation was OSINT, these publications were essential to the investigation.⁵²⁹ The latter operation can appear less significant among the more intricate intelligence collection methods, such as infiltrating agents into meetings and using informants. However, OSINT provided broader information necessary to illustrate the significance of the more intricate operations. The collection

⁵²⁶ 'Statement of William Reilly: New Scotland Yard', 14 October 1925; 'Statement of Hubert Willey: New Scotland yard', 14 October 1925', TNA, MEPO 38/26 (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵²⁷ 'Statement of William Rogers: New Scotland Yard, CID', 19 October 1925; Statement of William Hastings: New Scotland Yard, CID', and 'Statement of Archibald Hopley, New Scotland Yard, Special Branch', TNA, MEPO 38/26 (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵²⁸ Brodner, 'High Policing Low Policing', pp. 507 - 510

⁵²⁹ 'Statement of Ralph Kitchener, New Scotland Yard, CID', 25 October 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/26 (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

of various issues of the *Workers Weekly* would fall into the lowest portion of Herman's pyramid for source sensitivity – if it accounted for other forms of intelligence collection.⁵³⁰ Despite the relative simplicity of the operations, it provided crucial background information for the broader investigation. The role of the police in this investigation, while not sensational or invasive, reinforces the role of the police as intelligence collectors.

The correspondence between Commissioner Horwood and DPP Bodkin illustrates that through the raid and the subsequent trial of those associated with the publications of the CPGB, the security apparatus as a whole could function efficiently.⁵³¹ Analysis of aspects of the investigation which focussed on individuals reveals minor instances of overlapping; yet the police sphere of the apparatus, worked effectively. Arguably, the raid on the CPGB HQ represents one of the more successful operations by the security apparatus.

While providing intelligence during times of emergency was of crucial importance, uncovering criminal offences and subsequently charging those responsible is a central component of any democratic security apparatus. The surveillance of activities which contravene laws is of paramount importance. In contrast to the investigations into communism in the 1920s, the pursuit of legal action was a positive development.⁵³² The legitimacy of the sedition charge can be debated. However, these arrests display that the security apparatus gathered intelligence,

⁵³⁰ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 63.

⁵³¹ Horwood to Bodkin, 'The Communists Prosecution', 27 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, p. 2, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA); and Bodkin to Horwood, 'The Communists Prosecution', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵³² Morgan and Callaghan, 'Open Conspiracy', p. 560; and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, 'State Surveillance of the CPGB: 1920s – 1950s', *Labour History Review*, Vol. 69, No. 1, (2004), pp. 19 – 23.

through analysis it was determined that a crime had been committed, and that intelligence was used to secure a conviction.

Owing to their previous convictions, Inkpin, Hannington, Pollitt, and Gallacher, were all sentenced to twelve months imprisonment.⁵³³ The remaining seven, Murphy, Page-Arnot, McManus, Wintringham, Cant, Bell, and Campbell, were given the option of being released if they agreed to abstain from undertaking further action which supported the 'illegal policy of Communist Party'.⁵³⁴ Following their refusal, they were sentenced to six months imprisonment.⁵³⁵ The latter individuals were released in time to witness what many leading politicians had feared was an eventuality since the increase in industrial disputes following the Great War: a General Strike.

Although the seven individuals who received six month jail terms were released before the General Strike began in 1926, they had insufficient time to prepare and coordinate a concerted effort to take advantage of the situation.⁵³⁶ The lack of CPGB involvement in the strike can be explained as a result this reduction in key members.⁵³⁷ However, another fundamental reason why there was not an opportunity to use the General Strike as a catalyst for a revolutionary struggle was the proficiency of Britain's security apparatus. Just as it had done in 1918, 1919, 1921, and 1924 the security apparatus was able to mobilise and facilitate the maintenance of the 'essentials of life', and provide accurate intelligence so that appropriate decisions could be made, and inappropriate decisions prevented.⁵³⁸

⁵³³ Chief Inspector Parker, 'Special Branch report: Rex v. Inkpin & others.', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, p. 2. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵³⁴ Chief Inspector Parker, 'Special Branch report: Rex v. Inkpin & others.', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, p. 3. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵³⁵ Chief Inspector Parker, 'Special Branch report: Rex v. Inkpin & others.', 26 November 1925, TNA, MEPO 38/20, p. 3. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵³⁶ Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 137.

⁵³⁷ Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 143 – 145.

⁵³⁸ Jeffery and Hennessy, *States of Emergency*, p. 9.

The readiness of Britain's security apparatus to cope with a national emergency, such as a General Strike, had been a considerable concern of officials since the railway strike of 1919.⁵³⁹ The function of this portion of the apparatus, the emergency mechanism, was interpreted by some officials as Britain's strikebreaking apparatus.⁵⁴⁰ This mistake was apparent following a request from London City Council, in December 1925, to employ the emergency mechanism.⁵⁴¹ Such a misunderstanding, noted Anderson to the STC Sub-Committee, should be corrected, whenever it arose.⁵⁴² Although it contained many of the features of a strikebreaking apparatus, the official definition of the department, and a large portion of its paperwork addresses, the coordination of resources,

The emergency mechanism was the government's effort to collate all aspects of the security apparatus necessary to prevent 'excessive discomfort', 'confusion', 'serious political unrest' and the 'maintenance of law and order' under centralised 'guidance'.⁵⁴³ Fortunately, William Johnson-Hicks, who became Home Secretary in November 1924, believed, by February 1926, 'very little remaining to be done before the actual occurrence of an emergency'.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁹ 'Activities of the Supply Department during the strike crisis of April', 21 July 1921; and 'Revised memorandum for the guidance of Civil Commissioners' [date unknown], TNA, HO 317/73; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 172; and Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 163.

⁵⁴⁰ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 100.

⁵⁴¹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 100.

⁵⁴² 'Supply and Transport Sub-Committee', 17 February 1926, TNA, T 163/141/2.

⁵⁴³ W. Johnson-Hicks, 'Revised memorandum for the guidance of Civil Commissioners' [date unknown], TNA, HO 317/73. This explanation was an updated version of that used between 1920 and 1924 that focussed on the 'essentials of life'.

⁵⁴⁴ W. Johnson-Hicks, 'Supply and Transport Organisation: Progress Report by the Home Secretary', 22 February 1926, TNA, CAB 24/178/82, p. 1; and Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p.101. See also: W. Johnson-Hicks, 'Supply and Transport Organisation: Progress Report by the Home Secretary', TNA, CAB 24/175/16; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 44.

Such a state of readiness is a pre-requisite of an effective emergency organisation. In a similar manner to the Railway strike in 1924, the emergency mechanism was able to engage itself with little need for government intervention. The components which made up the emergency mechanism had been undergoing further development and refinement during 1925. As a result of these developments 'the various departments concerned' were 'strengthened and developed in every direction'.⁵⁴⁵ The success of these efforts were a result of the emergency mechanism entering into the light, being permitted 'a modicum of publicity'.⁵⁴⁶

The significance of this publicity is apparent when compared to the blanket of secrecy placed upon British intelligence during the Cold War. This openness, however, was limited. The plans of the STO, particularly those of the Civil Commissioners were still considered to be highly secret. The numerous documents circulating the Civil Commissioners plans informed the reader that the security associated with the document should be maintained by it 'being kept under lock and key'.⁵⁴⁷ Considering the poor level of control over official documents, this instruction emphasises the importance attached to these plans, and that their secrecy was considered essential.⁵⁴⁸

The readiness of the emergency mechanism was tested during 1926, following the release of The Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry. The

⁵⁴⁵ W. Johnson-Hicks, "Supply and Transport Organisation: Progress Report by the Home Secretary", TNA, CAB 24/175/16, p. 1. See also: Morgan, *Conflict*, pp. 201 – 2.

⁵⁴⁶ W. Johnson-Hicks, "Supply and Transport Organisation: Progress Report by the Home Secretary", TNA, CAB 24/175/16, p. 1.

⁵⁴⁷ For an example, see the Memoranda sent to Civil Commissioners regarding various aspects of their duties, W. Mitchell-Thomson, 'Memorandum: Civil Commissioners', 30 April 1926, TNA, HO 371/73.

⁵⁴⁸ For the control of official documents, see: C. Moran, *Classified: Secrecy and the State in Modern Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp.53 – 65.

Commission, referred to as the Samuel Commission, believed that because of the harsh economic conditions, the government's coal subsidy had to be reconsidered as well as a 'revision of the current wage rates'.⁵⁴⁹ The STO made a number of decisions to prepare for mobilisation. Crucially, it decided that 'within twelve hours of it [a strike] beginning a state of emergency was to be proclaimed'.⁵⁵⁰

The role of the military in the envisaged labour dispute was one area which proved to be difficult in the series of decisions needed to ready the STO.⁵⁵¹ Although the preparing of troops to be sent to troublesome areas was a necessity, any pre-emptive action would likely serve as a catalyst for further disruption. The role of the military network in industrial matters, whether as a force for strikebreaking, an intelligence asset, or to ensure the successful operation of essential services, remained in a secondary position. Much like 1924, the military was to be readied but only utilised in the event that police resources became exhausted.⁵⁵² Significantly the authority to despatch police resources from one region to another was, as it had been during the Transport Workers Strike in 1911, delegated to the Home Secretary.⁵⁵³

Despite the government's best efforts to maintain a subtle approach to their preparations, they were undone by the postal system. Because the system to inform local authorities of a state of emergency relied upon the post, and the deadline for

⁵⁴⁹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p.102; and 'Report of the Royal Commission on the Coal Industry (1925)', TNA, CAB 24/179/9. See also: Andrew, *MI5*, p. 125; Madeira, *Britannia*, pp. 145 – 6; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 155; Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 157

⁵⁵⁰ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 105; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 202; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 43; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, 155.

⁵⁵¹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 105. For more on the use of the military during the General Strike, see: Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 44; and Bunyan, *Political Police*, pp. 69 – 70.

⁵⁵² See: 'Duties in Aid of the Civil Power', TNA, WO 279/467; Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 105; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 157

⁵⁵³ 'Supply and Transport Committee: tenth meeting', 27 April 1926, TNA, CAB 27/260; 'Cabinet Meeting', 14 April 1926' TNA, CAB 23/52/15; and Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 105; and Bunyan, *Political Police*, pp. 69 – 70. The duty to redistribute police resources in Scotland was delegated to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

negotiations was midnight on a Saturday, there was no prospect of utilising the postal service to disseminate the proclamation on a Sunday – twelve hours after the deadline.⁵⁵⁴ The need to employ the emergency mechanism as planned required revealing the government's choice of remedy to the problem of a coal stoppage, prior to the deadline for negotiations. However, this increased the likelihood of a general strike, because the Trade Union Congress (TUC) was not going to perceive the subtle differences between a partial and full mobilisation of the STO.⁵⁵⁵ As feared during the preparatory period preceding the strike, the revelation of government plans, whether they included military mobilisation or not, galvanised the opinion of the TUC who joined in sympathetic action on the 4 May.

Government fears of widespread sabotage and disruption that necessitated the pre-emptive publication of the emergency proclamation, and the need for local authorities to be equipped with information promptly were unfounded. This was not entirely due to an exaggeration on the part of government officials, but a widespread warning from TUC officials. The TUC advised that strikers should be aware of *agents provocateurs* and be aware that spies may be employed against them, and to incite them to create disorder.⁵⁵⁶

Although aggressive intelligence operations, such as the use of *agents provocateurs* had always been frowned upon, their previous use, particularly by PMS2, served a deterrent function. The mobilisation of the STO and the security apparatus, both the actual apparatus as well as its perceived incarnation in popular opinion,

⁵⁵⁴ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 106.

⁵⁵⁵ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 107.

⁵⁵⁶ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 107

served to limited, or prevent, much of the actions that would have constituted a threat to public order.

Despite the outbreaks of disorder, the police were able to maintain order.⁵⁵⁷ As well as carrying out their law and order, 'low policing', function, the police as well as the wider security apparatus were able to collect accurate intelligence, which was disseminated as situation reports.⁵⁵⁸ Although the instances of disorder were not severe, the regular circulation of accurate reports permitted policy makers to maintain an informed judgement on the utilisation of civil resources. As a result of this informed approach to decision making, any uninformed increase in threat perception was mitigated.

While uninformed increases in threat perception were mitigated, that which remained influenced the employment of a network by the War Office. The War Office's agent network was mainly employed during emergencies.⁵⁵⁹ Although the agents employed by the War Office were limited, together with the Civil Commissioners, and the police, they cemented the fragmented pieces of intelligence together to create a clear picture of events as they unfolded.⁵⁶⁰

While the intelligence component of the emergency mechanism played an essential role, the legal component was also vital. The 'Emergency Powers Act' was crucial in permitting the government to declare a state of emergency and pass

⁵⁵⁷ 'For the examples of disturbances, and the police maintaining public order, see: 'Home Office report: Public Order', 3 May 1926; 'Metropolitan Police Report', 4 May 1926; 'Summary of reports received from police to Home Office' 4 May 1926; and 'Home Office situation report' No. 7, 8 May 1926, TNA, HO 144/6166. See also Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 157; and Morgan, *Conflict*, pp.202 – 203.

⁵⁵⁸ For the situation reports see: TNA, HO 144/6116; and TNA, HO 144/6902. See also: Brodeur, 'High Policing Low Policing', p. 507.

⁵⁵⁹ This network was largely run by former MI5 officers. See: Andrew, *MI5*, p. 125; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 45; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 157.

⁵⁶⁰ Quinlan, *Secret War*, p.45; and Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 90 – 96; and Marrin, 'Adding value', pp. 199 – 211.

regulations it deemed necessary to secure the essentials of life.⁵⁶¹ Although its utility during the General Strike is debatable, the ability of officers to stop and search any person or vehicle was an important recourse for officers to investigate allegations that strikers were planning on arming themselves during the strike.⁵⁶²

One regulation of significant importance was the ability to disperse meetings. The importance of such a power was vital for the police to effectively combat groups of strikers who were perceived to be a threat to law and order. The continued use of the latter power was still discussed in July 1926. Although the General Strike had ended, the Coal strike continued, and the Emergency regulations were maintained.⁵⁶³ The ability to disperse meetings permitted the police to act in a proactive manner and break up groups which they believed could become a threat to public order.

The lack of threat to law and order can be attributed to the efficient organisation of the STO and the security apparatus. The apparatus as a whole had developed significantly since 1924, the most significant difference being the commitment to the use of police, instead of the military, to maintain law and order. This commitment was tested owing to the apprehensions which were felt by many military officials, as well as Hicks. However, the proficiency the security apparatus proved that when faced with the perceived calamitous threat to internal security embodied in the General Strike, recourse to military aid to the civil power could be reserved for the most extreme of circumstances. The complexities of the General Strike did not end with the end of the General Strike on 14 May. The investigation that followed would see a renewed

⁵⁶¹ 'The Emergency Regulations' 30 April 1926, TNA, MEPO 38/83. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵⁶² 'Special Branch', 10 May 1926, and 'Special Branch report: Strike Report', 9 May 1926, TNA, MEPO 38/83. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵⁶³ 'Confidential: Superintendent S.B', 19 July 1926, TNA, MEPO 38/83. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

commitment to maintain a readiness for the threat to internal security, an investigation into Soviet sponsoring of the General Strike, and the unravelling of a Soviet controlled espionage ring.

The Committee of Imperial Defence approved a memorandum by the Chief of Staff sub-committee, 11 December 1925, which recommended an annual report on British security.⁵⁶⁴ The process of review began in February 1926; but, the Home Office's contribution – regarding the threats to internal security – was delayed because of the challenges posed by the General Strike.⁵⁶⁵

With respect to the accuracy of the review, the timing of the General Strike proved useful for officials to determine the potential of the 'golden opportunity for the Communist, revolutionary and seditious elements' within the UK.⁵⁶⁶ However, as Anderson argued: 'the outcome of the emergency has lent strong support to the view which was previously held as to the comparatively slight hold these elements have on the country as a whole'.⁵⁶⁷

Although the continuation of the coal stoppage prevented an overall opinion from being formed, Anderson's memorandum was largely negative. He believed that the approach advocated by Churchill in 1910 was appropriate. He argued that the efficiency of the police was sufficient to maintain security, utilising reinforcements from

⁵⁶⁴ See: 'M. Hankey to J. Anderson', 15 February 1926, TNA, HO 144 20058.

⁵⁶⁵ By 21 May 1926, the Committee had responses from all government departments, apart from the Home Office. See: 'Norman Leslie to F. Newsam', 16 April 1926; 'M. Hankey to J. Anderson' 21 May 1926; and 'J. Anderson to M. Hankey', 26 May 1926, TNA, HO 144 20058.

⁵⁶⁶ J. Anderson, 'Memorandum prepared in the Home Office on the problems of internal security in relation to national defence', TNA, HO 144 2058, p. 1.

⁵⁶⁷ J. Anderson, 'Memorandum prepared in the Home Office on the problems of internal security in relation to national defence', TNA, HO 144 2058, p. 1.

other police forces if necessary'.⁵⁶⁸ It is evident that even at this early stage in the appraisal of the conduct of the security apparatus during the General Strike that the organisation of the police forces had proved their value as an essential component in maintaining security.

This view of the police as the main recourse of the security apparatus to maintain security was reinforced during the second and third annual reviews conducted by the Chiefs of Staff Sub-Committee. Anderson's negative tone is still present in the contribution he made in the two annual reviews that followed. This is epitomised in his comments that there was little to add in 1927 and that the Home Office's view was largely the same in 1928 – disregarding the potential benefits of a detailed review of British security.

However, beneath the negativity lies an appraisal of the police and their efficiency as a component within the security apparatus. As Anderson stated during the first annual review, the General Strike offered a 'golden opportunity for the Communist, revolutionary, and seditious elements' within the UK; however, it also offered a golden opportunity to test the police network and the emergency mechanism which the Home Office had been promoting.⁵⁶⁹

In Anderson's 1927 contribution to the Chief of Staff's review, he stated: 'the drawn out stoppage on the coal field, and the outbreaks of disorder in the latter phase afforded a test of the police organisation'.⁵⁷⁰ This test involved the reinforcement of numerous County forces requiring assistance, at short notice, in order to counter

⁵⁶⁸ J. Anderson, 'Memorandum prepared in the Home Office on the problems of internal security in relation to national defence', TNA, HO 144 2058, p. 2.

⁵⁶⁹ J. Anderson, 'Memorandum prepared in the Home Office on the problems of internal security in relation to national defence', TNA, HO 144 2058, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁰ 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1.

outbreaks of disorder.⁵⁷¹ Significantly, this is the same problem which Churchill faced as Home Secretary during the South Wales Miner's Strike in 1910. However, possibly owing to the infancy of such a response to a disturbance, Churchill believed it was necessary to still despatch military forces, as well as reinforce local police forces with officers from the Metropolitan police.

The organisation of local police forces, and the central control executed by the Home Office facilitated by the redistribution of officers from surrounding police forces permitted the police to maintain order in a variety of disturbances.⁵⁷² Anderson believed that the ability to counter outbreaks of disorder 'without recourse to power under Emergency Regulations' or officers from the Metropolitan Police gives further recognition to the proficiency of the Home Office's centralised control of regional Police Forces.⁵⁷³

The success which the police and the Home Office experienced, particularly during the latter stages of the coal stoppage gave Anderson the evidence to claim that the Police Service had 'undergone a sufficient measure of centralisation in recent years to act effectively as a single service under emergency conditions'.⁵⁷⁴ Moreover, this rendered the employment of military forces 'in aid of the civil power ... so much more remote'.⁵⁷⁵

While Anderson's remarks concerning the General Strike display a belief in the minor control which communist and revolutionary elements possessed, the review of the General Strike published by Scotland Yard took a different tone. Released in June

⁵⁷¹ 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1.

⁵⁷² 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1.

⁵⁷³ 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁴ 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1.

⁵⁷⁵ 'Anderson to Hankey', 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058, p. 1 – 2.

1926, it analysed a number of key features, or *Aspects, of the General Strike*, which included an appraisal of communism and the strike, a summary of intelligence gathered by Chief Constables, the efforts of communists to undermine the loyalty of the Armed Forces, the number of communist prosecutions during the strike, and the foreign influences on the strike.⁵⁷⁶

Although the *Aspects of the General Strike* contains a wealth of information the degree of bias is immediately apparent. Despite it being labelled as *Aspects of the General Strike*, it only addressed the communist aspects of the General Strike – neglecting any recognition of fascist or broader public order concerns. Nevertheless, a great deal of information can be extracted from the document. Of particular importance are the chapters contributed by MI5 and MI6.⁵⁷⁷

MI5's contribution stresses the 'intensification of the Communist effort to tamper with the loyalty of the Forces'.⁵⁷⁸ The prominent methods utilised by the Communists, leaflets stuck to barrack walls, pamphlets sent wholesale through the post or thrown into barracks, as well as 'underground' methods of accosting military personnel while on leave, or in public houses in Garrison towns.⁵⁷⁹ The reference to these methods and the frantic distribution of leaflets on the eve of the General Strike does display a

⁵⁷⁶ See Scotland House (ed.), *Aspects of the General Strike*, (London: New Scotland Yard, 1926), Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Museum.

⁵⁷⁷ For MI5's contribution, see: MI5, 'Part III: Communist effort to undermine loyalty and discipline in His Majesty's Forces during the General Strike May 1926', *Aspects of the General Strike*, (GMP) Museum, pp. 1 – 7; MI6 is not stated as the author; however, owing to the concentration on the foreign influence, if the contributor was not MI6, it was likely written by the Foreign Office, or SS1 utilising intelligence gathered by MI6; see: 'Part V: Foreign influences on the Strike', *Aspects of the General Strike*, (GMP) Museum, pp. 1 – 33.

⁵⁷⁸ MI5, 'Part III: Communist effort to undermine loyalty and discipline in His Majesty's Forces', *Aspects of the General Strike*, p. 1, (GMP) Museum.

⁵⁷⁹ MI5, 'Part III: Communist effort to undermine loyalty and discipline in His Majesty's Forces', *Aspects of the General Strike*, p. 1, (GMP) Museum.

concerted effort on the part of Communists to persuade military officials not to follow orders directed against strikers. It also displays a distinct lack of sophistication.

The lack of sophistication may have been a result of an over-estimation of CPGB influence. The grip that CPGB had over the population, and their ability to exert influence was limited, or MI5 may have been limiting the examples it was using in order to maintain secrecy and control over certain active investigations.⁵⁸⁰ One example of this is the lack of inclusion of the connection between Cant and a Seaman aboard HMS Royal Oak in the weeks preceding the raid on the CPGB HQ in September 1925.⁵⁸¹ Credibility is given to the latter interpretation when the volume of individuals arrested during the General Strike, under the provisions of the Emergency Powers is addressed.

The efficiency of MI5 in countering threats to the armed forces was greatly aided by effective police cooperation, and the extensive use of the 'Emergency Powers Act'.⁵⁸² The emergency powers enabled one hundred and eighty three arrests, one hundred and fourteen of which were for offences linked with sedition – labelled as disaffection in the report.⁵⁸³ It is accurate to claim that the ability of the Communists and revolutionaries to take advantage of the potential of the General Strike offered was exaggerated. However, the powers conferred upon the police and the security apparatus generally allowed attempts to incite disaffection, both within the army and

⁵⁸⁰ V. Kell, 'Staff Lecture', 1934, Private Papers of Sir Vernon Kell (Kell Papers), Imperial War Museum (IWM) PP/MCR/120, p. 13.

⁵⁸¹ 'Saunders to Harker, 15 September 1925, TNA, KV 2 1053.

⁵⁸² For the use of the Emergency Powers during and following the General Strike, see: TNA, MEPO38/83. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA).

⁵⁸³ Scotland House, 'Part IV: Communists Prosecuted under the Emergency Regulations', *Aspects of the General Strike*, (GMP) Museum, pp. 1- 14. See also: Aldrich and Cormac, *The Black Door*, pp. 52 – 64.

in the population, as well as disturbances generally, to be prevented before those posed a significant threat.⁵⁸⁴

MI6's contribution to *The Aspects of the General Strike* addressed the 'foreign influences on the Strike', detailed both Soviet efforts to gain intelligence prior to the strike, and efforts to fund the Miners following the termination of the General Strike.⁵⁸⁵ It was claimed that a Soviet representative of the State Telegraph Agency, Jacob Heindrichovich Doletsky relayed a message to A.J Cook, Secretary of the Miners Federation that the miners should prolong their strike, and promised support from the Communist International.⁵⁸⁶

However, very little detail is given of the broader investigation, other than asserting that the Soviet Union was attempting to fund the strike. Liaison between Special Branch and MI6 extended much further than the retrospective appraisal of 'foreign influences on the General Strike', and included an active investigation, while the General Strike was still ongoing, into the efforts of the Soviet Union to subvert the security of the UK.

The day following the end of the General Strike, 13 May, Sinclair sent a 'draft memorandum to Childs "showing the connection of the Soviet Government with the Trade Unions"'.⁵⁸⁷ This statement aimed to prove 'beyond doubt' the connection between the British trade union movement and the Soviet Government; that the idea for the General Strike had been 'conceived many months ago at Moscow'; and that

⁵⁸⁴ Anderson, 'Memorandum prepared in the Home Office on the problems of internal security in relation to national defence', TNA, HO 144 2058, p. 1; W. Johnson-Hicks, 'Revised memorandum for the guidance of Civil Commissioners' [date unknown], TNA, HO 317/73; and Jeffrey and Hennessey, *State*, p. 3.

⁵⁸⁵ 'Part V: Foreign Influences', *Aspects of the General Strike*, pp. 1 – 6.

⁵⁸⁶ 'Part V: Foreign Influences', *Aspects of the General Strike*, p. 5.

⁵⁸⁷ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 227.

'the combined efforts of these unscrupulous people' had exploited the responsible trade union leaders.⁵⁸⁸

Some degree of scepticism is warranted regarding Jeffery's account of the liaison between Special Branch and MI6 following the General Strike. Aside from the inability to check the source of this statement, owing to the lack of a reference, Jeffery only presents the collaboration between SIS and SB regarding the influence of the Soviet Union over the General Strike through a document sent between Sinclair and Childs. Jeffery cites Sinclair's hesitation regarding its use: Sinclair 'hoped the occasion would not arise which would "necessitate" it "being made use of."⁵⁸⁹ However, the aforementioned *Aspects of the General Strike* supports a much broader investigation, not merely focussing on Soviet influence over British trade unions, but also the financial support offered to prolong the miners' strike.⁵⁹⁰ The degree of hesitation regarding the use of the intelligence suggested that it originated with from a sensitive source: SIGINT.

Further support for the view that MI6 – Special Branch collaboration extended further can be found in Special Branch's, heavily redacted, records regarding the 'Foreign Influences on the General Strike'.⁵⁹¹ Despite the redactions, it is evident that SIS and Special Branch were investigating the Soviet Union's financial support of the

⁵⁸⁸ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 227.

⁵⁸⁹ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 227.

⁵⁹⁰ 'Part V: Foreign Influences', *Aspects of the General Strike*, pp. 1 – 16.

⁵⁹¹ 'Part V: Foreign Influences', *Aspects of the General Strike*, pp. 1 – 33. For Special Branch's record regarding foreign influences on the General Strike, see TNA, MEPO 38/80; and MEPO 38/81. The latter record, MEPO 38/81, is still retained. The former, MEPO 38/80 has been released to author via the FOIA, but is still retained. A clear indication of the redactions made to MEPO 38/80 is the absence of the minute pages; and various markings covering recipients, authors, and locations.

General Strike.⁵⁹² The records portray numerous financial transactions to support British 'Miners whose situation [was] becoming extremely difficult'.⁵⁹³

The investigation also covered the refusal of the TUC 'to accept any financial assistance from abroad', but the efforts of the Central Committee of Russian Trade Unions to retain the funds and place them at the 'disposal of the British TUC, or the Miners Federation "at their request"' to 'find some other way of getting the money accepted in England'.⁵⁹⁴ The conclusion of the liaison between MI6 and Special Branch highlighted a concerted effort to undermine the internal security of the UK.

The enquiry into Soviet subsidies for the continuation of the Miners' Strike stretched into the political domain, giving Hicks justification to take action. During a Cabinet meeting, following the cessation of the General Strike, Hicks enquired whether the ARCOS (All Russian Cooperative Society), and other Russian institutions in the UK should be expelled owing to their financial support of the General Strike, and if he should employ emergency powers bestowed upon him under the state of emergency to stop the transfer of funds to support the strikers.⁵⁹⁵ Owing to ARCOS' attempted financial support for the TUC during the General Strike, ARCOS attracted a great deal of undesired attention from Britain's entire intelligence and security apparatus.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹² See: 'Most Secret', Socrabank, London to Gosbank, Leningrad, (No.45) 3 May 1926; and 'Roscombank, Moocow, to Socrabank, London, 13 May 1926; TNA, MEPO 38/80, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied via FOIA).

⁵⁹³ 'Western Union', 16 May 1926 MEPO 38/80; TNA, MEPO 38/80, (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied via FOIA).

⁵⁹⁴ Dogadov, Moscow, to Citrine, London [date unavailable], TNA, MEPO 38/80 (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied via FOIA).

⁵⁹⁵ Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, 144; Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 144; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 157 and 160; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 322; Andrew, 'British Intelligence', p. 959.

⁵⁹⁶ Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 163; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 96; C. Andrew and V. Mitrokhin, *The Mitrokhin Archive: The KGB in Europe and the West*, (London: Allen Lane, 199), p. 50; and N. West and O. Tsarev, *The Crown Jewels: The British Secrets at the Heart of the KGB Archives*, (London: Harper Collins, 1998), pp. 53 – 60.

The intelligence and security apparatus can be viewed as entering a stage of maturity during the General Strike. Rather than searching for subversion and cataloguing those that may be a threat to the realm, the security apparatus was visibly 'hunting' for intelligence that proved a contravention of British law.⁵⁹⁷ While this was not a permanent feature of counter-communist operations, it was a progressive change in this period.

The conduct of the apparatus during the General Strike further enhances the view that an emergency mechanism had been established. This mechanism was able to mitigate the disruptive effects to the 'essentials of life', and coordinate the various intelligence reports and condense them into a manageable intelligence product.⁵⁹⁸ The proficiency of this mechanism in ensuring British security is further reinforced when the retrospective analysis of its conduct is considered. Anderson, in particular, illustrated that the coordination of police forces permitted the effective management of public order incidents, without recourse to the military. The combination of the police supplying intelligence to the STC, and the public order role, supports the dual role of the police.

While networks, mechanisms, and the police were proving the efficiency of Britain's security apparatus, one network that had not undergone extensive development, the political, proved the opposite. The intelligence suggesting Soviet funding for the Miner's strike resulted in the need for direction. The severity of this threat engulfed the opinion of intelligence officials and policy makers and established

⁵⁹⁷ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, pp. 78 – 80; and Marrin, 'Adding value', pp. 199 – 211.

⁵⁹⁸ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 3; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 90 – 96; and Marrin, 'Adding value', pp. 199 – 211.

a belief that action was necessary. This action led to an 'orgy of government indiscretion about secret intelligence for which there is no parallel in modern parliamentary history': the ARCOS Raid.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 155; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 332; C. Andrew 'British Intelligence and the breach with Russia in 1927', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (1982), p. 963 – 964. See also: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 165; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

Chapter Seven: Catastrophic Breakdown or Business as Usual? Intelligence liaison, 1927 – 1931.

The period which followed the General Strike is interpreted as a breakdown of communication and liaison within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. This perception references the discoordination during the ARCOS raid, and the reaction of security officials to the revelation that two moles within Special Branch were providing intelligence to an intelligence cell operated by William Norman Ewer. While there is sufficient evidence to highlight a degree of animosity between individuals within the intelligence and security apparatus, there is also evidence that the level of friction was common and that a typical degree of liaison continued.

This chapter will breakdown events which display both the friction and liaison within the intelligence and security apparatus. This analysis will begin with an appraisal of the ARCOS raid in 1927. The fallout from the ARCOS raid and the meeting of the SSC in 1927 will be used to emphasise the level of friction present within the intelligence and security apparatus. The examination of the latter will also emphasise that certain weaknesses within the SSC prevented the remedy of this friction, and that continued deficiencies within the intelligence and security apparatus highlighted through the SSC's enquiries was left unchecked.

Supporting the assertion that liaison and relations between the components of the security apparatus remained similar, rather than broke down, attention will also be paid to the broader investigations being carried out at this time. This will highlight that there were equal instances of cooperation and liaison as there was of friction and

overlapping. These investigations will include an examination of the network operated by Jacob Kirchenstein, and an example of a broader investigation carried out by IPI.

The chapter will then examine the discovery of two Special Branch officers, Inspector Ginhoven and Sergeant Jane, who were passing information to William Norman Ewer. The review of this case, as well as its appraisal in the secondary literature, will be supplemented by an appraisal of what is considered intelligence, and whether some forms of OSINT can be considered benign – and as a consequence not as severe others. This appraisal will highlight that owing to the fragmented nature of intelligence, it is difficult to identify an area which is of little or no importance because a broader background knowledge is typically essential to gain a greater understanding of a target.⁶⁰⁰

ARCOS was a centre of interest for nearly all of the agencies within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. It was the organisation through which 'all Soviet industrial and commercial bodies had to transact their business in the UK'.⁶⁰¹ Closely linked with the Russian Trade Delegation – it was housed in the same building – and its financial muscle, ranging from £1 million with access to a further £3 million, resulted in it occupying a 'powerful position'.⁶⁰²

As a result of the key position held by ARCOS and the interest of all the components within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, the investigation into the activities of ARCOS was of critical importance. Like the General Strike, it should

⁶⁰⁰ Herman, *Intelligence*, pp. 61 – 69.

⁶⁰¹ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 96; Madeira, *Britannia*, pp. 163; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 228; Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp.197 – 198.

⁶⁰² Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 96.

have been an example of how, after two decades of development, Britain's intelligence and security apparatus could cooperate for a mutual goal: British security. Yet, as so often occurs when government departments are tasked with similar or overlapping tasks, friction was inevitable.

The controversy surrounding the security apparatus' interaction with ARCOS centres on intelligence which suggested that ARCOS was in possession of a military signals handbook – marked for official use only.⁶⁰³ Following the failure to procure this document when the premises of ARCOS was searched, the government was forced, again, to utilise intercepted communications, GC & CS' signals intelligence, to justify its actions. This 'orgy of government indiscretion about secret intelligence for which there is no parallel in modern parliamentary history' caused significant damage.⁶⁰⁴ Although there was a significant political impact, especially during the revelations of the intercepted communication – and the breach with Russia, the longevity of the impact to signals intelligence was paramount. The revelations of Soviet intercepted communications highlighted the vulnerability of Soviet communications. This resulted in the Soviet Union adopting the 'unbreakable One Time Pad' for encipherment.⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰³ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 165; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶⁰⁴ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 155; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 332; Andrew 'British Intelligence and the breach with Russia', p. 963 – 964. See also: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 165; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶⁰⁵ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 156; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 332; Andrew, 'British Intelligence', p. 964; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229. It was only as a result of mistakes made during the Second World War that Soviet communications were able to read again. These operations, codenamed BRIDE and VENONA, yielded tremendous insight into the infiltration of Soviet agents into British politics, intelligence, and, atomic research, see: D.W.B Lomas, *Intelligence, Security and the Attlee Governments, 1945 – 1951, an uneasy relationship?* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017); R. L. Beeson and M. Warner (eds.) *Venona: Soviet Espionage and the American Response, 1939 – 1957*, (Washington DC, National Security Agency and Central Intelligence Agency, 1966); N. West, *Venona: The Greatest Secret of the Cold War*, (London: Harper Collins, 1999); and M. Goodman, *Spying on the Nuclear Bear: Anglo-American Intelligence and the Soviet Bomb*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

The ARCOS raid has been described as ‘a half-baked idea, executed hastily, with unfortunate results’; and, by Sinclair, as ‘an irretrievable loss of an unprecedented opportunity’.⁶⁰⁶ The latter cannot be over stated. The influence of the informality of relationships, between policy makers and intelligence officials resulted in significant damage to an operation that should have crippled Soviet intelligence capabilities within the UK, and caused British SIGINT considerable difficulty decoding Soviet Communications for over a decade. Rather than an intelligence failure, the consensus is that the ARCOS raid was closer to an intelligence disaster.⁶⁰⁷

The ARCOS raid raises the issues of the dividing line between intelligence failure and political failure. The conduct of the security apparatus during the raid supports the perception of an intelligence failure. However, the handling of the political fallout had far greater consequences. The choice to release SIGINT in support of the raid, by far the greatest mistake, reinforces the view of the ARCOS raid was a political failure. Significantly, the ARCOS raid raises the importance of distinguishing between intelligence failures for the planning an execution of operations, and the political failures of sanctioning operations and handling the political ramifications.

The ARCOS raid is also significant for a number of other reasons. Not only because of the political fallout following the raid, or the severance of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Of particular interest to this study is the further insight it provides into the liaison between MI6, MI5, and Special Branch; as well as their relationship with the political network.

⁶⁰⁶ For comments that the ARCOS raid was poorly planned and executed, see: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 156; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 332; Andrew, ‘British Intelligence’, 964; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229. For the remarks of Sinclair, see: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95.

⁶⁰⁷ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 95; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 156; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 332; Andrew, ‘British Intelligence’, p. 964; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

The importance of ARCOS for Soviet commercial and industrial interests, as well as the intelligence which suggested that the Soviet Union was financially supporting the Miners following the General Strike, resulted in MI6, MI5, and Special Branch each pursuing their own investigations – with limited cooperation. MI6 was utilising an ‘odd job man’ – who was a former Russian icebreaker – as an informant; MI5 were investigating a suspected espionage ring being operated out of ARCOS, through the use of communists and trade union officials as informants; and Special Branch was utilising disgruntled, and recently dismissed, British employees of ARCOS.⁶⁰⁸ While flaws can be found in the reliability of each organisations choice of source, a fundamental failure was the lack of liaison. Liaison in this instance would have resulted in the pooling of intelligence, ‘fusing’, it to add value and reliability.⁶⁰⁹

Of crucial importance for the ARCOS raid was the approach made by an individual, identified as X to one of Desmond Morton’s colleagues in the production section of MI6, Bertie Maw.⁶¹⁰ After a consultation with Sinclair, Maw attempted to convince X to take his information to the police. X informed Maw that he had already been in contact with the police and was unhappy with his reception, and he preferred to talk to Maw.⁶¹¹

There is little evidence to uncover the initial interaction between X and the police; however, later recollections of Carter’s conversations with Maxwell Knight, head of MI6’s casual network in the UK, give a reasonable inclination as to why X may

⁶⁰⁸ For a summary of MI6’s and MI5’s operations see: Bennett, *Churchill’s*, p. 97, and TNA, KV 2/1020 in addition for MI5’s operations. For Special Branch’s enquiry, see: Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 201 -202.

⁶⁰⁹ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 101; Russell, ‘Achieving all-source fusion in the Intelligence Community’, p. 189 – 198; Simms, ‘Intelligence to counter terror’, pp. 38 – 56; and Marrin, ‘Adding value’, pp. 199 – 211.

⁶¹⁰ Bennett, *Churchill’s*, pp. 96 – 97; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 163; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶¹¹ Bennett, *Churchill’s*, pp. 96 – 97; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 163; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

have been unhappy with his reception. A significant factor could have been Carter's attitude towards HUMINT operations which he did not directly control. From his conversations with Maxwell Knight, it would seem that Carter was unwilling to provide financial reimbursement for intelligence, prior to its clarification.

One question left unanswered about the initial meetings is why Sinclair suggested that X be referred to the police. It seems peculiar that Sinclair would pass up on a potential HUMINT source regarding ARCOS, especially considering that MI6's casual network, according to Sinclair's own testimony, was active in 1925.⁶¹² Although such a suggestion supports the view that the intelligence and security apparatus was liaising effectively, it would have been more effective for MI6's HUMINT collection to utilise X themselves – which they eventually did.

The intelligence provided by X is claimed to have been of minor importance until, in March 1927, when he supplied intelligence originating from a disgruntled, former, employee of ARCOS, 'Y', who alleged that a 'Signals Training pamphlet had been photocopied at ARCOS.⁶¹³ Owing to this firmly being a counter-espionage matter, Maw passed X and Y on to MI5 because espionage was definitely within their remit.

This particular act, as well as the alleged attempt to pass X to the police, is an example of the intelligence and security apparatus liaising and differentiating investigation and passing them to the relevant department. While this does highlight that the system was working, there is also a lack of evidence of any actual communication. Although Morton claimed ignorance of this transfer, both he and

⁶¹² Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, HO 532/10.

⁶¹³ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 97; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 163; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 154; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 331; and Andrew, 'British Intelligence', p. 962; Jeffery, *MI6*, p.228; Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p.212; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 145.

Sinclair would have been aware of the procedures that MI5 would pursue following the transfer of a case of suspected espionage. Bennett portrays Sinclair's frustration following the ARCOS raid, because 'its timing, conduct and aftermath appear to have run directly counter to SIS interests'.⁶¹⁴ There is no evidence that, at this point, MI6 communicated any preference in how MI5 pursued the case, or requested prior warning of any action to be taken against ARCOS because it may hamper their ongoing investigations.⁶¹⁵

Sinclair was aware that the investigation into Jacob Kirchenstein was, according to Bennett, 'close to bearing fruit', and recognised the damage that action by MI5 would have had on the investigation.⁶¹⁶ There was ample evidence also, that any action carried out by MI5 would not be surgical or covert. All executive functions, searches and arrests, were carried out by the police, and three examples of their investigations into the CPGB, in 1921, 1924, and 1925 highlight that Special Branch's methods were anything but subtle. When Special Branch obtained intelligence, often believed to be reliable, it would conduct a formidable raid of any implicated premises, along with the widespread withdrawal of any and all incriminating evidence. Considering Sinclair would later claim knowledge of Soviet practices to burn incriminating documents, any hope of maintaining an active investigation following the initial raid on ARCOS was misplaced.⁶¹⁷

Following an investigation into the reliability of Y's intelligence, Harker of MI5, was satisfied that it was sufficient to warrant further action. After obtaining the consent

⁶¹⁴ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 102; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶¹⁵ Bennett, whose study had privileged access to official records not available to the public, observed that 'it has not been possible to discover how much they [Sinclair and Morton] may have known, or suspected about it [the ARCOS raid] in advance. See: Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 102.

⁶¹⁶ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 102; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶¹⁷ 'Fourth Meeting of the Secret Service Committee', 30 June 1927, TNA, FO 1093/71; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 99.

from the Director of Public Prosecutions that ARCOS' possession of the document constituted a breach of the Official Secrets Acts, 1911 and 1920, Kell began his search for political support for the raid of ARCOS.⁶¹⁸

The trial that Kell endured in attempting to contact various government officials displays, in stark contrast to the connection between Thomson and politicians, the impact of the lack of connection between the security and political networks could have. Kell attempted to arrange appointments with the Permanent Secretary at the Home Office, John Anderson; the Director of Military Operations and Intelligence; as well as Chief of the Imperial General Staff.⁶¹⁹

After failing to contact any of the aforementioned individuals, Kell managed to show the statement to the AC (C), Childs. It was only by sheer luck that Kell encountered the Secretary of State for War, Worthington Evans – who would later take the matter to the Home Secretary – that the statement was seen by a political official.⁶²⁰ It is interesting to note that the progression of this case was not the result of communication through any official channels. Rather than wait for correspondence with a suitable government department, either the Home Office or War Office, Kell personally sought out political support. It was the personal collegial political network connection of Home Secretary, Hicks that support was obtained from Foreign Secretary, Austen Chamberlain, and the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin.⁶²¹

Following the political approval from Worthington-Evans, (Secretary of State for War) Hicks (the Home Secretary), Baldwin (the Prime Minister), and Chamberlain (the

⁶¹⁸ Director of Public Prosecutions, 'Information for Search Warrant, Re: ARCOS Limited and The Russian Trade Delegation, 49 Moorgate', TNA, HO 144/8403.

⁶¹⁹ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 97.

⁶²⁰ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 98.

⁶²¹ Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*, p. 326; and Burns and Stalker, *Management of Innovation*, pp. 121 – 122.

Foreign Secretary), Kell's raid could now proceed. It is evident from Chamberlain's complaints, following the raid, that the information relayed to him did not mention that ARCOS shared a premises, 49 Moorgate, with the Russian Trade Delegation. Thus, any raid on ARCOS also constituted a raid on the Trade Delegation – which was permitted diplomatic immunity from search under the Anglo-Russian Trade Agreement, 1921.

It is likely that the memorandum prepared for a 'higher authority' was the document shown to Worthington-Evans (Secretary of State for War), Hicks (Home Secretary), Stanley Baldwin (Prime Minister), and Chamberlain (Foreign Secretary) which does omit any reference to the Russian Trade Delegation being housed in 49 Moorgate alongside ARCOS.⁶²² Chamberlain's lack of knowledge regarding the cohabitation of ARCOS and the Trade Delegation was addressed during 1927 SSC, with William Tyrell, Under Secretary Foreign Office, expressing the opinion that Chamberlain would have consulted the Foreign Office had he known; and Sinclair stating that both Childs and Kell were aware of this; and of the political implication of raiding both ARCOS and the Trade Delegation.

The initial meeting between MI5's Harker and the DPP to assess whether the accusations against ARCOS constituted a breach of the Official Secrets Acts does mention 49 Moorgate as the premises of both ARCOS and the Trade Delegation. Therefore, it is evident that all those involved in the planning of the raid, MI5, as well as the City of London Police, and Special Branch, who would officially conduct the raid, were clearly aware of the political implications of the proposed action.

⁶²² Harker 'Minute 16a', 10 May 1927, TNA, KV 3/15.

Hindsight suggests that a more measured approach to the issuing of a warrant would have been more suitable; however, as the search warrant stated:

'the possession ... of the said original pamphlet ... an offence against the Official Secrets Acts, 1911 and 1920 has been committed, ... and I am accordingly under the authority of my superior officer, authorised to lay this information in support of an application for a Warrant'.⁶²³

Therefore, the actions taken by MI5 and the DPP were well within their powers, considering the evidence they had.

The lack of informed political support can be interpreted as one aspect of the raid which aided creating the foundations for failure. Two other aspects closely intertwined are the timing and organisation of the raid. Despite the longevity of the investigation MI5 conducted, principally to ascertain the reliability of the intelligence provided by X and Y, between the 31 March and 11 May 1927, events unfolded rapidly following political approval. The following day, Kell and Harker visited the Chief Commissioner of the City of London Police, Lieutenant-Colonel Turnbull, along with AC C Childs and Inspector Parker of Special Branch. This group is alleged to have discussed the raid, however, there is no substantial evidence to unveil what was discussed during this meeting.

The lack of evidence was a result of the secrecy attached to the raid, and is considered by some to be excessive.⁶²⁴ The police involved were not informed of the raid, but were instructed that they were about to conduct an operation against an 'imaginary consignment of arms'.⁶²⁵ SS1, on the other hand, did not receive

⁶²³ 'The information of Oswald Allen Harker', 12 May 1927, TNA, HO 144/8403, p. 3.

⁶²⁴ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 101; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 164; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 154; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 70; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 145.

⁶²⁵ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 101.

information about the impending raid until 15:00, an hour and a half before the raid began.⁶²⁶

In comparison, Morton was given rather privileged access, he was informed, during a meeting with Childs at 12:40; but was only informed that the purpose was ‘the result of that man of yours that you know about’.⁶²⁷ This does support the view that the operation was, as Kell would describe it, a case of bottling information, as a result of jealousy, laziness, ignorance, or stupidity.⁶²⁸ In this case, the bottling of the information, wholesale secrecy, resulted in no one involved in the raid having prior knowledge of the operation they were about to conduct.

The origins of the ‘jealously guarding’ information interpretation is largely reliant on the recollections of Morton.⁶²⁹ However, there is the possibility that Morton’s recollection of events are not entirely accurate. Even if it was, his conduct during the period which followed him being informed of the raid is far from reproach. Having full awareness of the political implications of the impending raid, Morton did not endeavour to rush back to MI6 HQ to inform Sinclair of what was about to happen. Instead, after failing to find anyone upon his arrival, Morton went to Lunch – Sinclair was only informed of the raid at 15:00.⁶³⁰

Morton’s recollections also extend to an appraisal of the conduct of the police officers after the raid had begun:

Nothing was happening. No one seemed to be in charge, there was no one to appeal to for orders or to organise the search. Carter was busy arguing with the chief officials of ARCOS regarding the opening of

⁶²⁶ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 101.

⁶²⁷ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 101.

⁶²⁸ V. Kell, ‘Staff Lecture’, 1934, Kell Papers (IWM) PP/MCR/120 p. 13.

⁶²⁹ V. Kell, ‘Staff Lecture’, 1934, Kell Papers (IWM) PP/MCR/120 p. 13; Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 101 – 102.

⁶³⁰ Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 101 – 102.

safes; the City Police were on duty guarding the rooms and the rest of S[pecial] B[ranch] appeared to be wandering about and wondering what to do next.⁶³¹

While it is possible that after an hour of searching for a document that was never to be found, the raid was becoming more disorganised; the recollections of the various police officers following the raid offer an alternative opinion.

As the raid commenced, the officers entering 49 Moorgate were confronted with numerous complaints regarding the building's diplomatic immunity. The importance of these complaints only identifying the building and not the offices of the official agent of the Russian Trade Delegation was one reason, according to police statements, why the raid proceeded as it did and appeared disorganised. As well as the various complaints made against the officers, Inspectors Clancy and Pay were confronted with an instance of two individuals, identified as Miller and Kaulin, burning documents.

Carter claimed that his first action when entering the premises was to give direction to officers to search particular areas.⁶³² The significant difference between the statements provided by the police officers and Morton is explained by Bennett as Morton's attempt to remove himself from any responsibility regarding the raid. However, Morton may have also observed that the objective of finding the official document had proved elusive, and was beginning to become noticeable in the manner of the officers conducting the search.⁶³³ It is important to be mindful that the reports from Morton and the Police were likely, to some extent, exaggerations, either positive or negative, to highlight weakness or support a certain interpretation.

⁶³¹ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 102. For more perceptions on the disorganisation of the ARCOS raid, see: Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 154 and 164; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 154; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 331; Andrew, *British intelligence*, p. 963; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 229.

⁶³² Carter, 'Raid on ARCOS. Resisting Police', 18 May 1927, TNA, HO 144/8403.

⁶³³ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 103.

Although the primary aim of finding the Signals handbook was not accomplished, the search did yield a number of documents, as well as a list of legal and illegal addresses of people engaged in the communist movement in various countries.⁶³⁴ Horwood believed that a graph discovered which displayed the control which the Trade Delegation exerted over ARCOS was sufficient to justify 'everything we have done', and that the government did not need to 'worry their heads anymore'.⁶³⁵ It was possible for the government to justify its raid of 49 Moorgate, owing to the mixed up nature of ARCOS and the Trade Delegation. It was also a legitimate claim that ARCOS was not privileged to the same diplomatic immunity as the Trade Delegation.⁶³⁶ However, none of the evidence which was discovered, albeit valuable, was considered by policy makers as sufficient reason to justify the raid. As a result, the government opted, once again, to publicise its ability to read Soviet diplomatic traffic and jeopardised the future efficiency of British signals intelligence.⁶³⁷

The political fallout from the raid brought a degree of unwanted attention to Special Branch's intelligence role. One of Baldwin's principal concerns regarding the 'political work' of Special Branch revolved around the political confrontation between Conservatives and Socialists.⁶³⁸ Baldwin believed that complaints could be levied at Special Branch because their counter-communist duties could support the view that a 'government department was being employed for party politics'.⁶³⁹ The aim of the 1927 SSC became a quest for 'a scheme whereby the government can get its information

⁶³⁴ Ernest Thompson, 'Search Warrant executed at 49 Moorgate', 15 May 1927, and 'Horwood to Joynson-Hicks', 14 May 1927, TNA, HO 144/8403.

⁶³⁵ 'Horwood to Joynson-Hicks', 14 May 1927, TNA, HO 144/8403.

⁶³⁶ 'The Raid on the Buildings of ARCOS', 13 May 1927, TNA, HO 144/8403.

⁶³⁷ 'Parliamentary Question No. 369 and answer', 23 May 1927, TNA, KV 3/15.

⁶³⁸ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3.

⁶³⁹ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 105; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 228; and Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 219

about Communist activities without having to apply for it through a paid officer of the crown'.⁶⁴⁰

Although the informality present in the political network had been in decline, there was a definite political motive to use the SSC to facilitate a preferable change to the security apparatus. Instead of enquiring into Special Branch's efficiency, the 1927 SSC's objective can be interpreted as an attempt to increase the level of secrecy of counter-communism operations. It is evident that leading government officials were aware of the political scandal that would erupt if it was discovered the Special Branch was investigating Socialist movements on behalf of the government – especially if those investigations involved elected officials.⁶⁴¹ The government wanted to maintain its intelligence, but required guarantees that these operations would not undermine the government's credibility. The opening statements, therefore, support the view that SSC was using events, which could be interpreted as warranting a theoretical shock towards intelligence reform, to further the institutionalisation of secrecy.⁶⁴²

However, not all of the members of the SSC believed that removing the secret service functions from Special Branch would resolve the problem. Anderson was particularly vocal in his opposition to such reform, as he had been during the 1925 SSC. Anderson argued that the leakage – regarding an unrelated case – did not

⁶⁴⁰ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 228; and Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 219.

⁶⁴¹ For an example of the investigations into elected officials, see: 'Cecil John L'estrage-Malone', Coalition Liberal MP, TNA, KV 2/1908; 'Shapurji Dorabji Saklatvala', Labour MP for Battersea, TNA, KV 2/613; and Ivan Trebitsch Lincoln, Liberal MP for Darlington, TNA, MEPO 38/103. (Retained by Metropolitan Police, supplied outside of FOIA). While the former two references are to MI5's Personal series, the investigations in the 1920s were carried out by Special Branch. See: Curry, *Security Service*, p. 107.

⁶⁴² L. Johnson, 'A Shock Theory of Congressional Accountability', pp. 343 – 360

originate with 'the Secret Service, but on the executive side of Scotland Yard'.⁶⁴³ Anderson also sustained further attempts to undermine the credibility of Special Branch. Tyrell argued that there was no machinery, comparable with SIS's, to obtain the receipt of documents in the UK.⁶⁴⁴ Anderson's retort was quite blunt but explained but explained the position succinctly. Anderson elaborated that there were three options to obtain documents: bribery, theft, or warrant.⁶⁴⁵ However, 'the members of the inner circle of the Communist Party were incorruptible, the success of an attempted theft was highly problematical, and that of a search party ... scarcely less so'.⁶⁴⁶ Instead of their being a lack of machinery comparable with MI6's, the internal machinery was confined to operating under predetermined conditions. These conditions made accessing the inner circle of the CPGB a difficulty. Despite this stern defence of Special Branch, owing to Baldwin's concerns, the committee decided to discuss the matter further.⁶⁴⁷

The second meeting of the SSC can be seen an omen of later developments. One of the Committee's decisions was not to recommend any alterations which 'would not manifestly improve the present working of the branches in question'.⁶⁴⁸ Another point of discussion revolved around the amalgamation of the Secret Service sections of Special Branch, SS1 and SS2, with MI5 – a decision that was made in 1931.⁶⁴⁹ However, prior to the third meeting, the ARCOS raid occurred. The fallout of the raid

⁶⁴³ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 4; Bennett, *Churchill's Man of Mystery*, p. 105; and Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 219.

⁶⁴⁴ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 5 – 6.

⁶⁴⁵ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6.

⁶⁴⁶ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6.

⁶⁴⁷ 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 11 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 7.

⁶⁴⁸ 'Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 22 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 5; and Bennett, *Churchill's Man of Mystery*, p. 106.

⁶⁴⁹ 'Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 22 March 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3.

dwarfed any carefully considered attempt to consider intelligence reform; and instead, it renewed efforts to amalgamate all of the secret service organisations.⁶⁵⁰

The committee began an examination of the ARCOS raid and what deficiencies it revealed in the organisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.⁶⁵¹ Sinclair, was first to voice his opinions. Sinclair repeated his criticism that there was a lack of central control and this was the cause for the failure of the ARCOS raid.⁶⁵² Sinclair's principal complaint regarding the ARCOS raid revolved his lack of inclusion during the planning process.⁶⁵³ Sinclair also considered the approach to be a 'grave error', and would have persuaded for a much broader strategy involving multiple targets.⁶⁵⁴

Sinclair's emphasis on Childs' culpability for the raids on other locations was misplaced. It is understandable that Sinclair would have been frustrated that his line of enquiry into the multiple locations would have been missed, however, he was well aware of the policy to burn documents – an act committed during the ARCOS raid, and probably repeated by all of Sinclair's targets when they learned of it.⁶⁵⁵ This criticism, however, is more suited to Kell's actions than Childs. It was MI5 that pursued the warrant and failed to include the broader investigation they had been conducting with MI6.

⁶⁵⁰ 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 24 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 1.

⁶⁵¹ 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 24 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 1.

⁶⁵² Sinclair's opinion regarding the benefits of centralised control, see: 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 11. No records are currently available, or exists, regarding any further meetings of the SSC in 1927; despite the third meeting's statement that it would hear the interpretation of Sinclair, Kell, and Childs – only Sinclair was seen. 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 24 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p 5; see also: Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp. 221 – 223.

⁶⁵³ 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 5 – 6.

⁶⁵⁴ 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6; see also: Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp. 221 – 223.

⁶⁵⁵ 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 6; and Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 102 – 103.

While the SSC began its 1927 appraisal searching for a way to remove SS1 and SS2 from Special Branch, the greatest criticism was levied at Kell. Tyrell was shocked of Kell's approach of a Minister, 'bypassing the ordinary channels of communications'.⁶⁵⁶ This remark is a clear example of how much the relations between the various networks concerned with British security had developed between 1917 and 1927. The informality evident in Thomson's relationship with various officials is in stark contrast with the criticism Kell received after endeavouring to pursue legal action. However, the motivation behind the 1927 SSC's revival was not sufficient to maintain support for considerable reform. It would take a further erosion of the liaison between the superior officers to support another meeting of the SSC in 1931.

While it is possible to emphasise the lack of cooperation in Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, there is also evidence of continued liaison, similar to that evident between 1919 and 1927. Although these relationships were maintained, it must be highlighted that the practice of passing intelligence between departments still occurred following the ARCOS raid. What was missing, however, was the sense of common purpose highlighted by Sinclair during the 1925 and 1927 SSC meetings.⁶⁵⁷ Therefore, while it can appear that relations were eroding, there was actually a maintenance of the levels of cooperation that existed previously.

An example of the maintenance of relations within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus can be seen through the investigation into the suspected propaganda and espionage activities of Jacob Kirchenstein. Kirchenstein was an

⁶⁵⁶ 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the SSC, 1927', 24 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10, p. 3; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 10; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 147.

⁶⁵⁷ Minutes of the Second meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, and Minutes of the fourth meeting of the SSC, 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10.

official of the Russian Trade Delegation and a member of ARCOS. The investigation into Kirchenstein's activities began prior to the ARCOS raid. Officials surmised that: Kirchenstein acted as the controller, or 'Soviet representative', of this group; with James Messer, (a Scottish Communist and member of the CPGB), acting as the 'central authority' who alone would contact the 'Soviet representative'.⁶⁵⁸ The provenance of the intelligence regarding the origins of this group is not stated. A Special Branch note concerning the activities of this group reported: at a secret meeting on 4 July 1926, between Kirchenstein, Messer, and Karl Bahn, a member of ARCOS. It was 'arranged that Messer should build up a very secret organisation of Comrades who ... were to obtain information on military and economic questions'.⁶⁵⁹ Despite the reduction in activity of this group following 'the expulsion of the Russians who were directing affairs ... [recently] there had been definite signs of reoccurrence'.⁶⁶⁰

An example of the typical levels of liaison between Special Branch and MI5 is depicted in the case of Benjamin Lockspeiser. Lockspeiser was an employee of the Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, and came to the attention of MI5 and Special Branch because he was identified by colleagues as an agitator. Intelligence relating to Lockspeiser's socialist inclinations was relayed, via Captain Miller, from Superintendent Davis, Odiham Division. Davis claimed to have identified Lockspeiser, employed as a chemist at RAE Farnborough, who was 'considered to be a person who holds advanced 'Labour Socialistic views'.⁶⁶¹ In response to a request from Miller,

⁶⁵⁸ 'Espionage on behalf of Soviet Russia', 4 April 1928, TNA, KV 2/584.

⁶⁵⁹ 'Notes on information contained in S.F. 450/UK serial 3 (11b), 26 January 1927, TNA, KV 2/584

⁶⁶⁰ 'Espionage on behalf of Soviet Russia', 4 April 1928, TNA, KV 2/584.

⁶⁶¹ Superintendent Davis, 'Lockspeiser or Lockspeizer', 14 July 1927, TNA, KV 2/3059.

(SS1), MI5 agreed to receive copies of correspondence obtained through a HOW.⁶⁶² The evidence which supported the HOW against Lockspeiser was surprisingly thin. Unlike HOWs taken out against members of the CPGB, neither Special Branch nor MI5 could claim that correspondence of these individuals yielded information unavailable elsewhere. Even Superintendent Davis' report stated that he had 'no evidence that he [Lockspeiser] is a Communist agitator'.⁶⁶³ Instead, the HOW was submitted on the basis that Lockspeiser was a prominent supporter of the Left Wing of the Labour Movement ... [and] is extremely active in the propagation of ideas scarcely distinguishable from Communism'.⁶⁶⁴

There is little evidence of communication regarding the collection of Lockspeiser's correspondence after 1927. Two years elapsed before Lockspeiser would come to the notice of MI5. MI5 wished to check any correspondence between Lockspeiser and William John Evans – one of Lockspeiser colleagues at Farnborough; hoping that the HOW – despite the lack of any further documents – was still in operation.⁶⁶⁵ The lack of notice given to MI5 that the HOW was being stopped is symbolic of the limitations in the liaison within the intelligence and security apparatus. While Special Branch was willing to share information and the results of a HOW, which could likely develop into a case for MI5, it was not willing, for unknown reasons, to either consult or inform MI5 of the suspension of the HOW. This is a clear depiction of Sinclair's comments during the 1927 SSC, however, in this instance, it was originating from Special Branch towards MI5.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶² Captain Miller, (New Scotland Yard), to Philips (MI5)', 16 July 1927, and 'AMT to Miller', 21 July 1927, TNA, KV 2/3059.

⁶⁶³ Superintendent Davis, 'Lockspeiser or Lockspeizer', 14 July 1927, TNA, KV 2/3059.

⁶⁶⁴ 'Home Office Warrant: Lockspiser', 28 July 1927, TNA, KV 2/3059.

⁶⁶⁵ 'MI5 to Miss Saunders (SS2)', 3 January 1930, TNA, KV 2/3059. The HOW was cancelled 'at least by January 1928', see: 'Sissmore to Miller', 9 January 1930, TNA, KV 2/3059.

⁶⁶⁶ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC, 30 June 1927, TNA, HO 532/10.

Similar limitations to the level of liaison within the intelligence and security apparatus are evident when the scope is widened to include Indian Political Intelligence. Evidence of Special Branch reports are abundant within IPIs records.⁶⁶⁷ The liaison during the investigation of Walter M Holmes, (member of the CPGB, a journalist, and associated with Ewer in running the Federated Press of America) is particularly illuminating of Special Branch's unwillingness to act further than it deemed necessary. IPI believed that someone of interest to IPI was using Holmes' address at the *Daily Herald*, to send his letters to Clemens Palme Dutt, a prominent member of the CPGB.⁶⁶⁸ Because Special Branch was not 'inclined' to extend the scope of the HOW on Holmes, it would take a total of two months for the HOW to be submitted.

On the surface, this can seem an example of Kell's observation that intelligence agencies can guard or withhold information, or investigations.⁶⁶⁹ It is unclear what Childs' motivations were in this case, however. Childs' comment regarding his lack of inclination, but no objection, suggests that Special Branch were attempting to maintain control of their investigation. From an intelligence analysis perspective, the addition of IPI's request would increase the correspondence available to Special Branch regarding Holmes, and as a result, increase the workload of separating the 'signals' from the 'noise'.⁶⁷⁰ Despite the evidence of friction in each of the previous cases, it does not appear to be a significant deterioration of the liaison between the intelligence and security apparatus. However, even the continued liaison evident in the previous cases could not withstand the damage caused by the revelation of two moles within

⁶⁶⁷ For examples of Special Branch reports sent to IPI regarding the CPGB, see: 'Copy: extract report from New Scotland Yard', 30 May 1928, British Library (BL) India Office Records (IOR) L P&J 12/381; 'Copy: extract report from New Scotland Yard', 11 December 1929, (BL) (IOR) L P&J 12/382; and 'Copy: extract report from New Scotland Yard', 30 May 1928, (BL) (IOR) L P&J 12/383.

⁶⁶⁸ 'Minute 15', 25 March 1927; and 'Minute 19', 17 May 1927, TNA, KV 2/1000.

⁶⁶⁹ V. Kell, 'Staff Lecture', 1934, Kell Papers (IWM) PP/MCR/120, p. 13.

⁶⁷⁰ Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, p. 82.

Special Branch and the ever increasing encroachment of Special Branch enquiries by MI6's casuals.

The events of April 1929, when two Special branch officers were arrested and unmasked as Soviet agents, caused significant controversy. These officers had for some years supplied information through an intelligence cell operated by the Journalist W. N. Ewer. This confirmed to SIS many long held suspicions about Special Branch and about 'Soviet penetration of official bodies'.⁶⁷¹

One line of enquiry focussed on the activities of the Federated Press of America. The revelations of the extent of the associated intelligence cell, revealed during the 2002 release of MI5's personal, KV records, caused a modern equivalent of the debate regarding the Zinoviev letter between Christopher Andrew and E. H Carr.⁶⁷² Victor Madeira, then a Ph.D. student at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, published an article regarding the exposure of the first instance of Soviet penetration of British intelligence.⁶⁷³ This article received sustained criticism in an article published by John Callaghan and Kevin Morgan, the latter article was then subject to scrutiny by both Madeira and Madeira's fellow Cambridge researcher, Kevin Quinlan.⁶⁷⁴

While each author's perspective has merit, a significant reason for their differences of opinion can be explained by their respective interpretation of what

⁶⁷¹ SIS had multiple lines of enquiry regarding Soviet penetration of official UK bodies. One such enquiry resulted from an investigation into an article published by the *Daily Telegraph*, 'Spies in Britain', which argued that Soviet spies were arranging their own spies in Government offices, see: Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 102 – 103.

⁶⁷² Andrew, 'Anglo-Soviet relations part 1'; Carr, 'The Zinoviev Letter'; and Andrew, 'More on the Zinoviev Letter'.

⁶⁷³ Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration'.

⁶⁷⁴ For the discussions of the criticism levied at Madeira's work during the Cambridge intelligence seminar series, see K. Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 215.

intelligence is. An analysis of the collective works is best accompanied by the narrative of events which unveiled the extent of the penetration of the FPA of British government circles, as well as the existence of the two Special Branch officers who were revealed to be providing intelligence to the FPA, Inspector Ginhoven and Sergeant Jane.

The investigation of the suspected activities of the FPA concentrated on a number of individuals: W. N. Ewer, Walter Dale, Arthur Lakey, Rose Cohen, Walter Holmes, and George Slocombe.⁶⁷⁵ Each of these individuals had various connections with the socialist movement, varying from delivering speeches in protest of the First World War, connections with the *Daily Herald*, and involvement in the Police Strikes.⁶⁷⁶ Although all of those connected with the FPA had come to the notice of the security apparatus before joining the FPA, attention was drawn to the group following an advertisement in the *Daily Herald*:

'NOTICE – SECRET SERVICE – Labour group carrying out investigations would be glad to receive information and details from anyone who has ever had any association with, or been brought into touch with, any Secret Service department or organisation'.⁶⁷⁷

MI5, believing that the request for information was an attempt to infiltrate government departments decided to launch its own investigation.

⁶⁷⁵ Walter Dale was an officer of the Metropolitan Police who was dismissed following the 1919 Police Strike. Dale later joined Ewer as a 'watcher', see: TNA, KV 2/997. Arthur Lakey was an officer of the Metropolitan Police who was dismissed following his involvement in the 1919 Police Strike. He acted as an enquiry agent on behalf of the FPA, and was dismissed following the ARCOS raid and the reduction in funds available to the FPA, see: TNA, KV 2/989. Rose Cohen a naturalised British citizen, originally Russian. She frequently visited the Soviet Union and was a member of the CPGB, see TNA, KV 2/1396. Walter Holmes was a journalist and longstanding member of the CPGB, and described as Ewer's chief assistant at the FPA, see: TNA, KV 2/1000. George Slocombe was a journalist and author and provided information to Ewer from his contacts in Paris, see: TNA, KV 2/485.

⁶⁷⁶ For the records of the initial investigations into those associated with the FPA reference the respective personal records. For Lakey, see: 'Scotland House HOW on Lakey, ex-Sergeant', 7 December 1921, TNA, KV 2/989; for Ewer, see: 'Clandestine Activities of William Norman Ewer, 1919 – 1929', Part I, September 1949, TNA, KV 2/1016, p. 1; for Slocombe, see: 'Precis of Further Information Re: Slocombe', 8 July 1916, TNA, KV 2/485; for Holmes, see: 'Extract from report of the Committee of the National Guilds League', 6 January 1920, TNA, KV 2/1000; and for Cohen, see: 'Extract from letter to Scotland House asking for enquiries re Rosie and Nellie Cohen mentioned in an intercept letter', 14 March 1916; TNA, KV 2/1395.

⁶⁷⁷ Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration', p. 922; Andrew, *MI5*, p.152; Jeffery, *MI6*, pp.229 – 230; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, 149.

The attempt to make contact with a representative of the FPA is an example of MI5 employing HUMINT, as opposed to relying exclusively on HOW's and intelligence passed from either Special Branch, MI6, or regional police constabularies. Although the first meeting did not result in contact being made, the surveillance team detected Walter Dale, watching the individual who arranged to meet with the FPA.⁶⁷⁸ This attempted meeting began the MI5 portion of the investigation into the activities of the FPA and involved a wide scale implementation of HOWs, the surveillance of suspects, as well as telephone checks.

The available records of the MI5 portion of the investigation are illuminating of the relatively effective relationship between MI5 and MI6 prior to the ARCOS raid. Both organisations had clear lines of demarcation and exchanged intelligence frequently. Through this investigation, MI5 and MI6 believed that Ewer was the leader of the FPA intelligence cell, and received correspondence via the cover address of 'Milton'.⁶⁷⁹ This correspondence included French political and fiscal affairs from George Slocombe, and the partnership with the Vigilance Detections Agency meant that sustained surveillance was carried out against London embassies and suspected British intelligence agents.⁶⁸⁰

Following the ARCOS raid, the FPA access to financial support was limited, significantly impacting their ability to carry out their activities. Although perceived as a wasted opportunity by Sinclair, this limitation to funding was a primary reason why MI5 was able to take advantage of an opportunity to gain intelligence on the FPA's activities

⁶⁷⁸ 'Re: Advertisement in *Daily Herald* 1 January 1925, TNA, KV 2/1101; Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration' p. 922; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 129; Andrew, *MI5*, p.152; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 149.

⁶⁷⁹ Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration', p. 922.

⁶⁸⁰ Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration', p. 922; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 170; Quinlan, *Secret War*, pp. 75 – 78; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 150

from Arthur Lakey.⁶⁸¹ Lakey was the unfortunate member of the FPA to be released following the reduction in available funds – despite the remaining members sudden resurgence under the Featherstone Typewriting Company. While numerous enquiries into the activities of those involved in FPA were yielding fewer results, the HOW on Lakey revealed his growing financial difficulties, a situation which MI5 took considerable advantage of.⁶⁸²

It was through this established connection with Lakey that MI5 was able to gain the first intelligence regarding the moles within Special Branch. Moles which, according to Lakey, had been providing Ewer with: ‘lists of suspects, subjects of mail intercept warrants, addresses of British intelligence offices and personnel, and detail of Special Branch operations’.⁶⁸³ Although Lakey did not reveal the identities of the moles in Special Branch, further investigation into the FPA, as well as the procurement of Dale’s diary, allowed them to identify Inspector Ginhoven, and Sergeant Jane.⁶⁸⁴

One aspect of the criticism levied at Madeira was the suggestion that the FPA was a communist international Comintern front.⁶⁸⁵ Morgan and Callaghan cite evidence that portrays the existence of the American counterpart of their company to support the view that the FPA was, in fact, a legitimate organisation and not merely a front for Comintern activities.⁶⁸⁶ The London branch of the FPA was ‘one of “a far flung network of bureaus, setting up reciprocal relations with labor newspapers and correspondents around the world”’.⁶⁸⁷ Morgan and Callaghan emphasise their opinion

⁶⁸¹ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 123.

⁶⁸² ‘Minute 39’, 21 May 1928, TNA, KV 2/989.

⁶⁸³ ‘Note by Mr Harker on his interview with Allen’, 1 August 1928, TNA, KV 2/989; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 123; Madeira, ‘Moscow’s interwar infiltration’ p. 928; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 173; and Andrew, *MI5*, p.157.

⁶⁸⁴ ‘Copy of Dale’s Diary’, Books 1, 2 and 3, 29 April 1929, TNA, KV 2/997.

⁶⁸⁵ Morgan and Callaghan, ‘Open Conspiracy’, pp. 557 – 560.

⁶⁸⁶ Morgan and Callaghan, ‘Open Conspiracy’, pp. 558 – 559.

⁶⁸⁷ Morgan and Callaghan, ‘Open Conspiracy’, p. 560.

regarding the legitimate status of the FPA: the 'Federated Press was a considerable news agency and now a mere front for Ewer's or anybody else's espionage activities'.⁶⁸⁸

It is clear from the latter reference that the core difference can be explained by definition. The use of a 'front' suggests that the activities of the host organisation are illegitimate, and exist purely for the protection it affords to those conducting illicit or illegal activities. However, a change in the terminology employed can dramatically change the connotations associate with Madeira's original statement. Instead of front, if Ewer and his associates are considering to be using the FPA as a form of cover, 'notional cover', the two respective opinions appear dramatically more compatible. Notional cover can involve the establishment of front companies, but it can also involve the use of cover stories and false identities.⁶⁸⁹ The use of notional cover does not delegitimise the FPA, but suggests that those using notional cover utilised the position of the FPA to carry out intelligence operations.

The second area of disagreement revolves around the validity of the evidence contained within MI5's records. Callaghan and Morgan reference the poor quality of a large volume of the intelligence gathered by the intelligence and security apparatus. Callaghan and Morgan cite the numerous instances, during the 1920s that 'the spooks were often wrong about the detail or significance of developments within the CPGB and the Comintern, even when something of import was happening'.⁶⁹⁰ Madeira's own

⁶⁸⁸ Morgan and Callaghan, 'Open Conspiracy', p. 560.

⁶⁸⁹ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 66; and G. Miller, 'Shades of Cover', *LA Times*, 16 July 2005, <http://articles.latimes.com/2005/jul/16/nation/na-cia16> [Accessed 17 March 2016].

⁶⁹⁰ Morgan and Callaghan, 'Open Conspiracy', p. 560; and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, 'State Surveillance of the CPGB', pp. 19 – 23.

perspective supports this conclusion: 'disinformation and outright falsehoods frequently passed for intelligence in these years'.⁶⁹¹

Quinlan interjects and compensates for the inaccuracy of intelligence by highlighting that when interviewed, in 1950, that Ewer expressly admitted it.⁶⁹² It would appear that Callaghan and Morgan's main thrust, in this portion of their argument, revolves around the use of the intelligence presented in the early portion of record surrounding the FPA. Callaghan and Morgan are somewhat critical of what they interpret to be Madeira's faithful pursuit of MI5's narrative. This perspective raises two observations relating to the fragmentary nature of intelligence, and the majority of references utilised by Madeira.⁶⁹³

With regards to the fragmentary nature of intelligence, Callaghan and Morgan are quite right. It is somewhat foolhardy to blindly follow the official record of an investigation, particularly one conducted by a government department which has employed secrecy to such a degree and for so long a period. However, a far more serious criticism of the official record is the considerable reductions made to each of the respective records. With reference Ewer's personal record, KV 2/1016, nineteen volumes were condensed into two. Further supporting this, the minute pages of Ewer's record, as well as those of those connected with the FPA, had substantial portions of their records destroyed – often with a small fraction of what was originally contained remaining. Although there are legitimate preservation reasons behind performing such

⁶⁹¹ Morgan and Callaghan, 'Open Conspiracy', p. 560.

⁶⁹² Harker, 'Interview with Allen', 23 October 1928, TNA, KV 2/989; 'Statement made by A. Allen corroborating MI5 circumstantial evidence that W. N. Ewer is a Soviet Agent', 8 January 1930, TNA, KV 2/1016, pp. 1 – 3; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 74.

⁶⁹³ Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2.

a cull of an official record, it greatly reduces the ability of any researcher to retrace and recreate the investigation conducted in order to come to an accurate interpretation.

Moreover, neither Callaghan and Morgan nor Madeira and Quinlan make reference to the omission of Special Branch's records relating to the FPA. Although it has been ascertained that a large quantity of Special Branch records became MI5 records following the 1931 transfer, Special Branch still retain an unknown quantity of their original records. Although these records are not indicated through catalogue records, evidence within MI5 records of active investigations into Holmes, as discussed above, as well as Slocombe, prove that some official record should exist, but is currently unavailable. Having access to an adjacent record would greatly aid in clarifying the narrative portrayed through the MI5 record, providing a much more accurate perspective.

A final area of disagreement revolves around Ewer's public stance as 'an open Communist of international repute, and that, when questioned later, Ewer only admitted to performing activities that were purely 'counter'.⁶⁹⁴ Quinlan rejects this assertion with the comments of Maxwell Knight, the leader of MI6's casuals, who was transferred to MI5 in 1931. Knight remarked: 'It is quite impossible to run a counter-espionage organisation of this kind without performing acts which are to all intents and purposes 'espionage' or entirely 'counter'.⁶⁹⁵ While Quinlan accurately highlights that even if Ewer's actions were entirely counter-intelligence, this can still yield valuable

⁶⁹⁴ Morgan and Callaghan, 'Open Conspiracy', p. 560.

⁶⁹⁵ Harker, 'Interview with Allen', 23 October 1928, TNA, KV 2/989; 'Statement made by A. Allen corroborating MI5 circumstantial evidence that W. N. Ewer is a Soviet Agent', 8 January 1930, TNA, KV 2/1016, pp. 1 – 3; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 74.

information of the operational and methodical practices of target intelligence and security organisations.⁶⁹⁶ Again, the initial cause for this disagreement is definition.

In this matter, as well as the use of terminology to describe Ewer's connection with the FPA, a historical application when using intelligence terminology is essential. The 'then and now' approach to intelligence theory permits the articulation of terms which take into consideration that those being analysed had little or no understanding of the terms they are being accredited as using. For instance, Ewer's statement that the disagreement between Knight and Ewer on the 'counter' nature of his work with the FPA may not refer to counter intelligence as Knight, or an intelligence theorist may interpret it. Instead, it likely refers to a defensive component of foreign intelligence. In either case, a more fluid approach to intelligence theory, and the use of terminology is essential to appreciate what may have been implied during a historical study.⁶⁹⁷

It is evident that, in Ewer's perspective, conducting acts of espionage would have been far more severe than conducting counter-intelligence.⁶⁹⁸ Ewer interpreted his actions as a defensive measure; however, adequate counter-intelligence is an essential component of any intelligence operation. Despite this agreement, having access to active Special Branch operations, as well as the activities of the Vigilance Detection Agency, supports an interpretation of active intelligence gathering as well as counterintelligence. This is supplemented by Ewer's role as Foreign Editor of the *Daily Herald*. Although the information privy to Ewer in such scenarios was definitely OSINT – freely available – it would have allowed Ewer to give significant insight and

⁶⁹⁶ Harker, 'Interview with Allen', 23 October 1928, TNA, KV 2/989; 'Statement made by A. Allen corroborating MI5 circumstantial evidence that W. N. Ewer is a Soviet Agent', 8 January 1930, TNA, KV 2/1016, pp. 1 – 3; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 74.

⁶⁹⁷ Harker, 'Interview with Allen', 23 October 1928, TNA, KV 2/989; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 74.

⁶⁹⁸ 'Clandestine Activities of William Norman Ewer, 1919 – 1929', September 1949, TNA, KV 2/1016

context to supplement the more secret aspects of the intelligence provided to the Soviet Union.

This period witnessed a maintenance of the status quo, rather than a severe breakdown of liaison. Although the SSC was presented with further evidence for the need to reform, following the uncoordinated raid on ARCOS, it opted to wait for a collapse rather than act in a preventative manner. This choice is further reinforcement for the view of the SSC taking a reactive approach to intelligence reform. This reactive, 'fire-alarm', approach, and the limited scope given for the investigations was one of the key components of the weaknesses within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus.⁶⁹⁹ The failure to address the evident flaws within this organisation can be traced back to the appointment of Carter as Deputy Assistant Commissioner (C), in 1922 rather than continue the search for a more preferable candidate. This was further reinforced by the failure to monitor developments within Special Branch until the review during the 1925 SSC.

The continued unwillingness to push through reform during the 1927 SSC, either in the exchange of responsibilities or in the control of records permitted the poor liaison, and the infiltration of the security apparatus. This already weak state of liaison and oversight permitted MI6 to resort to operating its own intelligence network within the UK – an act condemned by the Foreign Secretary during the creation of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1919, and repeated periodically during the meetings of the SSC.⁷⁰⁰ The perceived encroachment on the jurisdiction of Special Branch led to

⁶⁹⁹ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 79; and Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 165 – 179.

⁷⁰⁰ 'Foreign Office to Troup', 23 April 1919, TNA, HO 144/1590/380368

a final breach in the relationship between Special Branch and MI6. Rather than a measured approach to intelligence reform, the SSC was forced to react to the fire-alarm of the breakdown of communications.

Chapter Eight. A Transfer of Power? Britain's security apparatus, and the 1931 Secret Service Committee.

The friction within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus culminated, in 1931, with a meeting of the SSC. The meeting that preceded 1931, 1927, followed a similar pattern to the meeting in 1925. The attendees would meet, interview various members of the intelligence and security apparatus, and assess the demarcation of responsibilities and debate varying plans for amalgamation. The SSC consisted of three separate meetings in 1931, the first was held 27 April, the second 11 June, and the final meeting on 22 June.⁷⁰¹ Each of these meetings was chaired by Sir John Anderson, representing the Home Office; Sir Robert Vansittart, representing the Foreign Office; Sir Warren Fisher, representing the Treasury; and Sir Maurice Hankey acting as Secretary.

The meetings in 1931, much like the meeting a decade earlier, which presided over the dissolution of the Directorate of Intelligence, was the precursor to actual change to Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. This change is regarded as the defining moment when the 'modern form' of Britain's security apparatus was established.⁷⁰² This definition identifies the responsibilities for foreign intelligence

⁷⁰¹ 'Secret Service Committee, 1931', 24 June 1931 TNA FO 1093/71 p. 1.

⁷⁰² The 'modern form' of Britain's security apparatus refers to MI5 being responsible for intelligence duties within the UK and SIS responsible for foreign intelligence. See: K. Jeffery, *MI6*, pp. 235 – 236. See also: Quinlan, *Secret War*, pp. 12 – 14; Madeira, 'No Wishful Thinking Allowed', p. 1; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129; Andrew, *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*, pp. 36 – 363; Thurlow, *Secret State*, pp. 142 – 143; Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp. 253 – 254; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, pp. 168 – 174; J. Clark, *The National Council For Civil Liberties and the Policing of Interwar Politics*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012) p.40; Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 132 – 134; Allason, *The Branch*, pp. 94 – 95; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70; Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, pp. 7 – 8; and Curry, *Security Service*, pp. 101 – 103; and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, 'State surveillance and Communist lives: Rose Cohen and the Early British Communist Milieu', *Journal of Intelligence History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2013), p.136.

collection were delegated to MI6, MI5 became responsible for investigating all communist subversion, and Special Branch, although retaining a counter-terrorism function, 'became the police arm', or the 'foot soldiers' of MI5.⁷⁰³

However, a reassessment of the meeting, and the subsequent years that followed, reveals that the impact of these changes has been exaggerated. Significantly, the extent to which MI5, or the Security Service as it was also known from this point, became the leading department tasked with internal security is questionable. Instead, the transfer of power only related to the analysis and dissemination roles. This left Special Branch as an integral component of the intelligence mechanism, retaining its intelligence role within the Metropolitan district, and its plethora of duties relating to public order, and counter-terrorism.

In order to explore this reassessment of the transfer of power to MI5, this chapter will look, in detail, at the established narrative of the meeting of the SSC and what it portrays as the outcome. This will then be contrasted with an assessment, based on the available primary records. This will be supplemented with an examination of what policy makers and security officials defined as internal security, or, as Vernon Kell labelled it, 'home security'.⁷⁰⁴ The analysis will then broaden to assess the impact of these changes on the outer reaches of Britain's security apparatus; specifically, the role of the police and Special Branch. This will be achieved by exploring the practical impact of these changes on active investigations. This will include an analysis of the investigations conducted into the Young Communist League (YCL) and the National

⁷⁰³ For the reference that Special Branch became the 'foot soldiers' of MI5, see P. Gill, '*Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom*', p. 269; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70. For the reference that the Special Branch became the 'police arm' of MI5, see Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 143; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 169; and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, 'State surveillance and Communist lives', p.136.

⁷⁰⁴ Minutes of the Fourth meeting of the SSC 10 March 1925, TNA, FO 1093 68, pp. 2 – 6.

Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM), which the current historiography, because of their associations with the CPGB, would portray as the remit of MI5.

The historiography of the 1931 SSC meeting broadly agrees that duties relating to internal security were transferred from Special Branch to MI5.⁷⁰⁵ Although there is agreement on the overall result, there is some disagreement regarding the background narrative that influenced the meeting to take place. The most distinct claim originates from Calder Walton – a research assistant for the *Authorised History of MI5*.⁷⁰⁶ Walton claims that the impetus for the 1931 SSC meeting was a ‘turf war within Whitehall over intelligence matters ... [in which] the London Special Branch, led by its eccentric head Sir Basil Thomson, essentially attempted to take over MI5’.⁷⁰⁷ Although the claims that Basil Thomson was eccentric and attempted to take over MI5 are accurate, it did not occur in 1931. The 1931 meeting of the SSC marked the ten-year anniversary of Thomson’s fall from grace in 1921.⁷⁰⁸

A different account is presented in Andrew’s *Authorised History*. Andrew depicts the actions of Colonel Carter as the reason for the rupture of relations. Andrew recounts that ‘by the summer of 1930 ... both Special Branch and MI5 had discovered what SIS was up to – that MI6 was controlling Maxwell Knight and supporting the

⁷⁰⁵ Jeffery, *MI6*, p.235 – 236. See also: Quinlan, *Secret War*, pp. 12 – 14; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129; Andrew, *On Her Majesty’s Secret Service*, pp. 360 – 363; Thurlow, *Secret State*, pp. 142 – 143; Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp. 253 – 254; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 168 – 174; Bennett, *Churchill’s*, p. 132 – 134; Allason, *The Branch*, p. 94 – 95; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70; Hinsley and Simkins, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*, pp. 7. – 8; and Curry, *Security Service*, pp. 101 – 103.

⁷⁰⁶ See: <http://www.calderwalton.com/#education-and-employment-2>, [accessed 26 May 2016].

⁷⁰⁷ C. Walton, *Empire of Secrets: British Intelligence, The Cold War and The Twilight of Empire*, (London: Harper Press, 2013) p. 23.

⁷⁰⁸ For information relating to Thomson’s bid for power, see: Andrew, *MI5*, p. 106 – 109; and Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p.146, and Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 377; and Minute of the Meeting between E. Shortt, B. Thomson and W. Horwood, 8 November, 1920 TNA HO 144/1590 380368.

operation of the casuists in the UK. Andrew describes that Carter 'had Knight under observation ... [and] attempted to frighten M K [Maxwell Knight] off doing his work for Major Morton or anybody else, by suggesting that he [Carter] could make his [Knight's] life and that of his agents a misery'.⁷⁰⁹ Although Andrew's account moves closer to accuracy, he does identify Carter as part of SS1.⁷¹⁰ Carter was, in fact, Deputy Assistant Commissioner (C). This role placed him in operational control of Special Branch. Although Childs, while Assistant Commissioner (C), had made all sections, SS1, SS2 and Special Branch equal, Carter had been placed in charge of the department, as a whole, when Lord Byng became Commissioner of the metropolitan Police in 1928.⁷¹¹

Although Andrew and Dilks both lamented on the neglect shown to intelligence in 'political and much military history' the same level of neglect is shown to the police in intelligence history.⁷¹² While Andrew and Dilks afforded AJP Taylor an excuse for following 'a precedent among modern historians' the same excuse can be afforded to Andrew and modern intelligence historians.⁷¹³ The same neglect is evident when an Assistant Commissioner is referred to in intelligence histories. Although their role as an Assistant Commissioner, the department to which they belong is frequently absent which undermines a greater understanding of their importance. This underscores the importance of clarifying Carter's positions. As Deputy Assistant Commissioner (C), Carter continued in his role as head of the Special Branch. However, if Carter had been part of SS1 he would have been transferred to MI5 following the decision of SSC.

⁷⁰⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129.

⁷¹⁰ Andrew, *MI5*, pp. 128 – 129.

⁷¹¹ 'Notes on the working of S.S.1', 26 June 1931, TNA, FO 1093/74.

⁷¹² Andrew and Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 1.

⁷¹³ The excuse afforded to Taylor was a result of his failure to include the heads of the intelligence services in his '875 page survey of *English History*'. See: Andrew and Dilks, *The Missing Dimension*, p. 1.

Andrew does not allude that his information has come from a classified MI5 archive, but from the work of former Chief Historian to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Gill Bennet. Bennett goes into greater detail than Andrew, but supports the view that it was disagreements between Carter and MI6's employment of Maxwell Knight that caused the rupture of relations. Significantly, Bennett emphasises the one sided nature of the information relating to the conflict between Carter and MI6. Bennett states:

It is hard to estimate the degree of credence we should attach to this and other account of Knight's dealing with both Carter and Morton. The latter certainly seemed concerned to portray Carter as a blustering fool with dangerous political views antithetic to the efficient operation of secret intelligence.⁷¹⁴

As a result of this chance of unreliability, the recollections of Morton, must be treated carefully.

Jeffery's history of MI6 offers more balanced perspective. While efforts were underway to improve the liaison between Special Branch and MI6 – a number of months after Carter's confrontation with Morton - the operation of the casuals within the United Kingdom had come to the attention of Sir John Anderson, the Home Office Under-Secretary, who intervened. Anderson summoned Sinclair to a meeting at the Home Office in January 1931. Sinclair was questioned about the 'small organisation', which Anderson recalled from the 1925 SSC, which was designed for the purpose of "checking certain items of C's information from abroad". It now appeared that it "was expanding and as such was proving a source of grave embarrassment for the Home Office".⁷¹⁵ Following a series of accusations, and attempts by Sinclair to defend MI6's position, Anderson suggested that he would convene another meeting with 'Vansittart,

⁷¹⁴ Bennett, *Churchill's*, p. 131.

⁷¹⁵ Jeffery, *MI6*, p.233-234; and Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, FO 1093/68, pp. 9 – 10.

... Kell Trevor Bingham, and Sinclair, “in order that there might be no more misunderstanding in regard to this matter”.⁷¹⁶

Jeffery further describes that it was the actions of Sir Trevor Bingham (Assistant Commissioner C) who caused the final rupture. Bingham, allegedly, ‘unilaterally decided to dispense with the service of the officer who had jointly run the two agencies’ registers for the previous two years’.⁷¹⁷ Believing that this was an attempt to destroy a valuable system, based on previous recommendations of the SSC, Sinclair complained to Vansittart that he would not be held responsible for failures which arose as a result.⁷¹⁸

Overall, there were three distinct reasons why the SSC was resurrected: Anderson’s dismay at the actions of MI6 and the embarrassment it caused the Home Office, Sinclair’s complaints to Vansittart regarding the actions of Bingham; and Carter’s protestations about MI6’s employment of Maxwell Knight. It is intriguing that Jeffery presents the actions of Bingham as the reason for the rupture of relations – considering that this would present MI6 in a more favourable light.⁷¹⁹

Similar is also true of Curry’s *Official History* which presents the breakdown of relations as a matter concerning MI5-MI6 relations.⁷²⁰ It is difficult to accept the arguments presented by Bennett and Andrew due to the limitations of supporting evidence. However, attempting to manoeuvre the bias, it is possible to decipher a likely scenario.

⁷¹⁶ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 234.

⁷¹⁷ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 235.

⁷¹⁸ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 235

⁷¹⁹ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 234 – 235.

⁷²⁰ Curry, *Security Service*, p. 101.

The appraisal of Carter's protests regarding Morton's employment of Knight and the casualties are likely to have been exaggerated. But it is plausible that Carter did feel anger towards MI6's encroachment into his area of responsibility, and raised particular objection to the possibility that Knight had attempted to enlist the services of civil servants.⁷²¹ It was this interaction between civil servants and the Casuals that raised the attention of Anderson. The meeting between Anderson and Sinclair led to the resurrection of the SSC. However, the breakdown regarding the registry acted as a catalyst for the members of the SSC to be convinced that change was necessary.

The second matter of disagreement is the actual details as to what was transferred to MI5. The earliest details of the transfer were presented by Andrew in *Secret Service* (1984). Andrew relayed Kell's recollection that MI5 took control of 'all Scotland Yard intelligence'.⁷²² This viewpoint, that MI5 assumed control of Scotland Yard's intelligence function is further supported by Curry's *Official History*, which described the transfer of "intelligence duties connected with civil security."⁷²³ Curry elaborates further by identifying that 'Irish and anarchist matters were to remain with Special Branch', and that MI5 were to take 'responsibility for the previously done in ... connection with Communism'.⁷²⁴

As has been commented by numerous historians, official records are not always an analogue of reality, and, in many cases, have to be treated with caution.⁷²⁵ However, due to the secretive nature of many of the individuals involved in the SSC

⁷²¹ Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 234.

⁷²² Holt Wilson, 'Security Intelligence in War', 1934, Imperial War Museum (IWM), The papers of Sir Vernon Kell, MSS. See also: Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* p. 362.

⁷²³ Curry, *The Security Service*, p. 101; and T. Hennessey and C. Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 234.

⁷²⁴ Curry, *The Security Service*, p.101.

⁷²⁵ Aldrich, "Grow your own" p. 148. See also Aldrich, *The Hidden Hand* p. 6; Moran, *Classified: Secrecy and the State in Modern Britain*, p. 18; Baxter and Jeffrey, 'Intelligence and Official History', p. 290; and P. Gill, 'Reasserting control: Recent changes in the oversight of the UK intelligence community', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 11, No. 2, (1996), pp. 313 – 331.

meeting, it is a necessary recourse to rely upon the Foreign Office record of the meeting. Being the only publicly available record of the 1931 SSC meeting, and likely the only record considering the lack of citations to other sources in the various official and authorised histories, its value increases significantly. However, there are a number of questions that the record does not answer.

The first of these questions is the considerations and thoughts of those who were assessing the evidence presented to them by the various members of the intelligence and security apparatus. This includes any consideration of the discovery, in 1929, of two members of Special Branch who were providing intelligence to the Ewer cell.⁷²⁶ Although Andrew and others have attached a great amount of significance to this event in 'fatally compromising' Special Branch's position, there is no evidence contained within the official record to confirm or refute this perspective.⁷²⁷

Another aspect absent from the record is the consideration given to the role of MI6 in overreaching any jurisdictional agreement. Although Anderson is alleged to have questioned Sinclair regarding this matter prior to the SSC there is no inclination how this factored into the committee's decision to transfer responsibilities to MI5. In the notes of the SSC meetings, no mention is made of the evidence provided by Kell or Sinclair. Unlike previous meetings, there is no record of the individual times that the SSC met. Instead, this report appears to be a retrospective appraisal of events – a scenario which would likely account for the absence of certain details and the precedence of others.

⁷²⁶ Andrew, *MI5*, p.129; Madeira, *Britannia*, p. 171; V. Madeira, 'Moscow's interwar infiltration', pp. 915 – 933; Bennett, *Churchill's*, pp. 122 – 127; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, pp. 74 – 77.

⁷²⁷ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129.

The majority of recent works which address the 1931 SSC further contribute to the details of the transfer. They all identify that ‘SS1 and its responsibilities were transferred to MI5’.⁷²⁸ However, the details of what SS1 and its responsibilities were are somewhat vague and have been presented to infer multiple roles in various investigations. Andrew presents SS1 and its transfer as meaning the transfer of responsibility of ‘countering communist subversion’.⁷²⁹ Quinlan supports this view claiming that following the reorganisation in 1931, MI5 became ‘Britain’s primary domestic and imperial security intelligence service’.⁷³⁰ Hennessey and Thomas present the transfer of ‘intelligence duties connected with civil security’, while Jeffery – due to his work being an authorised history of MI6 – adds a more MI6 focus on the events: ‘MI6 was stripped’ of the casuals which were ‘transferred to MI5’.⁷³¹

Together these works identify that responsibilities and capabilities were taken from Special Branch and MI6 and transferred to MI5. A common feature in the analysis of the 1931 transfer of power is a reference to Anderson’s remarks, during the committee, that ‘there would thus be only two organisations dealing with secret service work, C covering foreign countries and MI5 the Empire’.⁷³² Yet, no attempt to examine what Anderson actually defined as secret service work has been made.

The implications of this lack of exploration are great, especially considering the lack of clarity of the functions were transferred from the Special Branch. These implications are compounded when the inherent neglect towards the study of the police and its respective role within Britain’s security apparatus is considered. This

⁷²⁸ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129; Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 236 and Bennett, *Churchill’s*, p. 133.

⁷²⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p.129.

⁷³⁰ Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 14.

⁷³¹ Hennessey and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 253; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 235.

⁷³² This comment was made by John Anderson at the third meeting of the SSC, 22 June 1931. See SSC, 1931, p. 2, TNA, FO 1093/74. For its use in the secondary literature, see: Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 236; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129; Bennett, *Churchill’s*, p. 133; and Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 14.

neglect has led many to assume that, following the transfer of SS1 in 1931, MI5 assumed a preeminent position within the intelligence and security apparatus. Another result of this neglect is the interpretation that Special Branch assumed a subservient role within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. This neglect, or in some cases reliance on received wisdom, extends to studies in which the Special Branch is the focus.⁷³³ When accounting for Special Branch's role following 1931, Wilson and Adams claim that the transfer of SS1 'did not reduce SB's [Special Branch] workload; in fact, the reverse was the case ... [because] MI5 ... had no executive powers and no extra staff to cope with the extra work.'⁷³⁴

This is referred to in the broader analysis of the development of Britain's security apparatus as Special Branch becoming the 'foot soldiers of MI5'.⁷³⁵ Yet, following the 1931 reorganisation, Special Branch, and, possibly more importantly, the Chief Constables of the UK's police forces retained their previous duties. While Wilson and Adams have highlighted that Special Branch continued investigations following 1931, their interpretation of MI5's relationship with Special Branch is somewhat flawed. This is a likely result of a hierarchical approach to British security. However, the independence of Special Branch, and the responsibility of the police as a whole for their respective regions, suggests that a network approach would be more appropriate. The neglect to notice this feature, in the broader literature, is a combination of the above; but, crucially, a misinterpretation as to what Anderson and the committee understood to be the functions of both SS1 and Maxwell Knight's Casuals. In order to

⁷³³ Ferris, 'The Road to Bletchley Park', p. 53; Lomas, '*Intelligence, Security and the Attlee Governments*' p. 2; D.W.B. Lomas, 'Labour Ministers, Intelligence, and domestic anti-Communism, 1945 - 1951', *Journal of Intelligence History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (2013), p. 114; and Ferris, 'The Road to Bletchley Park' p. 53

⁷³⁴ Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70.

⁷³⁵ Gill, '*Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom*', p. 269; A similar perspective is displayed in Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 143; and Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 169.

remove this confusion, a greater understanding of SS1, the casuals, and what Anderson implied by Secret Service is essential.

As is present in the literature, and the official record of the 1931 SSC meeting, SS1 was a sub-section within the Metropolitan Police Special Branch. Its primary duty was 'the liaison office on foreign revolutionary matters between Special Branch and the Home Office, on the one hand, and the Special Intelligence Section of the Foreign Office [MI6] on the other'.⁷³⁶ As well as this, SS1 was also responsible for supervising revolutionary propagandists abroad, interviewing informants and agents regarding revolutionary movements and individuals, examining 'passport applications ... of suspects of alien origin', advising 'the Home Office re the exclusion of aliens [who were] politically undesirable'. SS1 also exchanged information with MI5 on politically undesirable individuals who were engaged in 'military, naval, or air espionage', and exchanged with SIS information regarding revolutionary movements with foreign countries and the Empire.⁷³⁷ Maxwell Knight's Casuals, as understood by Anderson, was created to check C's information from abroad.⁷³⁸ Sinclair explained his need for MI6 to operate agents within the UK because neither MI5 nor Special Branch employed agents, or were able to clarify details he deemed essential, during the 1925 SSC meeting.⁷³⁹

Together, the transfer of these two sections did not amount to a great transfer of intelligence gathering responsibility or capability. A noted transfer included Captains Liddell and Miller – referred to as Special Branch's leading experts on communism.

⁷³⁶ 'The work of SS1 Branch', TNA, FO 1093/74, p. 1.

⁷³⁷ 'The work of SS1 Branch', TNA, FO 1093/74, p. 1 – 3.

⁷³⁸ Jeffery, *MI6*, p.233 – 234.

⁷³⁹ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC', 2 March 1925, TNA, FO 1093/68, pp. 9 – 10.

Although they did have twelve years worth of experience, which encompassed working for Thomson's Directorate of Intelligence and Special Branch, their only active intelligence gathering role was interviewing informants. Although academic investigations highlight this as substantial, the assessment of SS1, and Special Branch as a whole in 1925 was believed by Sinclair to be insufficient to clarify the intelligence he was gathering from abroad.⁷⁴⁰

Knight's casuals, on the other hand, did involve capability for active intelligence collection. Yet, if the information Morton and Sinclair provided to Anderson prior to the SSC is to be taken as fact, this network of casuals, including Knight, amounted to five individuals.⁷⁴¹ Instead, the great increase in responsibility, which came with the transfer of SS1, and Knight's Casuals related to the roles of intelligence analysis and dissemination.

The importance of analysis cannot be underestimated, with insufficient evidence; the final intelligence product cannot be effective in influencing further operations or adequately influencing policymakers.⁷⁴² However, it is clear that the references to 'Scotland Yard's intelligence' and 'intelligence duties relating to civil security' actually refer Special Branch's role as an analyser and disseminator of intelligence.⁷⁴³ This notion is validated by the breakdown of SS1's role presented to

⁷⁴⁰ Minutes of the Second Meeting of the SSC, 2 March 1925, TNA, FO 1093/68, pp. 9 – 10.

⁷⁴¹ This is compared to the 134 officers which Special Branch employed for its operations.

⁷⁴² S. Lefebvre, 'A Look at Intelligence Analysis', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 2, (2004), pp. 231 – 264; W. Odom, 'Intelligence Analysis', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (2008); p. 316 – 323; L. Johnson, 'Analysis for a new age', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 11, No. 4, (1996), pp. 657 – 671; and R. Betts, 'Analysis War, and Decision: Why intelligence Failures Are Inevitable', *World Politics*, Vol. 31, No. 1, (1978), pp. 61 – 89.

⁷⁴³ For the reference to 'Scotland Yard Intelligence', see Holt Wilson, 'Security Intelligence in War', 1934, IWM, The papers of Sir Vernon Kell, MSS. C. Andrew, *Secret Service*, p. 362; and for 'intelligence duties relating to civil security', see Curry, *The Security Service* p. 101; and Hennessy and Thomas, *Spooks*, p. 254.

the SSC.⁷⁴⁴ The intelligence analysis role is evident in multiple functions, but stands out in the role of examiner of revolutionary propagandists.⁷⁴⁵

The role of intelligence dissemination is connected with this analysis and the role of SS1 as the liaison office for the Home Office and MI6.⁷⁴⁶ However, in the broader records of what followed the 1931 SSC, it is apparent that another role connected with intelligence dissemination was also transferred: Cabinet reports. From 1917 Basil Thomson had been providing Cabinet members, as well as prominent MPs, with intelligence reports relating to what was considered to be leading threats.⁷⁴⁷ These ranged from pacifism, revolutionary movements, and industrial disputes. Following the dissolution of the Directorate of Intelligence, and Thomson's resignation, Special Branch, under the supervision of Sir Wyndham Childs and Sir Trevor Bingham – while Assistant Commissioner (C) - continued this role. In Carter and Kell's communications with the Chief Constables of the UK, both inform that MI5 would be taking on this duty.⁷⁴⁸ Carter emphasises how this transfer would not involve changes in 'duties of this or other Police Forces as regards any executive actions ... and where it is desired that any information be taken by the Metropolitan Police, as distinct from the supply or interchange of information, the request should be addressed to the Special Branch'.⁷⁴⁹

Carter's comments raise another interesting fact surrounding the 1931 transfer of responsibilities from Special Branch to MI5: lack of official recognition. Although numerous historians have suggested that official recognition was oral instead of

⁷⁴⁴ 'Notes on the working of S.S.1', 26 June 1931, TNA, FO 1093/74.

⁷⁴⁵ 'The work of SS1 Branch', p.1 TNA FO 1093/74.

⁷⁴⁶ 'The work of SS1 Branch', p.1 TNA FO 1093/74.

⁷⁴⁷ Thomson, *The Scene Changes*, p. 387.

⁷⁴⁸ J.F.C Carter to Chief Constables, 14 August 1931, TNA, KV 4/126; and V. Kell to Chief Constables, 2 November, 1931, TNA, KV 4/126.

⁷⁴⁹ J.F.C Carter to Chief Constables, 14 August 1931, TNA, KV 4/126.

written, it is noted as a strange feature.⁷⁵⁰ This lack of official written recognition was raised as early as 1933 when Holt-Wilson commented that the 'General Staff, and the War Office as a whole, did not possess a single scrap to which they could refer in support of' MI5's takeover of 'certain Civil Duties from the Metropolitan Police'.⁷⁵¹ Although it is reasonable, as Wilson's note suggests, to utilise Carter's letter to Chief Constables as a proof of when the transfer occurred, the lack of official documentation is an anomaly.

The difference between what historians have interpreted as being transferred and what was actually transferred reinforces the perspective that a more fluid approach to intelligence theory is necessary. Although there have been numerous attempts to define intelligence or security, there has been no attempt to create a theory that takes into account how intelligence was defined in the past.⁷⁵² The above case provides a suitable example. Many accounts of the 1931 SSC reference Anderson's remarks that there will be 'only two organisations dealing with Secret Service work, C covering foreign countries, and MI5, the Empire'.⁷⁵³ It is evident that by the volume of works which imply that MI5 became the dominant internal security department following 1931 that the term 'secret service work' has been interpreted as all matters relating to counterintelligence generally.⁷⁵⁴ However, considering the previous analysis of the responsibilities of SS1 and MI6's Casuals, it is logical to assume that

⁷⁵⁰ Curry, *Security Service*, p. 102; Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, pp. 129 – 130; Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 14, Hennessy and Thomas, *Spooks*, pp. 253 – 254.

⁷⁵¹ 'Holt-Wilson to Major Philips', 5 January 1933, TNA, KV 4/126.

⁷⁵² Marrin, 'Adding value to the intelligence product' pp. 199 – 211; L. Johnson, 'Bricks and Mortar for a Theory of Intelligence', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 22, No. 1, (2003), pp. 1 – 28; A. Breakspear, 'A New Definition of Intelligence', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 28, No. 5, (2013), pp. 678 – 693; T. Troy, 'The Correct definition of intelligence', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 5, No. 4, (1991), pp. 433 – 454.

⁷⁵³ 'Secret Service Committee, 1931', 24 June 1931, TNA, FO 1093/74, p. 2; see also Andrew, *MI5*, p. 129; Bennett, *Churchill's*, p.133; and Jeffery, *MI6*, p. 235

⁷⁵⁴ 'Secret Service Committee, 1931', 24 June 1931, TNA, FO 1093/74, p. 2.

by 'Secret Service work' Anderson was referring to MI6's foreign intelligence role, and the role of checking MI6's intelligence with domestic sources.⁷⁵⁵

This same logic can be applied to Vernon Kell's comments that MI5 took over 'Scotland Yard Intelligence'.⁷⁵⁶ While Kell may have been using the term 'intelligence' loosely, it could also refer to the distinction between whether it is the post-analysis product that becomes intelligence and whether it is apt to utilise the term intelligence when referring to the initial collection phase.⁷⁵⁷

While this can seem a rather pedantic debate, it has rather significant implications for an analysis of the relative importance of those engaged in maintaining British security. If the former definition is used, that analysis is required to create intelligence, then it could be argued that the increase in MI5's responsibilities did elevate its importance significantly. The validity of this interpretation is largely dependent on the method of collection. If, for example, the focus is drawn to MI5's main recourse for intelligence: postal interception, the role of analysis is somewhat high. The information contained within the intercepted correspondence would have been to be cross-referenced to others, or applied to an existed case file before its true significance could be appreciated.

However, if the method of collection under consideration is surveillance, it would be flawed to view intelligence in such a segmented manner. Using the examples offered by the surveillance of the police, it is true that intelligence did pass through departments, intelligence was collected by Chief Constables, Sergeants or Inspectors,

⁷⁵⁵ 'Secret Service Committee, 1931', 24 June 1931, TNA, FO 1093/74, p. 2.

⁷⁵⁶ Holt Wilson, 'Security Intelligence in War', 1934, Imperial War Museum (IWM), The papers of Sir Vernon Kell, MSS. C. Andrew, *Secret Service* p. 362.

⁷⁵⁷ Marrin, 'Adding value to the intelligence product', pp. 199 – 211; Byman, 'Strategic Surprise and the September 11 attacks', pp. 164 – 168; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 82 - 101; and Betts, 'Analysis, War, and Decision: Why Intelligence Failures are Inevitable', pp. 61 – 89.

and then was passed to Special Branch or MI5 for analysis before being passed to policy makers.

Although this segmented view is somewhat flawed, and analysis was conducted on numerous occasions, some degree of analysis is inherent during the collection phases. Those actively engaged in gathering intelligence analyse the relative importance of what they are witnessing and then decide whether it is important enough to be gathered and transmitted to another department. Arguments can be made for occasions when analysis is not necessary to enrich the former example, and is needed for the latter. However, those conducting the intelligence collection still play a vital role. When considering intelligence in Britain during the interwar period it is appropriate to identify the section designated with analysis as enriching, rather than creating, the intelligence product.⁷⁵⁸

The relative independence of Chief Constables and the continued involvement of Special Branch in investigating suspected communist and communist organisations is evident when the investigations into the YCL and NUWM are analysed.⁷⁵⁹ With this assessment, it is clear that MI5 only absorbed certain case files it believed to be important, the equality between MI5 and regional police constabularies remained unchanged, Special Branch maintained a great deal of its coordinating function, and its responsibility for intelligence collection in Metropolitan London

The YCL was a youth organisation linked to the CPGB and was perceived to pose a threat during the 1930s under the assumption that it was producing subversive

⁷⁵⁸ Marrin, 'Adding value to the intelligence product', pp. 199 – 211.

⁷⁵⁹ See: KV 5/90

propaganda. Although subversive propaganda emanating from the CPGB and YCL can be considered to be the remit of MI5, the official record reveals that the majority of MI5's sources of intelligence originated with the police.

Throughout the investigation, numerous correspondence was shared between Kell and regional Chief Constables. Notable correspondence includes the Chief Constable of Glasgow City Police, Percy Sillitoe – Sillitoe would later be appointed Director General of MI5 in 1946. Sillitoe provided a lengthy report on the activities of the YCL in Scotland. Another notable example of regional police constabularies providing intelligence is that supplied by Major Chapman, Chief Constable of Maidstone County Constabulary.⁷⁶⁰ The correspondence between Kell and Major Chapman and Kell and Sillitoe highlight that the relationship between Kell and the Chief Constables is one of mutual assistance, rather than a superior and subordinate. Although Kell does request information, Chapman was still responsible for organising the methods employed, and overseeing the report sent to Kell. This would suggest that Kell assumed a guiding role.⁷⁶¹ From this example, the Chief Constables resemble an intelligence department and MI5 an assessment centre, providing guidance on what was deemed important.

The inclusion of Special Branch reports within the MI5 YCL record, however, is more illuminating. Instances of Special Branch reports within the YCL record are not limited to the time surrounding the 1931 meeting of the SSC. Instead, these reports range from 1932 until 1937.⁷⁶² This removes the possibility that Special Branch

⁷⁶⁰ 'YCL in Scotland', 'Chapman to Kell', KV 5/90

⁷⁶¹ Davies, *MI6 and the Machinery of Spying*, p. 326; and Burns and Stalker, *Management of Innovation*, pp. 121 – 122.

⁷⁶² For an example of these reports, see: 'S.B. report re. Y.C.L.G.B', 14 February 1932; 'S.B. report re YCL Training Class', 23 August 1932; 'From S.B. forwarding copies of documents re ...[YCL]', 18 November 1932; 'S.B. report re YCL' 29 December 1932, 'SB report re meeting of the YCL', 10 April

maintained investigations into communist organisations and individuals during a transitional period. Instead, this provides evidence that the Special Branch section which was responsible for active operations, including surveillance, remained intact and continued similar operations following the decision of the SSC. This adds further credibility to the premise that the meeting of the SSC did little to alter the nature of Special Branch operations, but transmitted the responsibility for analysis and dissemination to MI5.

While the YCL offers an example of MI5's relationship with Chief Constables following the 1931 SSC, it is important to investigate further, and to assess how the decision impacted active investigations. Although Curry noted that the Special Branch registry, and its active investigations were incorporated by MI5 in 1931, this did not occur for all of Special Branch's investigations.⁷⁶³

One organisation, in particular, was not incorporated into MI5's list of organisations which were required to be investigated despite suspicions of communist influence: The NUWM. Enquiries into MI5's records reveal no records of any investigations into the organisation – one exception being a personnel file for Harry Mcshane, a shipyard engineer who was associated with the NUWM, the CPGB, and the *Daily Worker*. The absence of an organisational record into the NUWM can be attributed to a number of factors. The first of these being possible retention by MI5. However, also equally plausible is the statement made in the *Authorised History*, that following the 1931 reorganisation, a number of Special Branch investigations 'were

1933, 'From S.B. enclosing a copy of draft resolution of the "Leading role of the League in the Mass Struggle of London's Young Workers"', 17 April 1934 TNA KV 5/90.

⁷⁶³ Curry, *Security Service*, p. 92.

not of interest to MI5'.⁷⁶⁴ Andrew recounts that William Philips, head of MI5's A Branch, believed:

Some of those in the SS1 files were, in his view, mere "hot air merchants." He also disagreed with keeping files on Scottish nationalists who, in his view, were currently "a perfectly sound constitutional movement, aiming at strictly limited autonomy, similar to Northern Ireland." Nor did Philips think it legitimate to open files, as Scotland Yard had done, on atheists, unemployed marchers, mutinous members of the merchant navy, pacifists or policemen who had received adverse reports.⁷⁶⁵

Although the latter does imply that Special Branch was less discriminate about who it conducted investigations into, it reinforces the importance of definition.

The reason why MI5 did not conduct investigations into the aforementioned list, and the reason why Special Branch did, is because the two departments, as well as the personalities leading them, had very different definitions on what constituted subversion, communism, and, importantly, a threat to British security. While Special Branch's role as both an investigator of subversion, and for the maintenance of law and order, its definition was necessarily much broader than that of MI5.

Significantly, the verdict of the 1931 SSC had little impact upon limiting Special Branch's ability to continue investigating communist subversion. Although SS1 was transferred to MI5, and SS2 to the Home Office, Special Branch's size still remained substantial, 136 officers of various ranks.⁷⁶⁶ This left Special Branch's capability of conducting intelligence operations against organisations intact. Importantly, it was the definition which Special Branch applied to these organisations which determined whether they would continue to be investigated, if their actions were conducted within Metropolitan London, or could be considered to pose a threat to the maintenance of security.

⁷⁶⁴ Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p. 129.

⁷⁶⁵ Andrew, *Defence of the Realm*, p. 129.

⁷⁶⁶ 'Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925. Minutes of the 9th meeting, held in Sir Warren Fisher's room at the Treasury, at 3:30 p.m., March 1931, TNA, FO 1093 68, p. 3.

The only exception to the absence of NUWM related material within MI5's released records is that of Harry McShane.⁷⁶⁷ Even a cursory glance through Harry Mcshane's personal record reveals the continued relevance of the Chief Constables and Special Branch, as well as a broader concern of MI5 into the activities of the NUWM. Of particular importance was the financial assistance provided by the NUWM for Mcshane's travels, as well as reports from the Chief Constable of Glasgow, Nottingham, and Derby.⁷⁶⁸ The relevance of Special Branch appears when McShane travelled to and attended meetings in London.⁷⁶⁹ From this, it is apparent that the broader security apparatus which was employed against the threats posed by communism was still employed following the 1931 SSC. Moreover, when the focus of the threat was centred upon London, the role and involvement of the Special Branch increased significantly.

The activities of the NUWM and the hunger marches between 1931 and 1934 represents an example where the role of Special Branch and regional police constabularies was at the forefront of the analysis within the secondary literature. This is not only because MI5 had a limited role, but because of the controversial actions of the police in attempting to counter the perceived threat to public order which the NUWM and the hunger marches posed.

However, these controversial actions were not the surveillance of the hunger marches, the infiltration by Special Branch officers, or the use of informants, but the

⁷⁶⁷ For MI5's personal records for Harry McShane, see: TNA KV 2/3588, KV 2/3589, KV2/3590, KV 2/3590, and KV 2/3591.

⁷⁶⁸ 'The NUWM sent Mcshane £2 allocation: NUWM to McShane 16.08.34', 'The NUWM sent Mcshane £2 allocation: NUWM to McShane 23.08.34', 'The NUWM sent Mcshane £2 allocation: NUWM to McShane 23.08.34', 'Minute 8a: Addressed an anti-war, anti-Fascist demonstration' Report by Chief Constable of Glasgow, 'Minute 62a: Addressed a communist meeting in New Ollerton, Nottingham' Report by Chief Constable of Nottingham, and 'Minute 126a: Attended a communist in Staveley', Report by Chief Constable of Derby, TNA, KV 2/3588.

⁷⁶⁹ 'Special Branch report: McShane's speech at the NUWM demonstration at Trafalgar square', TNA, KV 2 3588.

use of force to disperse the marches. While issues of surveillance and infiltration by police officers of public and private meetings is identified by works such as Thurlow's *Secret State*, Morgan's *Conflict and Order* and, more recently, Clark's study of the *NCCL*, they are understandably overshadowed by claims that Special Branch officers provoked the violence which accompanied the 1932 hunger march.⁷⁷⁰

The Hunger Marches offer further examples of the continued importance of Special Branch and regional Chief Constables in operations which were important to maintain British security. Moreover, when the activities of Britain's security apparatus and the actions, responses, and decisions taken by policy makers are considered, it is evident that the wave-like pattern of developments in British security, responding to the peaks and troughs of the perceived level of threat, was still in flux. In order to fully appreciate the motivations of the Hunger Marches in 1932 and 1934 and the subsequent response of Britain's security apparatus, a greater understanding of the background events which influenced these events is necessary.

The number of unemployed in Britain increased significantly following the Wall Street Crash in 1929. The number of unemployed rose from 1,200,000 in June 1929 to over 2,500,000 in the middle 1931.⁷⁷¹ However, great hostility was aroused amongst the unemployed because the newly formed National Government implemented a means test for unemployment benefit, following the financial crisis in August 1931.⁷⁷²

⁷⁷⁰ Thurlow, *Secret State*, pp. 158 – 159; J. Morgan, *Conflict and Order* pp. 245 – 256; J. Clark, *The NCCL*, pp.12 – 15; K. D. Ewing and C. A. Gearty, *The Struggle for Civil Liberties and the Rule of Law in Britain, 1914 - 1945*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 252 – 276; R. Hayburn, 'The Police and the Hunger Marches', *International Review of Social History*, Vol: 17, No.2 (1972), pp. 625 – 644, and J. Greene, 'Review Essay: The National Unemployed Workers' Movement and Popular Protest in Britain, 1920 – 1939', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, Vol. 30 (1986), pp. 94 – 102.

⁷⁷¹ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 137.

⁷⁷² Hayburn, 'Police and the Hunger Marchers', p. 626.

This means test resulted in a 10 per cent reduction in the benefit received by the unemployed.⁷⁷³

While the NUWM had organised marches in the early 1920s, and the unemployment rate in Britain remained high, it was increasingly difficult for the NUWM to unite the vast numbers of unemployed workers in Britain, and organise them into large protests.⁷⁷⁴ The means test, however, served to be a uniting influence among the unemployed, and numerous protests and marches were organised throughout Britain following its implementation.⁷⁷⁵ While violence was associated with the marches in Bristol, Cardiff, Manchester City Centre, Salford, and Westminster between September and October of 1931, the most significant instances of violence, and accusations of police transgressions are associated with the 1932 Hunger March on London.

In response to the various marches and the disturbances which the security apparatus was confronted with, the new Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Hugh Trenchard, was tasked with finding a solution. Although the 'Public Order Act' of 1936 would be central to the ability of Britain's security apparatus to maintain public order, no similar powers were available in 1932.⁷⁷⁶ Although the 'Emergency Powers Act' was not invoked during the disorder which accompanied the hunger marches in the early 1930s, efforts were made to modernise the government's emergency mechanism.

On 7 September 1932, a meeting was convened to consider what would be necessary to prepare the Supply and Transport Organisation. It was decided that the

⁷⁷³ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 138.

⁷⁷⁴ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 243.

⁷⁷⁵ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 243.

⁷⁷⁶ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 241.

Supply and Transport Committee should be reconstituted 'but not action should be taken involving publicity'.⁷⁷⁷ While this does prove that the National Government sought to prepare itself for all eventualities, it also supports the view that government sought to exercise restraint. When incorporating this example into the wave analogy of British security, the years preceding the hunger marches were a trough, while the threat level associated with the Hunger March placed it on an upward trajectory, but still remained far away from a peak.

At this time, the powers of the Metropolitan Police, under the control of the Commissioner, were still the main recourse to maintain security. In pursuit of greater guarantees of security, Trenchard first sought to ban the marches from taking place in areas which were often places of confrontation. Although Trenchard and regional Chief Constables were able to disperse marches which posed an obstruction, this would have largely been a reactionary measure, and still involve some violence between the police and demonstrators.⁷⁷⁸

Ewing and Gearty recount that the Ministry of Labour requested that Trenchard attempt to keep the 'vicinity of Labour exchanges clear of political meetings' because 'the natural result of these meetings is to excite the temper of the crowd'.⁷⁷⁹ Thus, instead of reacting to an offence after it had been committed, Trenchard sought prevention. This proactive preventative approach is in stark contrast to the detection or deterrence approach which characterised British policing in the nineteenth century.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁷ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, p. 138.

⁷⁷⁸ Morgan, *Conflict*, pp. 231 – 2.

⁷⁷⁹ Ewing and Gearty, *The Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 254.

⁷⁸⁰ Porter, *Origins*, pp. 3 – 8; Thurmond Smith, 'Policing Victorian London', p. 192; Andrew, *Secret Service*, p.16; and Kennedy, 'The secret service department', pp. 100 – 127; and Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, p. 121.

In November 1932, Trenchard issued an order:

under the Metropolitan Police Act 1839 ... that in future no meeting should be held by unemployed or other persons at any Labour exchange in the Metropolitan area, whether likely to cause an obstruction or not, as such meetings have been found liable to lead to a breach of the peace. While similar actions were taken by provincial police forces, it was not effective to prevent further instances of violence between political meetings of the NUWM and the police.⁷⁸¹

What is referred to as the 'Trenchard Ban', however, did not prevent the Hunger Marches between October and November 1932.⁷⁸²

Prior to the 1932 Hunger March, a number of Special Branch reports were created detailing numerous aspects of the planned march. These details included the placement of Marshalls during the march, venues to conduct demonstrations, such as MPs houses, embassies, and workhouses; and the use of banners in 'open conflict with the police'.⁷⁸³ The evidence of Special Branch gathering intelligence on a group which was believed to have strong ties to the CPGB adds credibility to the claim that the Special Branch, and the police, continued their intelligence role in investigating communist subversion.

However, the violence which erupted during the demonstrations at Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park, in November 1932, raised questions of the use of provocation by members of Special Branch. While there is little evidence to support the contention that the intelligence gathered influenced a planned use provocative actions by members of Special Branch, contemporary reports of the demonstration at Hyde Park confirmed their role in provoking violence.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸¹ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 245; and Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 252 – 256; Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, p. 121.

⁷⁸² Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 245; and Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 252 – 256; Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, p. 121.

⁷⁸³ Hayburn, 'The Police and the Hunger Marchers', p. 625.

⁷⁸⁴ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 13.

The origin of the allegations of the use of *Agent Provocateurs* originated with Ronald Kidd's, (bookseller, journalist, and founder of the National Council for Civil Liberties), retort to A.P. Herbert's (barrister and author) article in the *Weekend Review*.⁷⁸⁵ Through the series of articles, Kidd alleged that he witnessed two individuals 'who wore cloth caps and red handkerchiefs' encouraging disorder, and who later 'drew truncheons from their clothing and laid about the marchers indiscriminately'.⁷⁸⁶ Kidd's allegations were supported by those of Douglas Jefferies, a journalist and friend of Kidd, who claimed that he recognised an officer of Special Branch, Arthur Cane, who 'took missiles from his coat pocket and threw them over the heads of the crowd in the direction of the mounted police'.⁷⁸⁷

While Trenchard's investigation into these allegations revealed that a number of Special Branch and other police officers had infiltrated the march, dressed in plain clothes, in order to 'mingle with the mob and collect essential information'.⁷⁸⁸ However, owing to what Trenchard interpreted as certain discrepancies in the timing suggested by Jefferies, and the denial of the accusations by the recently promoted Sergeant Cane, Trenchard concluded that the accusations were 'inherently improbable'.⁷⁸⁹

While these allegations have been interpreted as a starting point for what became the National Council for Civil Liberties, it also provides further examples of the continued use of the police, particularly Special Branch, as intelligence collectors, and their role within the broader intelligence mechanism. Although the allegation that a

⁷⁸⁵ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 12.

⁷⁸⁶ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 13; and 'Sworn affidavit of Ronald Kidd', 27 September 1933, TNA, MEPO 3/553.

⁷⁸⁷ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 13; and 'Sworn affidavit of Douglas Jefferies', 28 September 1933, TNA, MEPO 3/553.

⁷⁸⁸ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 14; and 'Memorandum by Superintendent Foster', 5 October 1933, TNA, MEPO 3/553.

⁷⁸⁹ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 15; Commissioner to Sir Russell Scott, 17 October 1933, and Commissioner to Sir Russell Scott, 17 October 1933, TNA, MEPO 3/553.

Special Branch officer was inciting violence is significant, the wider investigation reveals that a prime motivation for their infiltration of the hunger march was to gather intelligence, or 'essential information'.⁷⁹⁰

Importantly, it also reinforces the dual role of the British police. The combination of 'High' and 'Low Policing' and their continued role as intelligence collectors.⁷⁹¹ While many historians of British intelligence would note that after 1931 Special Branch was relegated to the 'foot soldiers' of MI5, the case of the 1932 Hunger March reveals that when the Metropolitan Police perceived a threat to law and order, in the case of the NUWM, possibly even a threat to British security considering official fears of their connection with the CPGB – it would deploy all means, including infiltration and the use of informants, in order to counter it – even if the organisation in question was believed to be linked to the CPGB.

The violence associated with the 1932 hunger march did not end following the demonstrations at Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park. Instead, Trenchard attempted to minimise the potential for further violence and the perceived threat which the Hunger Marches of the NUWM posed. In order to achieve this, Trenchard sought to remove their leadership.⁷⁹² On 24 October 1932, a memorandum was sent to all Chief Constables requesting them 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 of the local or other leaders of the Communists or Unemployed against whom you possess evidence of incitement to create disturbances, or of participation in disturbances that have occurred.⁷⁹³

⁷⁹⁰ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 14; and Superintendent Foster, 'Memorandum', 5 October 1933, TNA, MEPO 3/553.

⁷⁹¹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', pp.507 – 20.

⁷⁹² Clark, *NCCL*, p. 24; and W. Hannington, *Never on our knees*, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1967), pp. 270 - 271

⁷⁹³ 'Memoranda' March 1932, TNA, MEPO 2/3064; and Hayburn, 'Police and the Hunger Marchers', p. 629; and Clark, *NCCL*, p. 24; Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, p. 121, and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 250.

This led to an influx of intelligence relating to the leaders of the NUWM and other suspected 'agitators' who were believed to play a central role in the outbreaks of violence.⁷⁹⁴ Trenchard's instructions were not limited to the leaders of the NUWM, but also included communists – again reinforcing the perception that the demarcation of intelligence responsibilities had little impact if an organisation was perceived to pose a threat to British security.

Analysis of the wider police operation at this time reveals that the Metropolitan Police were making an effort to use all the 'resources at their disposal'.⁷⁹⁵ Much like during previous instances of civil unrest, police reinforcements were drafted in from outside of Metropolitan London, leave was cancelled, rapid means of transport was acquired – '15 Motor tenders, and 5 wireless tenders' – the full resources of the mounted branch were employed and extra 'horses were borrowed from the military'.⁷⁹⁶ Despite these efforts, it was still decided that arresting the leaders of the NUWM would prove decisive in quelling the unrest which was accompanying the hunger marches.

Although four members of the NUWM were arrested, including the leader of the NUWM, Wal Hannington, for 'attempting to cause disaffection among members of the Metropolitan Police', a large number of unemployed workers still protested.⁷⁹⁷ This protest was met with a vast number of police officers, both uniformed and plain clothed, and included the deployment of the mounted police.⁷⁹⁸ While the Hunger Marches which followed the 1931 SSC emphasise the Metropolitan Police's continued

⁷⁹⁴ 'Hunger March, 1932', TNA, MEPO 2/3064; Hayburn, 'Police and the Hunger Marchers', p. 629; and Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, p. 121.

⁷⁹⁵ Jeffery and Hennessy, *State*, pp. 14 – 17; 'Report on Revolutionary Movements in the UK', 22 January 1920, TNA, CAB 24/96.

⁷⁹⁶ Clark, *NCCL*, p.24; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 237 – 239; Bunyan, *Political Police in Britain*, pp. 120 – 122; and Ewing and Gearty, *The Struggle for Civil Liberties*, pp. 252 – 254.

⁷⁹⁷ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 24; Hannington, *Never on our knees*, p. 270; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 160; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 252.

⁷⁹⁸ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 252.

involvement in investigating organisations which were considered to be linked to the CPGB, and the use of various methods to collect intelligence, it also demonstrates that the British police also resorted to the use of violence. As has been noted elsewhere, this challenges the stereotypical view of the British police as the 'best in the world', and further enriches a broader understanding of the methods employed by the Metropolitan and provincial police forces in countering, what they believed to be, threats to British security.⁷⁹⁹

However, there is a surprising conclusion when the tactics utilised by the Metropolitan and provincial police forces to counter the 1932 hunger marches are compared with those utilised during the 1934 hunger marches. In a complete contrast to 1932, the 1934 hunger march passed with little violence. The observer for the NCCL, Harold Laski, noted 'that the police conduct was admirable and there was nothing to which one could take the slightest exception'.⁸⁰⁰ Although recollections of the 1934 hunger march recognise the change in police conduct, the surveillance and plans which preceded it displayed a similar degree of intrusion which accompanied the 1932 Hunger march.

Upon reviewing the Home Office's official record for the 1934 hunger march, the continued relevance Special Branch is evident. Moreover, there is a noticeable difference in the supply of information which preceded an anticipated threat to British security. Prior to the 1931 SSC, the majority of information regarding suspected communist organisations originated from the Special Branch and the local police constabularies. Following the 1931 SSC, it is evident that MI5 had a more visible role.

⁷⁹⁹ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 12; and C. Emsley, 'The English Bobby', in R. Porter (ed.), *Myths of the English*, (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), pp. 126 – 127.

⁸⁰⁰ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 36.

However, when the origin of the intelligence collected is considered, it is clear that Special Branch was still conducting investigations within Metropolitan London and then disseminating it to the Home Office and MI5. Furthermore, the description of MI5's role as an advisor, during the 1925 SSC is also prevalent. Although it is accurate to suggest that MI5 had a more visible role, it would be an exaggeration, based on the evidence of the 1934 Hunger March, that MI5 had a leading role.

Intelligence relating to the NUWM plans to organise another Hunger March for 1934 was first disseminated to the Home Office 1 November 1933.⁸⁰¹ Much like previous investigations, it was led by a Sergeant of Special Branch, and the report was accompanied by documents from the target institution acquired in an unspecified manner.⁸⁰² In this particular instance, considering that the report detailed attendance of an indoor meeting, it is reasonable to assume that the Sergeant in question had infiltrated the meeting. The centrality of Special Branch's role in acquiring intelligence regarding the NUWM's plans for the Hunger March is evident when the volume of circulars is considered. These documents ranged from general circulars to regional NUWM offices, financial plans, time tables, and potential routes.⁸⁰³ While it can be considered that this intelligence was not necessarily of the highest importance, it was essential in gaining a broader perspective of the plans of the NUWM's 1934 Hunger March. Although unlikely to provide significant intelligence, they were essential to gaining 'pieces of the intelligence jigsaw'.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰¹ A. Canning to F. Newsam, 1 November 1933, TNA, HO 144 19843.

⁸⁰² F. Abbot, 'National Unemployed Workers' Movement: North London District Council', 30 October 1933, TNA, HO 144/19843.

⁸⁰³ See: A. Canning to F. Newsam, Special Branch report, 'NUWM Hunger March, 1934', 1 November 1933; 'Copy, Report on Special Meeting of the National Administrative Council held Saturday, October 28 1933'; 'Feed The National Hunger Marchers', 11 December 1933; A. Canning to F. Newsam, 18 December 1933; A. Canning to F. Newsam, 'National Hunger March', 20 December 1933; A. Canning to F. Newsam, '1934 Hunger March', 23 December 1933; and A. Canning to F. Newsam, 'National Hunger March', 2 January 1934, TNA, HO 144/19843.

⁸⁰⁴ Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 62.

Although MI5's role as a disseminator of intelligence is clear within the file, there still seems to be some overlap between MI5 and Special Branch. On numerous occasions throughout the preparations for the NUWMs 1934 Hunger March, MI5 disseminated reports, NUWM circulars, and time tables, to the Chief Constables of areas along the NUWM's planned route.⁸⁰⁵ However, there were also instances where MI5 would send reports which Special Branch had sent to MI5, to the Home Office. This correspondence would be to ensure that the Home Office had seen these reports, despite the fact the Special Branch had sent the same report – often on the previous day.⁸⁰⁶ This further underscores the perspective that Special Branch was still an important part of Britain's security apparatus, and that the problems of duplicity of effort and overlap was still present following the 1931 SSC.⁸⁰⁷

Special Branch's role during the investigation of the 1934 Hunger March was not confined to attending meetings and intercepting circulars. There is also an example of information obtained which implies the use of an informant.⁸⁰⁸ This information was later of great use to the broader security apparatus in developing a potential plan to prevent the NUWM raising the necessary funds to: feed and clothe the marchers; pay for the hire of the hall in which the Congress is to be held; and for the marchers' fare home.⁸⁰⁹ This intelligence also reveals MI5's continued advisory role.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁵ Kell to Chief Constables, 15 December 1933; and Kell to Chief Constables, 20 January 1934, TNA, HO 144/19843.

⁸⁰⁶ Liddell to Newsam, 29 January 1934, TNA, HO 144 19843.

⁸⁰⁷ For the argument that the 1931 reorganisation was to remove duplicity of effort, see: Clark, *NCCL*, p. 40; J.F.C. Carter to Chief Constables, 14 October 1931 and V. Kell to Chief Constables, 15 October 1931, TNA, KV 4/126.

⁸⁰⁸ This information is likely the product of an informant or a defector within the NUWM due to the opening of the report. Unlike other reports, it states: 'the following information has been received: An outline of the machinery operating or proposed to operate, the 1934 Hunger March'. Canning to F. Newsam, 'Hunger March 1934', 16 December 1934, p. 1.

⁸⁰⁹ A. Canning to F. Newsam, 'Hunger March 1934', 16 December 1934, TNA, HO 144/19843 p. 2.

⁸¹⁰ 'Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925. Minutes of the Fourth meeting', TNA, FO 1093/68, p.5 – 6.

Correspondence between MI5 and the Home Office suggests the possibility that 'local police forces should ... enforce any Bye-laws which prohibit street collections'.⁸¹¹ As was noted during the 1925 SSC, however, no real decision making power regarding issues of internal security lay within the remit of MI5, instead, it was MI5's role to advise on possible solutions, often after consulting with the Attorney General.⁸¹²

In the case of the 1934 Hunger March, it was the Home Office Under-Secretary, Sir Frank Newsam, who enquired about the legality of enforcing section 5 of the Police, Factories, etc. (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1916 ... [which] empowered police authorities to make regulations with regard to the collection or the sale of articles in the streets'.⁸¹³ At a meeting with the Attorney General, however, it was decided that it would be a 'sufficiently clear lead to police authorities as to whether the particular object of the street collections was or was not a contravention of the law'.⁸¹⁴ This was coupled with the possibility that if a circular from the Home Office to Chief Constables advising them to ban street collection became public, it would leave the Home Secretary open to criticism'.⁸¹⁵

The decision to inform local police forces to ban street collections was not taken. In order to avoid the criticisms of the Home Secretary advising Chief Constables to ban street collections, the option of raising a question in the House of Commons regarding the matter was taken.⁸¹⁶ Although this can be interpreted as a softening of the tactics employed, it also represents a further increase in Home Office control.

⁸¹¹ MI5 to Newsam, 13 November 1933, TNA, HO 144/19843.

⁸¹² 'Prime Minister's Secret Service Committee, 1925. Minutes of the Fourth meeting', TNA, FO 1093/68, p.5 – 6.

⁸¹³ F. Newsam to T. Inskip, 2 December 1933, HO 144/19843.

⁸¹⁴ Newsam to Inskip, 2 December 1933, HO 144/19843.

⁸¹⁵ 'Minutes', 12 December, HO 144/19843.

⁸¹⁶ 'Minutes', 12 December, HO 144/19843.

While the trajectory of the use of evermore intrusive surveillance methods, arrests, and the use violence was increasing between the end of 1931, until the hunger march of 1932, a comparable increase did not accompany the 1934 hunger march. Although Clark has attributed the actions of the then recently formed NCCL, the wave analogy of British security also proves useful. It is possible to explain this increases in surveillance and violence which were present in 1932 as a response to the ever increasing perception of threat, the apparent lack of increase is also part of the same increase in threat level. This increase had previously resulted in Trenchard deploying greater numbers of police officers, and likely would have done for the 1934 hunger march, if the Home Secretary, John Gilmour, had not taken a more decisive role. It is true, as Clark argues, that Gilmour's motivations to control Trenchard's actions were influenced by the involvement of a number of M.Ps in the hunger marches, but it also represents an instance of the Home Office exerting central control of Britain's security apparatus.

In a similar manner as accompanied the South Wales and Transport Workers strikes, the industrial unrest of 1919, and the General Strike in 1926, as the perceived level of threat increases so does the involvement of central government. Utilising this to expand upon the wave analogy reveals that the intensity of the methods employed to counter a threat to British security will increase along with the perceived threat level; but, the involvement of central government also increases. However, as the example of the Hunger Marches displayed, this increase will be accompanied by greater amounts of central government control, especially when the perceived threat level reaches a peak.

This period began with a breakdown of communication and liaison within Britain's intelligence and security apparatus. Although efforts to resolve these problems have been widely interpreted as MI5 ascending to a much grander role, becoming 'Britain's primary domestic and imperial security intelligence service'.⁸¹⁷ As a consequence of this change, it is believed that Special Branch was stripped of its counter-subversive function, becoming the 'foot soldiers of MI5'.⁸¹⁸ However, there are examples Special Branch's continued role, and importance, in investigating suspected communist individuals and organisations who were believed to pose a threat to British security. It is evident that the importance of definition is paramount when deciphering the implications of decisions made – especially when the documentation surrounding these decisions has limitations. In order to overcome these limitations, it is imperative to attempt to understand what was implied then, as opposed to imposing definitions and explanations relevant now. This is particularly true of British intelligence reforms of the interwar period, but also has applicability to the broader study of intelligence.

Although the above analysis has shown that attempts to reform Britain's intelligence and security apparatus have been misinterpreted, further adaptations were still required for Britain to meet the security challenges of the 1930s. These reforms were not concentrated on the delegation of counter intelligence responsibilities, but were in the legal capabilities of those agencies tasked with ensuring Britain's security. These adaptations had been discussed as early as 1920, but the increase in threat associated by the confrontation between Fascism, and

⁸¹⁷ Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 14.

⁸¹⁸ P. Gill, '*Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom*', p. 269; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 143; and Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 169.

Communism was necessary to gain the political will to alter this legal framework be sufficient to influence change.

Chapter Nine. Security reequipped 1934 – 1939.

The meetings of the SSC between 1921 and 1931 focussed upon possible organisational changes to Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, but neglected any considerations for future threats. The period following 1931 illustrated weaknesses in the changes made. Rather than further changes to Britain's intelligence and security apparatus, these weaknesses required legal reform. The neglect for legal reform in the decade preceding 1931 was, in part, a result of the proficiency of the 'Emergency Powers Act' in providing the necessary powers for the security apparatus to counter threats to British security. However, following the meetings of the SSC in 1931, it became apparent that reforms of the legal parameters within which the intelligence and security apparatus operated required amendment to ensure British security.

The requirement to amend British legislation was largely a result of the developments to what was considered a threat to British security.⁸¹⁹ Under the 'Emergency Powers Act', the response of the security apparatus and the emergency mechanism was largely reactive. Owing to the increase in the volume of persons involved in demonstrations, such as the Hunger Marches, and public meetings held by fascists and anti-fascists, a reactive response was no longer sufficient. Reacting to public order incidents involving thousands of individuals resulted in a situation that had already deteriorated further than the security apparatus would have preferred.

The alteration to what was considered a threat was also accompanied by increases in the apprehensions of officials of the ramifications of public order incidents. As previous increases in fear, or perceived level of threat, impacted the extent of Home

⁸¹⁹ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 173.

Office control, there was also further attempts to advance the central control of the security apparatus through the detailed advice contained within Home Office circulars.

The 1920s witnessed an increase in the central control of the Home Office through the STO, the primary requirement being the centralised control of the various components of the intelligence and emergency mechanisms. During the 1930's, the police were perceived to be the integral component which the Home Office sought to extend its centralised control over. The primary focus shifted to effective control of incidents, at a local level, before they deteriorated into large scale disturbances.

However, as the dominant threat to British security shifted from industrial disputes to large scale public order incidents, there was little that central control, within the existing legal parameters, could do to mitigate the effects of the disorder which accompanied the Hunger Marches and fascists demonstrations. As a result, the government began to reconsider these legal parameters which govern the control, and the powers of, how the security apparatus operated.

The extension of the legal parameters in which the security apparatus could operate were embodied in the 'Incitement to Disaffection Act' (1934), and the 'Public Order Act' (1936). Although the influences behind the acts differed, 1934 was a significant year. Not only was the 'Disaffection Act' passed in 1934, but the 'Public Order Act' received much consideration. While the government was seeking to amend the parameters which governed the activities of the security apparatus, the threat to British security rose significantly. The relationship between threat and the desire for action impacted upon regional Chief Constables significantly. The Chief Constables who were most impacted by the confrontation between Fascists and anti-Fascist demonstrations sought to reassert their jurisdictional independence and act in a

proactive manner – preventing disturbances before they occurred – often disregarding attempts by the Home Office to exert centralised control.

This chapter will first address the actions of MI5 to further extend their remit with regards to the perceived Fascist threat in 1933. It will then analyse the motivations and implications of the ‘Disaffection Act’ in 1934 along with developments in the conduct of the regional Chief Constables which sparked initial negotiations for a ‘Public Order Act’. This will be accompanied by an analysis of how the increase in confrontation between fascist and anti-fascist organisations between 1934 and 1936, and how the increase in the perceived level of threat which accompanied this confrontation, influenced the passing of the ‘Public Order Act’. This Act encompassed the preventative approach, advocated by Chief Constables in 1934. This chapter concludes with an appraisal of the ‘Public Order Act’, and its impact upon British security.

The decision to give MI5 a role in the investigation of Fascism in 1933 has received far less appraisal than the 1931 transfer of power. Much like the latter decision, the interpretation of this decision, and the understanding of its true impact on the relative importance of MI5 within the intelligence and security apparatus revolves around definition. However, like the 1931 transfer, following a broader review, the 1933 decision is far less significant than previous studies claim.

Both Quinlan and Grant depict MI5 as a leading proponent of the need for a greater investigation into the fascist threat in the early 1930s.⁸²⁰ Quinlan, in particular,

⁸²⁰ Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 110; J. Grant, ‘The role of MI5 in the Internment of British Fascists during the Second World War’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (2009), pp. 503 – 504.

claims that MI5 'was one of the first departments of government to recognise the potentially threatening nature of British fascism'.⁸²¹ Unsurprisingly, the evidence to support this assessment is obtained solely from MI5 records. The evidence supplied by Quinlan does support the interpretation that MI5 was one of the first government departments to take the threat of British fascism seriously.⁸²² However, the Home Office record of the deliberations regarding the surveillance of British Fascism reveals a great deal more.

What is immediately clear is that MI5 was aiming to further improve its position. It is debateable that MI5 was at the forefront of government departments who perceived the threat of British Fascism, but the requests for MI5 to take a leading role in investigating British Fascism highlights both the lack of communication between MI5 and Special Branch, and that Special Branch enquiries had already begun.

MI5's initial request to the Home Office for the extension of its duties highlights Kell's reluctance owing to the 'natural increase in the work of' MI5 that it would result in.⁸²³ It also included an enquiry as to whether Scotland Yard were investigating these movements.⁸²⁴ The need for the latter enquiry highlights the lack of improvement in the communication between MI5 and Special Branch following the transfer of SS1 and SS2 in 1931. Following any degree of improvement in Special Branch-MI5 relations, MI5 would have known that Special Branch was already conducted investigations into British Fascism.

⁸²¹ Quinlan, *Secret War*, p. 111.

⁸²² 'Policy Re Study of Fascism and other Right Wing or Kindred Movements and activities, 1933 – 1945', TNA, KV 4/331.

⁸²³ Kell to Newsam, 21 June 1933, TNA, HO 45/25384.

⁸²⁴ Kell to Newsam, 21 June 1933, TNA, HO 45/25384.

Trenchard did not respond well to Home Office enquiries regarding MI5's attempting acquisition of investigations relating to British Fascism. After being given the various reports which MI5 forwarded to the Home Office, Trenchard stated, on multiple occasions, that he was too busy to have a meeting straight away, and questioned what MI5 would do 'that would poach on what Special Branch does'.⁸²⁵

Although Trenchard stated that he could have supplied the reports directly, the Home Office was persuaded by the apparent threat which they implied. Sir Russel Scott, permanent Under-Secretary for the Home Office, was particularly intrigued by the reports which displayed the intent of the BUF to establish regional centres of propaganda, and confirmed his perception that the movement 'required careful watching'.⁸²⁶ However, these reports were not the result of an MI5 investigation, or the result of a HOW applied for by MI5, but the work of regional Chief Constabularies. Again, the investigations of regional police constabularies were to provide significant intelligence and insight into plans of the BUF. This further reinforces the view of the police as part of a larger intelligence mechanism, the importance of their role as intelligence collectors, and their centrality in the overall security apparatus.

While the institutional battle between MI5 and Special Branch was being contested for the primary role of investigating British Fascism, the police network had already begun investigating regional meetings of the BUF in their respective areas. Without prior direction from the Home Office, MI5 or the Metropolitan Police, regional Chief Constables, utilising their jurisdictional independence, initiated enquiries whenever the opportunity arose. The intelligence contained within the report from the Cardiff Constabulary report proved to be considerably valuable in persuading the

⁸²⁵ Trenchard to Newsam, 21 July 1933, TNA, HO 45/25384

⁸²⁶ Russell Scott to Dixon, 13 July 1933, TNA, HO 45/25384.

Home Office to extend MI5's remit – especially considering the simplicity of the collection method.

The actions of Cardiff Constabulary did not involve the typical surveillance of meetings, but merely a response to the request of one BUF member, Mr. Michael Goulding, to 'obtain facilities to hold open air meetings'.⁸²⁷ In response to this request, the Chief Constable asked Goulding produce proof of his credentials, which included a Specimen of his membership to the BUF, copies of *The Blackshirt*, as well as 'copies of instructions as to the development of the BUF activities in the provinces'.⁸²⁸ While these items were largely OSINT and likely easily obtainable, their procurement and dissemination to MI5 proved critical in persuading the Home Office to take the threat of Fascism more seriously.

The influence of intelligence collected by the police on policy decisions provides further detail of the role of the police within the intelligence mechanism and the typical functioning of government. This role as part of the broader intelligence mechanism is significant because it supports the assessment of intelligence being informed by the police, and as a result the value of the police to the security apparatus.

To fully understand the importance of the decision to give MI5 a greater role in the investigation of Fascism, it is important to consider what is meant by Kell's term: 'supervision'.⁸²⁹ If Curry's official history of MI5 is considered, it would be accurate to conclude that the employment of the casual network, now M section, would have been tasked with investigating the British Union of Fascists (BUF) and other fascist

⁸²⁷ J. Wilson, Chief Constable of Cardiff City Police, to Kell 26 June 1933, p. 1.

⁸²⁸ J. Wilson to Kell 26 June 1933, p. 1.

⁸²⁹ Kell to Newsam, 21 June 1933, TNA, HO 45/25384.

organisations in the same manner it investigated communist subversion, and the activities of foreign agents.⁸³⁰

However, the investigation of the 1931 SSC transfer of power highlighted that the main duty transferred to MI5 was the dissemination of intelligence. Considering the limited resources of MI5, who prior to requesting the task of the BUF were 'fully occupied', it is likely to have relied upon its main sources of intelligence: HOWs and police reports. Recent research by Jennifer Grant has highlighted the frustration of MI5's efforts to obtain HOWs because of an inherent bias towards the aristocratic members of the BUF. In contrast, the substantial amount of intelligence MI5 would have received from the police regarding the national ambition of the BUF was invaluable.⁸³¹ By extension, any BUF activities in the Metropolitan district would likely have been covered by the Metropolitan Police.

This assumption gains credibility when MI5's main output following its direction to 'supervise' British fascism is considered. MI5 created a number of reports disseminating intelligence to policy makers. It is clear that MI5 would not have been limited to the dissemination role, but the limited resources, and readily accessible police reports suggests that it would have been far more efficient, unless the severity of an incident required further investigation, to rely upon the police.

The extension of MI5 duties relating to fascism was not the only MI5 request which the British government acquiesced to in the 1930s. The 'Incitement to Disaffection Act' was a response to repeated requests from MI5 to strengthen laws regarding sedition.

⁸³⁰ Curry, *Security Service*, p. 107.

⁸³¹ Grant, 'The Role of MI5', pp. 499 – 528

Yet, there was little desire for change following the end of the First World War.⁸³² However, the motivation to revisit Britain's sedition legislation was a result of the threat posed by the Invergordon Mutiny. One of the few instances of mutiny in the British Navy, the Invergordon Mutiny highlighted the weaknesses in British legislation against sedition. Much like each of the meetings of the SSC in the 1920s, intelligence reform, albeit the legal parameters, conformed to the 'fire alarm' approach.⁸³³

Another influence on the 'Disaffection Act' was the desire to strengthen the law and increase the likelihood of a conviction. The 'Disaffection Act' was introduced following an 'unsuccessful attempt to secure a conviction in the *Elias v Pasmore* case'.⁸³⁴ The case revolved the common police practice of seizing vast quantities of documents, regardless of their relevance to the alleged crime.

The evidence to support the *Elias v Pasmore* case was acquired through the mass seizure of documents during Hannington's arrest and the search of the NUWM headquarters in 1932. This brought a degree of criticism towards Trenchard's actions. Similar tactics had been utilised during the arrest of John Campbell, prior to the Zinoviev letter in 1924; the raid on the CPGB HQ in 1925; and the ARCOS raid in 1927. Nevertheless, the victory of the NUWM was a blow to the government's credibility, and a victory for the NCCL which could claim the victory as further evidence that it was the defender of British civil liberties.⁸³⁵ The greatest impact of the case, however, was to strengthen the political will to reform sedition law to prevent a similar situation occurring again.

⁸³² SSC, 1925: Minutes of the tenth meeting', 15 June 1925, TNA, HO 532/10, pp. 6 – 7.

⁸³³ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 162; Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 57 – 75; Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked', pp. 196 – 179.

⁸³⁴ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 57.

⁸³⁵ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 57; and B. Weinberger, *The Best Police in the World: An Oral History of English Policing*, (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1995), p. 173.

The combination of the Invergordon Mutiny and the failure of the *Elias v Passmore* case clearly illustrated the weakness of the legislation relating to sedition. The Cabinet first discussed the draft Disaffection bill on 18 October. Described as a 'summary method of dealing with attempts to seduce members of His Majesty's Forces from their duty', the bill drew together various components of existing legislation, and supplemented it to extend the powers of the security apparatus to counter what it believed to be a credible threat to the security of the armed forces.⁸³⁶

Following the Act's publication, the NCCL began a campaign to gather support against it. They sent a detailed analysis to every Member of Parliament as well as a list of changes it deemed necessary. The NCCL was not alone in the more direct protests to the Disaffection Act. On 22 June 1934 an officer of Special Branch observed an individual distributing a pamphlet, *That's Sedition That Was*, a collection of extracts from Macdonald's speeches, outside the Houses of Parliament.⁸³⁷ The officer claimed that he was informed by the individual, who was not known to him, that it was hoped that the Prime Minister would apply for an injunction against the publication so that it could be discussed in the House of Commons.⁸³⁸

The interaction between the officer of Special Branch and the individual disseminating *That's Sedition, That Was* highlights the continued position of Special Branch in efforts to counter sedition. Significantly, it highlights that during Special Branch's counter sedition effort, it employed a variety of HUMINT techniques. This incident highlights that as well as the more common surveillance operations carried out by Special Branch, it also conducted OSINT. While it can be argued that OSINT is

⁸³⁶ 'Cabinet Conclusions', 18 October 1933, TNA, CAB 23/77/4, p. 13 and Andrew, *MI5*, p. 165.

⁸³⁷ [author's name illegible], Special Branch report, 22 June 1934, and [author unknown], *That's Sedition – that was! Being a collection of Notable Sayings by the Prime Minister and other Persons Above Criticism*, (London: Sidney Stanley, 1934), TNA, HO 144/19701

⁸³⁸ Special Branch report, 22 June 1934, TNA, HO 144/19701

unlikely to yield the same quality intelligence of the more intrusive HUMINT techniques of infiltration and informants; a broad spectrum of intelligence sources is required to gain an overall view.⁸³⁹ This interaction also provides evidence that Special Branch's role within the intelligence mechanism was akin to that of regional police constabularies.

This incident provides further evidence that Special Branch officers evaluated a situation, regardless of its specific duties, in order to gain intelligence. The vicinity of the officer to the Houses of Parliament, and the lack of detail in his report regarding his instruction to specifically target those outside of the Houses of Parliament, suggests that this was not a pre-planned operation, but that the officer was conducting typical protection duties. Not only was the intelligence in this instance carried out by the police, but it was high policing activities being conducted alongside low policing.⁸⁴⁰

The NCCL surveillance of the protests extended to a large meeting, of approximately 1,600 delegates, organised jointly between the NCCL and the London Trades Council.⁸⁴¹ With such public and well organised protests to the Disaffection Bill, Special Branch maintained surveillance on the group's activities. Clark has claimed that this surveillance led Special Branch to believe that the NCCL 'had "seized upon" the Incitement to Disaffection Bill in an endeavour to "further justify its existence"'.⁸⁴² However, the protests of the NCCL, as well as other groups did have an effect upon the content of the Bill.

The Act itself, despite the criticism it received, sought to regularise many of the most frequent methods utilised by the security apparatus when investigating

⁸³⁹ Herman, *Intelligence Power in Peace and War*, p. 82; Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 2.

⁸⁴⁰ Brodner, 'High Policing, Low Policing', p. 507.

⁸⁴¹ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 57.

⁸⁴² Clark, *NCCL*, p. 58; and 'Special Branch summary: Ronald Hubert Kidd', 19 November 1935, TNA, HO 45/25462.

suspected cases of sedition. The Act first addressed the specifics of how an offence could be committed, if any person with intent to procure or aid the dissemination of documents that could constitute an offence. It also detailed how a warrant was to be applied for. A positive feature was the limitations of time surrounding the application and execution of a warrant. The information which formed the basis of an application could not be more than three months old, and a search warrant had to be executed within a month.⁸⁴³

The significance of this limitation is amplified when the longevity of some of the investigations into suspected communists is considered. Leading CPGB members, and those with left wing political views, who may have spoken out against certain government policies in the early 1920s were often the subject of decade long enquiries, with varying degrees of invasive HUMINT techniques employed to discover subversive plots. The limitation of one month introduced a modicum of restraint on the security apparatus.

The specifications regarding the execution of search warrants also placed an emphasis on the officer authorised to carry out the warrant to inform the occupier of the residence that the search had taken place, provide a list of documents seized, which were not to be kept longer than a month – or until the conclusion of proceedings; and that no woman was to be searched under the warrant, except by a woman. These all seem minor details, but they all correspond to complaints made against the police when investigating the sedition of the CPGB in 1925 and the ARCOS raid in 1927. Their inclusion in the ‘Disaffection Act’ supports the interpretation that policy makers were attempting to improve investigations into sedition.

⁸⁴³ *Incitement to Disaffection Act* (24 & 25 Geo 5 Chapter 56), p. 2.

While the latter provisions sought to prevent further instances, other provisions permitted actions which had gained a certain a degree of infamy. Section 2 of the Act stated that entry to premises could be gained by force, and that the premise of every individual found within could be searched also.⁸⁴⁴ Similar actions had been taken in the raid on the CPGG HQ in 1925, and the search of the NUWM prior to the arrest of Hannington in 1932. This Act encompassed all of the areas that officials thought necessary to mitigate the threat of sedition. Despite the majority of powers being present in older legislation, the 'Disaffection Act' was an extension of the parameters within which the security apparatus could operate when investigating sedition.

However, the threat of sedition and the protests over the 'Disaffection Act' were not the only increasing threats facing the security apparatus. The security apparatus was faced with increasingly violent public order incidents. These incidents began with large scale protests and the Hunger Marches, but significantly increases as a result of the confrontation between Fascist and anti-Fascist demonstrations.

The confrontation between Fascist and anti-Fascist demonstrations caused great concern for policy makers and members of the security apparatus. Just as a variety of factors had influenced the National Government to implement changes to the law countering sedition, the growing threat to public order gave greater impetus to amend the powers of the security apparatus to prevent public order incidents.

Examinations of the government response to the threat to public order, 'the Public Order Act' (1936), have debated the importance of the confrontation between Fascist and anti-fascist demonstrations. This discourse can be displayed as two

⁸⁴⁴ *Incitement to Disaffection Act 1934*, p. 2.

opposing interpretations. The first perspective interprets the government's implementation of the 'Public Order Act' as a response to the trade union demonstrations and the Hunger Marches.⁸⁴⁵ The second perspective gives greater emphasis on the 'trigger mechanism', that the growth of unrest caused as a result of the confrontation between Fascist and anti-fascist demonstrations.⁸⁴⁶

However, the wave like progression of Britain's security apparatus incorporates the 'Public Order Act' as a logical progression to the 'Emergency Powers Act'. The confrontation between fascist and anti-fascist demonstrations was the successive threat that caused prominent political figures to appraise the boundaries of the legal parameters which the security apparatus, particularly regional Chief Constables, could operate, and draft plans for their reform.

The necessity to control processions and public meetings had been an intermittent concern for the security apparatus following the First World War. The desire to expand police powers regarding processions and meetings is evident in the comments of Commissioner Horwood during the General Strike, 1926. Horwood commented: Regulation 22, which granted Chiefs of police with the power to 'prohibit meetings and marches ... if they feared disorder would arise' 'should be permitted through the general law.'⁸⁴⁷ Just as MI5 requests to enhance powers to counter sedition were persistent throughout the 1920's, so to was the desire to maintain some degree of power to regulate processions and marches.

⁸⁴⁵ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 184; G Anderson, *Fascists, Communists and the National Government*, London: University of Missouri Press, 1983); D. S. Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 145 – 148; and Morgan, *Conflict*, pp. 229 – 275.

⁸⁴⁶ Thurlow, *Secret State*, pp. 184 – 185; Lewis, *Illusions of Grandeur*, pp. 149 – 145; R. Kidd, *British Liberty in Danger*, p. 258.

⁸⁴⁷ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 86; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 254. Horwood's comments are cited from: 'Horwood to Joynson-Hicks', 8 October 1926, TNA, HO 144/8014. Channing cites both Morgan and Morgan's reference to HO 144/8014. However, Morgan was given privileged access to Home Office records during the research for *Conflict*. As such, HO 144/8014 is still retained by the Home Office.

Political support for greater power for the police to maintain public order was not in abundance, however. Just the use of Regulation 22 during the General Strike aroused considerable discontent from Labour MPs, particularly Ernest Thurtle, David Greenfell, James Hudson, John Bromley, and Henry Thomas.⁸⁴⁸ Contrary to the opinion that political will to reform public order law arose from the perceived threat of communism, specifically the Hunger Marches, no reform arose following the 1932 hunger march.

If the political network found an impetus to reform public order law as a result of disturbances associated with the Hunger Marches, it would have followed the 1932 march, rather than the 1934 – especially considering the reduction in violence which accompanied the 1934 Hunger March. This view is reinforced by the analysis of Channing and Morgan who both conclude that the 1932 Hunger march revealed defects in the power of police to regulate processions, and act in a preventative, rather than a proactive manner.⁸⁴⁹ Instead, two attempts were made to draft a Bill, in 1932 and 1934, to counter the threats to internal security posed initially by the Hunger Marches, and, in 1934, the public order concerns of the marches and the BUF.

Both of the attempts, the 1932 Procession (Regulations) Bill and the Public Order Bill, 1934 were drafted as umbrella legislation to cover potential threats to British security. However, a primary aspect of both proposed Bills was a great increase in the powers of the Home Secretary. These increased powers granted the Home Secretary the ability to prohibit processions if a threat to order was anticipated.⁸⁵⁰ The specification that the threat was anticipated, as opposed to imminent, was a clear sign

⁸⁴⁸ Channing, 'Blackshirts and White Wigs, p. 86; *HC Deb*, 06 May 1926, vol. 195, pp. 453 – 597.

⁸⁴⁹ Morgan, *Conflict and Order*, p. 254, and Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 88.

⁸⁵⁰ For the 1932 Bill, see: TNA HO 144/18294; and Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 90; for the 1934 bill, see: TNA HO 45/25386.

of official attitudes, particularly in the Home Office, was shifting towards the need for preventative rather than a reactive measure to maintain British security.⁸⁵¹ The increase in the powers of the Home Secretary reinforces the view that an increase in the perceived level of threat is accompanied an increase in the control exerted by central government.

The 1932 Bill was drafted at a time when the perceived threat level was high, but preceded events which would have likely served as adequate justification for its implementation. The 1934 Public Order Bill, on the other hand, was discussed and drafted during July 1934, while the outbreaks of disorder, particularly that surrounding the BUF meetings at the Albert Hall and Olympia, as well as the counter-demonstrations were causing greater degrees of violence.

During the drafting of the Public Order Bill, Chief Constables were consulted and expressed their desire to act in a preventative manner in cases where disorder was considered likely. Gilmour, who became Home Secretary in 1932, noted: the police believed they 'should be given the power to prohibit processions which are likely to lead to a breach of the peace ... and to regulate the route of processions so as to prevent undue interference with traffic.'⁸⁵²

As well as illustrating official attitudes about the need to reform the parameters in which the security apparatus operated, the 1932 and 1934 Bills also illustrates the continuing effort by the Home Office to gain central control over the police. Channing highlights that the Bills proposed contradicted certain regulations within the Emergency Powers Act. Chief Constables were solely responsible for maintaining law and order and making decisions to prohibit processions, but the proposed public order

⁸⁵¹ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 103.

⁸⁵² Gilmour, 'Memorandum', July 1934, TNA, HO 45/25386; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 106.

bills stipulated that the decision to prohibit processions lay with the Home Secretary.⁸⁵³

Channing argues that

This departure is likely to reflect that these Bills were primarily mandated to prevent the Hunger Marches which would have traversed through different local authorities and provincial police forces. This would have given the Home Secretary comprehensive control over prohibiting these marches and declaring them as unlawful assemblies without relying on the action of local authorities.⁸⁵⁴

The efforts of Home Office to create a universal approach to public order can also be interpreted as the central response which accompanied a significant threat. Just as central control dramatically increased during the First World War, and during states of emergency in the 1920s, the increased threats to law and order became severe enough to warrant a centralising effort from the Home Office.

If the Hunger Marches and BUF demonstrations are viewed as a national, rather than a regional threat, as the Transport Worker's Strike (1911) was, this view is further reinforced. Such an interpretation accounts for differences in the approach of the Home Office control in the Emergency Powers Act, 1920, and the proposed Public Order Bill 1934. However, it is also feasible that the Home Office wished to enforce a universal approach to marches and processions because of the political repercussions that could result from either the left or the right believing the opposite was receiving preferential treatment from police officers.

Owing to the failure to pass any legislation concerning public order, the security apparatus, principally the police, had to rely upon the 'Highways Act' (1835) and the 'Metropolitan Police Act' (1839) to maintain order.⁸⁵⁵ However, using the above acts to counter threats to public order was largely reactive. In order to utilise the legislation,

⁸⁵³ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 107.

⁸⁵⁴ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 107.

⁸⁵⁵ *Highway Act* (5 & 6, Will IV Chapter 50); and *Metropolitan Police Act* (2 & 3, Vict Chapter 47). See also: Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 199; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 103; Clark, NCCL, p. 71; and Weinberger, *Best Police in the World*, p. 180.

there had to be evidence that the disorder was in progress, or imminent. This was in contrast to the development of security practices which were becoming proactive – seeking to prevent disorder before it arose.⁸⁵⁶

Allegations of police bias and the use of Highways Act and Metropolitan Police Act were both evident during the BUF meeting at the Albert Hall, held on 28 October 1934, and the counter-demonstration organised by the NCCL. Although there is evidence both to support and counter the view that the Metropolitan Police favoured the BUF, there is also evidence to suggest that Trenchard's methods were primarily focussed on the maintenance of British security.

As a result of the quandary facing the Metropolitan Police, Trenchard ensured a large police presence at BUF meetings, particularly at a meeting held at the Royal Albert Hall.⁸⁵⁷ The BUF meeting and the counter demonstration at Hyde Park displays the duality of the security role required of the Metropolitan Police. Not only did the police employ a considerable force, approximately 1,000 officers, who accompanied the Blackshirt procession, and formed cordons around the Albert Hall to prevent all but ticket holders from entering, but they also conducted intelligence operations during the BUF meeting, and of the counter-demonstrations.⁸⁵⁸

The police's intelligence reports illustrate that there was support, amongst the anti-fascist groups, for utilising force to counter the BUF demonstrations, and the plans of the BUF to attack 'the reds' and 'defend themselves, if attacked.'⁸⁵⁹ The foreknowledge of the likely use of violence gave the Metropolitan Police sufficient

⁸⁵⁶ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 69.

⁸⁵⁷ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 103.

⁸⁵⁸ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 89; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 198; and Clark, *NCCL*, p. 69.

⁸⁵⁹ 'Special Branch summary of particulars', 10 September 1934, TNA, MEPO 38/15, p. 38; 'Summary by CI', TNA, MEPO 2/3077; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 109; and Clark, *NCCL*, pp. 68 – 69.

insight to prepare an effective response should a threat to Public Order arise. Again, the police informed nature of this intelligence assessment of the threats to public reaffirms the view that the police were a central component within the larger security apparatus.

Trenchard expressed his displeasure that his preferred method to 'keep peace at Fascist demonstrations' was 'creating the impression among anti-Fascists that Sir Oswald Mosley's semi-military organisation is being permitted to develop under police protection'.⁸⁶⁰ Yet, the disparity of intelligence reports concerning the plans of anti-fascist organisations compared with the plans of the BUF does add credibility that the security apparatus, or at least some members within it, possessed some bias towards the BUF.⁸⁶¹ While the Home Office debated the introduction of the Public order Bill in 1934, Trenchard became increasingly frustrated that his plans to strengthen public order legislation had not been implemented.⁸⁶²

Trenchard was not alone in taking action not promoted by the Home Office. While Trenchard's actions during the BUF Albert Hall meeting, and the anti-fascist Hyde Park meeting, were to some extent governed by Gilmour's reluctance in being held responsible for alterations in police strategy. Trenchard's implementation of a preventative strategy was not wholly in accordance with Gilmour's view that as much 'freedom' of meeting should be permitted 'as far as possible'.⁸⁶³

⁸⁶⁰ 'Trenchard to Newsam', 28 September 1934, TNA, MEPO 3/2490; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 103; and Clark, *NCCL*, p. 68.

⁸⁶¹ 'Trenchard to Newsam', 28 September 1934, TNA, MEPO 3/2490; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 103; Clark, *NCCL*, pp. 68 - 69; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 260 – 262; S. Cullen, 'Political Violence: The case of the British Union of Fascists', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1993), pp. 245 - 267; Lawrence, 'Fascist Violence and the politics of public' pp. 238 – 267; and M. Pugh, 'The National Government, the British Union of Fascists and the Olympia debate', *Historical Research*, Vol. 76, No. 200, (2005).

⁸⁶² Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 188.

⁸⁶³ Gilmour to Trenchard, 25 August 1934, TNA, HO 45/52384; and Clark, *NCCL*, p. 69.

Gilmour's opinion, however, had little impact outside of the Metropolitan district. Throughout 1934, regional Chief Constables who were confronted with similar public order problems debated similar preventative strategies as Trenchard. Two Chief Constables who planned, or threatened to implement preventative measures, the Chief Constables of Manchester and Leicester, sought to prevent the fascists wearing uniforms, and ban meetings in the marketplace.⁸⁶⁴

However, the Home Office exerted little control over provincial police forces. Directions given to regional police forces during the Hunger Marches between 1930 and 1934 were advisory, or a request for support. Owing to the threats posed during certain instances of Hunger Marches, regional Chief Constables frequently resorted to independent action.⁸⁶⁵ The independence of the regional police constabularies in this instance supports the view of the security apparatus as a series of networks. Despite the prevalent view that networks permitted greater degrees of cooperation, the independence of the Chief Constables, as opposed to a hierarchical relationship that exists between a superior and a subordinate, permitted a degree of autonomy not in line with government policy.

Home Office opposition to these measures was not necessarily a disagreement upon the legitimacy of the action, but a belief that, they would falter if legally challenged.⁸⁶⁶ In some respects, the failure of the efforts of regional Chief Constables and Trenchard to influence legislative change can be attributed to their lack of collegial connection to the political network. Unlike the 1920's, the political network was becoming formalised, and the influence of security officials upon policy was reducing.

⁸⁶⁴ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 188; see also: TNA, HO 144/20158.

⁸⁶⁵ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 249; Thurlow, p. 188; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 262.

⁸⁶⁶ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 136; and Ewing and Gearty, *Struggle for Civil Liberties*, p. 329.

However, this formalisation was not a barrier to further fluctuation that would prevent security officials impacting policy. But a temporary absence of an influential member of the security apparatus from the political network. Although Trenchard's lack of inclusion in a network which allowed either party to influence the other, Trenchard's often 'fraught' relationship with the Home Office served to limit his influence on public order policy.⁸⁶⁷

An example of Trenchard's often strained relationship with the Home Office is evident in Trenchard's proposal to ban the BUF and the strong criticism it from the Home Office. This response illustrates that the Home Office's view of internal security still conformed with the previous approach to react in a reactionary manner. Instead of implementing preventative strategies, the Home Office believed that 'only if the authority's management of the situation under existed power appeared to be threatened could changes in the law be contemplated'.⁸⁶⁸

In response to Trenchard's request, The Home Office cited Horwood's similar request to ban the CPGB in 1926.⁸⁶⁹ Despite the Home Office's refusal to take preventative measure until the resources of the police were exhausted, they still strongly advocated for the continuance of political surveillance. However, they offered caution both as a reason to not ban the BUF, and as guidance towards to use of surveillance, fearing that the restriction of liberty might drive political expression underground creating a 'worse problem in the long run'.⁸⁷⁰

⁸⁶⁷ 'Trenchard to Gilmour', 29 October 1934, Trenchard Papers, MFC 76/1/314/25; and Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 188.

⁸⁶⁸ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 188; see also, TNA, HO 144/20158.

⁸⁶⁹ 'Horwood to Joynson-Hicks', 8 October 1926, TNA, HO 144/8014.

⁸⁷⁰ Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 188; see also, TNA, HO 144/20158.

This was not the only instance when Trenchard wished to ban an organisation, or utilise the full extent of police powers, under the emergency regulations, to resolve a public order issue. In 1932 Trenchard also advocated the use of emergency powers to outlaw the Hunger Marches. Trenchard believed it was an ‘anachronism in present day conditions ... to allow all and sundry pass through the centre of London whenever they like’.⁸⁷¹ Again the failure of Trenchard to obtain an increase in powers to deal with public order issues can be attributed to the absence of the political network. Basil Thomson had obtained concessions when suitably influential members of the political network also supported his case, but when he appealed directly through the Home Secretary his requests were denied. This absence of political influence, however, can be interpreted as a positive development. While it was Trenchard’s duty to ensure the maintenance of law and order with Metropolitan London, it was not suitable for him to impose his will on government policy.

Although Trenchard did not have the same level of support amongst various government department as Thomson did, there was still support within the Home Office for amendments to public order legislation. The draft of the 1934 Public Order Bill was brought to the Cabinet by Home Secretary Gilmour. He conveyed the opinion of the majority of Chief Constables

that there should be express statutory provision requiring the prior consent of chief constable to the holding of open air meeting[s] ... and the chief constable should be empowered to prohibit such a meeting ... likely to cause obstruction or ... a breach of the peace.⁸⁷²

⁸⁷¹ Trenchard to Home Secretary, 27 October 1932, TNA, MEPO 2/6269; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 254.

⁸⁷² Gilmour, ‘Preservation of Public Order: Memorandum by the Home Secretary’, 11 July 1934, TNA, CAB 24/250/14; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 262; and Channing, ‘Blackshirts’, pp. 236 – 238.

The proposal also sought to increase the Home Secretary's power by granting the power 'to prohibit ... concentration of peoples outside the areas in which they lived if he felt that they were likely to lead to serious disorder'.⁸⁷³

The reduction in outbreaks of violence in 1935 can be interpreted as the rationale that the 1934 public order Bill was not presented to parliament. As such, provincial police forces were left to continue to adopt an individual approach to public order threats. Prior to this passing of the Public Order Act in 1936, provincial police forces were left to utilise existing legislation such as the Highways Act and the Town Police Clauses Act to maintain order.

Increases in public order incidents in 1936, culminating in the Battle of Cable Street, and another Hunger March proved to be the final factors to increase political will introduce legislation to amend police powers with regards to the maintenance of public order. The severity of these incidents, particularly the Battle of Cable Street, proved to be sufficient to prove to policy officials that the reactive approach required amendment.

The disorder at Cable Street did reveal the ability of the Metropolitan Police to maintain order. It was not necessarily an example of deficiencies of police powers, but another example of security officials overreaching their position and exploiting a situation for a political objective. The individual exploiting their position was Sir Philip Game, who succeeded Trenchard as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in 1935. While Game enjoyed a stronger relationship with the Home Secretary, John

⁸⁷³ Gilmour, 'Preservation of Public Order', 11 July 1934, TNA, CAB 24/250/14; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 262; and Channing, 'Blackshirts', pp. 236 – 238.

Simon, Game's efforts to secure policy changes, principally the banning of processions and demonstrations in the East End of London were unsuccessful.⁸⁷⁴

Game's transgressions are illustrated during the weeks preceding the Battle of Cable Street. In correspondence between Game and the Home Office, Simon expressed his concerns regarding the likelihood of severe disorder and violence occurring at the planned BUF march. Game reassured Simon that 'the march would produce the usual few arrests for minor disturbances but not any serious trouble'.⁸⁷⁵

Although Game's preferred method, to ban marches, had been denied by the Home Office, similar methods were being employed elsewhere. The Chief Constable of Liverpool had initiated a ban on public meetings at St. Domingo Pit, a common location for meetings which frequently resulted in disorder between Protestant Reformers and the Labour Party.⁸⁷⁶

The adoption of a wholesale ban on public meetings by the Chief Constable of Liverpool was instituted on another location, Smith Street lamp. The legal foundation for this policy was based upon the Liverpool Corporation Act, 1912, which permitted certain powers to the Chief Constable in relation to the meetings and processions.⁸⁷⁷ The continuation of these powers were a result of the inaction of the Liverpool Watch Committee, deflecting attention from themselves trying to 'avoid re-opening a very thorny subject and did nothing in the way of making regulations'.⁸⁷⁸

Despite the role of the Watch Committees to provide an oversight function for their regional police constabularies, there was a lack of central control across the

⁸⁷⁴ Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 111; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 262.

⁸⁷⁵ Game to Simon, 'Memorandum', 11 September 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551.

⁸⁷⁶ Wilson, Chief Constable of Liverpool, to Mr Brook, Home Office, 27 June 1938, TNA, HO 144/21037, p. 2.

⁸⁷⁷ Wilson to Brook, 27 June 1938, TNA, HO 144/21037, pp. 1 – 2.

⁸⁷⁸ Wilson to Brook, 27 June 1938, TNA, HO 144/21037, p. 1.

country. Game's actions during this time, or inaction, reveal that even during instances where the governing authority pursued a policy against that preferred by the local constabulary, it was possible for the police authority to manipulate situations in order to promote a particular policy.

The determination of Game to pursue certain policies is revealed in his correspondence with a friend. In this correspondence, Game was more forthcoming regarding the degree of violence and disorder he anticipated would occur at the October march of the BUF, and his preferred outcome. Game revealed that he envisioned that 'there will be some fun and a few broken heads before the day is out'; and that he would be 'glad if it brings things to a head' and 'lead to banning processions all over London'.⁸⁷⁹

Although Game's conduct in the weeks preceding the Battle of Cable Street left much to be desired. His relations with Mosley and the BUF were far more developed than with individuals leading the anti-fascist demonstrations. Game was able to utilise his relationship with Moseley to proscribe the routes of BUF marches and the venues where meetings would be held, as well as limiting the claims that the police were acting favourably towards the BUF.⁸⁸⁰ Most importantly, however, Game was able to add a stipulation, if disorder arose, the police would 'indicate' whether the 'meetings should held elsewhere of be abandoned'.⁸⁸¹

Unlike the BUF, Game had very little interaction with the leaders of the anti-fascist demonstration. Significantly, there is no evidence that Game sought to

⁸⁷⁹ Clark, *NCCL*, p. 117; and Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 117. Original citation contained within A. Moore, 'Sir Phillip Game's "Other Life": The making of the 1936 Public Order Act in Britain', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 36, No. 1, (1990) p. 67.

⁸⁸⁰ Game to Simon, 11 September 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551; Clark, *NCCL*, p. 117; Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 118.

⁸⁸¹ Game, 'Proposed BUF Parade, March and Meetings in the Jewish Districts on 4 October 1936', TNA, MEPO 3/551; Clark, *NCCL*, pp. 117 – 118.

converse with the anti-fascist group which petitioned the Home Office.⁸⁸² While this can be interpreted as incompetence on the part of Game; it is equally plausible that Game was allowing events to unfold in order to realise his goal of reform of public order legislation, or an increase in police powers.

Game's reaction to a Special Branch memorandum on 2 October reinforces the view that Game's actions towards the anti-fascist demonstrations were more likely a result of indifference or ignorance, rather than a pre-determined strategy. The memorandum revealed that the CPGB had decided to concentrate all of their efforts on opposing the BUF.⁸⁸³ Game responded by cancelling all leave for police officers, and drafting in 4000 officers, a number of which were designated mounted officers.⁸⁸⁴ Despite these numbers proving sufficient to quell the outbreak of violence, the significant weakness of Game's strategy was the lack of agreement with the anti-fascist demonstrators similar to that with Mosley and the BUF.

The confrontation between the BUF and the anti-fascists illustrates the importance of Game's agreement with the BUF. The BUF procession on 2 October 1936 was divided into four groups, each BUF group travelling through predominantly Jewish areas of Shoreditch, Stepney, Bethnal Green and Limehouse.⁸⁸⁵ The anti-fascist group prevented the BUF from passing further than Cable Street. When violence broke out Game's accord with the BUF came into effect, and they BUF were diverted the Embankment. The anti-fascist group, however, continued to respond to

⁸⁸² Clark, *NCCL*, pp. 117 – 118.

⁸⁸³ 'Memorandum', 2 October 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551; Clark, *NCCL*, p. 118.

⁸⁸⁴ 'Police Leave Cancelled – New Orders', 3 October 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551.

⁸⁸⁵ Clark, *NCCL*, 121; Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 176; Andrew, *MI5*, p. 194.

the provocation of the BUF, displaying the same degree of violence towards the police as they did the BUF.⁸⁸⁶

If Game's methods were designed to increase political will for reform, he succeeded. In the pursuit of restoring order, officers resorted to baton charges; and 74 arrests.⁸⁸⁷ Andrew Crossley MP witnessed the events and testified to the proficiency of the police officers; but also to the ferocity of the violence directed at police officers. 'Special Branch reported to the Home Office that Mosley's opponents mounted what was "undoubtedly the largest anti-fascist demonstration yet seen in London" and the government feared that even worse violence would occur if Mosley was allowed to pursue his devious campaign unchecked'.⁸⁸⁸ The cumulative effect of the Battle of Cable Street 'led the government to recover the urgency it had lost following Olympia'. While this can be interpreted as a 'trigger mechanism for the National Government to introduce the Public Order Act' – it is more accurate to view it as the peak in the wave like curve of threats facing Britain.⁸⁸⁹

While political motivations to revisit legislative reform resulted from the Battle of Cable Street, there was also a more immediate effect. The surveillance of BUF activities had been confirmed, as a Special Branch responsibility, at a Home Office Conference in 1933. The concern raised by the violence influenced an increase in the number of officers assigned to Special Branch.⁸⁹⁰ This increase of fifty officers

⁸⁸⁶ Anthony Crossley MP to Geoffrey Lloyd MP 14 October 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551.

⁸⁸⁷ 'Report from Leman Street Division', 4 October 1936, TNA, MEPO 3/551; and Clark, *NCCL*, and 119.

⁸⁸⁸ Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 176; and Andrew, *MI5*, p.194.

⁸⁸⁹ Andrew, *MI5*, p. 194; and R. Thurlow, 'The Straw that broke the Camel's back: public order, civil liberties and the battle of cable street'. In T Kushner and N. Valman (eds.) *Remembering Cable Street: Fascism and Anti-Fascism in British Society*, (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2000), p.74.

⁸⁹⁰ R. Thurlow, 'The Straw that broke the Camel's back, p. 75.

remained until 1937 when the impact of the Public Order Act had reduced the threat from the BUF and anti-fascist confrontation.

A secondary measure employed the Metropolitan Police – highlighting the importance of the uniformed branch – was the increase in the numbers of uniformed officers present at possible public order confrontations. In 1936 and 1937, large numbers of special constables were used for ‘blanket saturation’, of public meetings, especially in the East End of London.⁸⁹¹ These tactics echo back to the *raison d'être* of the police to act in a deterring rather than a detective role.⁸⁹² Significantly, in this context, the use of the police in a deterring role displays the attitude of Game to act in a preventative rather than a reactionary manner.

Unlike 1934, however, members of the Labour party, in particular, Labour MP Herbert Morrison, were in favour of strengthening the law.⁸⁹³ The fears of disorder associated with previous Hunger Marches added further to the apprehensions of officials. Further amendments to unemployment benefit, a drastic cut in the benefit amount, caused renewed support for another national Hunger March. The plans of the NUWM were closely monitored by Special Branch, which reported, in July 1936: ‘The NUWM have for the past few weeks been considering the prospect of being able to organise a successful hunger march’ and hide its ‘party character’.⁸⁹⁴

The discussions surrounding the planned Hunger Marches raises further evidence of the division of responsibilities between Special Branch and MI5. However, owing to the secrecy which still surrounds official records of counterintelligence in the

⁸⁹¹ R. Thurlow, ‘The Straw that broke the Camel’s back, p. 75; ‘Meetings, Processions and Demonstrations’, TNA, MEPO 2/3034.

⁸⁹² Porter, *Origins*, pp. 4 – 6.

⁸⁹³ ‘Preservation of Public Order’, 16 October 1936, TNA, CAB 27/610; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 271; Anderson, *Fascists, Communists*, pp. 170 – 171.

⁸⁹⁴ A. Canning. ‘National March London – November 1936’, 25 July 1936, TNA, HO 144/20696; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 272.

1930s, there is little evidence to identify the source of the intelligence regarding the planned Hunger March. The form of the Special Branch report suggests that the intelligence originated from a Chief Constable, rather than an informant or surveillance of a meeting.⁸⁹⁵ Conversely, the MI5 report implies a secondary source, other than the Special Branch.⁸⁹⁶ In sum, there is little conclusive evidence to support MI5's primacy in this investigation.

The enquiries into Walter Hannington, leader of the NUWM is a prime source of evidence to unravel this question. MI5's record of its enquiries into Hannington is yet to be released, and Special Branch's record, one of the few to be released to the National Archives, contains a number of redactions. Frustratingly, a redaction occurs to a Special Branch memorandum which would have been created at the time of Special Branch enquiries into the Hunger March of 1936.⁸⁹⁷ However, the broader records of investigations relating to the NUWM and the 1936 Hunger March support the view that Special Branch and the regional police constabularies maintained the role as intelligence collectors within the intelligence mechanism, while MI5 was acting as a disseminator.

The correspondence contained with the Home Office record of the 1936 Hunger March; as well as Special Branch's record of investigations into Walter Hannington; and MI5's record into the Harry McShane, an organiser for the Scottish contingent of the 1936 Hunger March, highlight that the vast quantity of intelligence gathered was

⁸⁹⁵ The Special Branch report does not contain the layout associated with an informant's testimony, and omits the 'information received from a reliable source' statement. Moreover, the report also omits a signature and statement on behalf of the officers who attended the meeting, common place for reports which followed a surveillance operation.

⁸⁹⁶ Harker to Newsam, 19 August 1936, TNA, HO 144/20696.

⁸⁹⁷ The redacted memorandum is index no. 83 (b). It is preceded by Special Branch's annual report into Hannington in June 1936; and followed another annual report in June 1937, see: TNA, MEPO 38/45.

carried out by Special Branch and the regional Chief Constables.⁸⁹⁸ The only source of intelligence prevalent in MI5 records was intercepted correspondence: HOWs.⁸⁹⁹ The role of Special Branch in the early investigation of the planned 1936 Hunger March further supports the view of the police as intelligence collectors. While MI5's report contains an overview of the investigations, the first Special Branch report preceded it by almost a month. A logical assessment of these difference would suggest that MI5's role as a disseminator was to compile reports as well as perform an advisory function regarding the threat which the planned hunger march posed.

Being a great deal smaller than a secondary report provided by Special Branch, it would have been far easier for politicians to digest. However, this notion is undermined by the frequency which Special Branch reports were also circulated to various departments. The first Special Branch report being circulated to the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Health.⁹⁰⁰ Despite the best efforts of the SSC in 1931, the problems of duplication of effort still existed five years later.

The issue of definition was likely a cause of the duplication, While MI5 assumed supervision of communist plots; the Metropolitan Police maintained its jurisdictional duty to ensure the much broader duty of maintenance of public order within Metropolitan London. As a result, when a threat emerged that officers believed warranted investigation, regardless of the political affiliation of the threat, it preceded to do so.

⁸⁹⁸ For evidence of the varying amounts of intelligence collected against the proposed Hunger March in 1936 by Special Branch, Chief Constables, and MI5, see: TNA, HO 144/20696; MEPO 38/45; and KV 2/3588.

⁸⁹⁹ The prevalence of MI5's reliance on HOWs is evident during its investigations of Harry McShane, see: TNA, KV 2/3588.

⁹⁰⁰ See: 'New Scotland Yard to Home Office' 29 July 1936; 'Home Office to Ministry of Health', 12 August 1936 and 'Home Office to Ministry of Labour' 12 August 1936, TNA, HO 144/20696.

Just as the emergency mechanism had initiated itself in 1924 and 1926, in response to the Railway and General Strike, the Metropolitan Police initiated the intelligence mechanism, the police network, in preparation for the planned Hunger March. The sophistication of this effort has led Morgan to describe these preparations, as 'similar to those which would have been used against an invading army'.⁹⁰¹

However, the breadth of the security apparatus involved was substantially less than had been employed against industrial disputes during the 1920s. The preparations involved obtaining the consent of magistrates to read the riot act in cases of disorder, revisiting the 1934 manual on the powers and duties of the Metropolitan Police during meetings and processions, and regional police constabularies were informed of the planned route of the march, and instructed to take measures to prevent disorder.⁹⁰²

Despite these efforts to prepare the security apparatus to confront wide scale disorder, akin to that which accompanied 1932 Hunger March, the 1936 Hunger March was largely peaceful.⁹⁰³ The circulation of police reports added to official fears about the maintenance of public order.⁹⁰⁴ This fear was capitalised upon, the Public Order Bill being introduced to Parliament the day after the National Hunger March demonstration.

The fear that Britain's security apparatus was ill-equipped to deal with the threat to Public Order aided its passing through the Houses of Parliament. While it did not contain all of the features of the 1932 processions bill and the 1934 public order bill,

⁹⁰¹ Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 269.

⁹⁰² Untitled memorandum to Chief Constables, 5 October 1936, TNA, HO 158/30; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 272.

⁹⁰³ For the preparations and correspondence relating to the 1936 Hunger March, see:

⁹⁰⁴ For the correspondence regarding the 1936 Hunger March, see TNA, HO 144/20696, and HO 144/20697; and Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 272.

the 'Public Order Act' contained a number of features which aided the police taking a preventative approach to public order.

The 'Public Order Act' prohibited a number of features of processions, such as the political uniforms, quasi-military organisations, offensive weapons, and offensive conduct. It also granted greater powers to regional police constabularies and the Metropolitan Police for the preservation of public order.⁹⁰⁵ One significant difference in the approach to the Public Order Act and the proposed public order bill in 1934 was the increase in powers given to the Chief Constables, rather than the Home Secretary.⁹⁰⁶

The amended public order legislation permitted Britain's security apparatus to take a much more aggressive preventative approach to possible processions, marches and demonstrations which threatened public order. Some of the features of the Act, Sections three, four, and five amended powers to control processions which were permitted. However, sections one and three, the prohibition of political uniforms and the preservation of public order, gave the police the power to adopt an approach that they believed to be most appropriate. Rather than having to anticipate whether disorder was imminent prior to dispersing a march, the police now had the power to act, as they perceived appropriate, to remove, or minimise the potential for conflict, in a preventative rather than a reactionary manner.

With regards to section 1, Simon stated that it was the 'unanimous view of chief officers of police ... that the wearing of political uniforms is a source of special

⁹⁰⁵ *The Public Order Act*, (1 Edw. 8 & 1 Geo. 6, Chapter 6).

⁹⁰⁶ 'Reading of riot proclamation by Magistrates', TNA, MEPO 2/8132; 'Telegram to all Area Commanders', 6 November 1936, TNA, MEPO 2/3091; and 'Preservation of Public Order', 12 October 1936, TNA, CAB 27/610; Morgan, *Conflict*, p. 272.

provocation.⁹⁰⁷ While opposition was raised regarding the definition of a uniform, highlighting that a number of peaceful groups such as Orangemen, the Social Credit Party could be effected by the act if no definition was given.⁹⁰⁸

Despite claims that innocent groups might be affected by Section 1, no changes were made. Its inclusion did affect groups such as the Social Credit Party. There was one aspect of the wording of section 1 which permitted some groups to aim to bypass the public order act to wear political uniforms: ceremonies. In order to exclude the processions of groups such as the Ulster Orangemen, political uniforms were permitted as long as they had the consent of the Chief Constables and the Home Secretary.

This power sharing relationship between the Home Office and Chief Constables displays a progression of the Home Office's ability to exert influence over regional police constabularies. However, the requirements for the consent of the Chief Constable to be obtained first supports the view that, despite the increase in the Home Office's influence, there was a parity of power regarding disturbances. Although the Public Order Act amended the legislation regarding processions and demonstrations, it did not provide a clear method to ascertain whether a political uniform should be permitted, nor it did it remove the ability of the Chief Constables to act in a unilateral manner.

The Chief Constable of Sheffield was one of the first to have to counter an attempt to work around the banning of political uniforms by the Public Order Act. The Sheffield Branch of the CPGB and YCL requested that members of their proposed meeting be permitted to wear uniforms under the pre-text that it was a ceremonial

⁹⁰⁷ *HC Deb*, 29 December 1936, Vol. 316, c.7; and Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 284.

⁹⁰⁸ *HC Deb*, 23 November 1936, Vol. 318 c. 49 – 51; and Channing, 'Blackshirts', p. 285.

event to commemorate Arthur Newsom – who was killed during the Spanish Civil War.⁹⁰⁹ However, owing to the practice of the BUF holding frequent meetings outside of the proposed venue, not in uniform, and the belief that it was an attempt to create a legal precedent to undermine the Public Order Act, the Chief Constables refused to give his consent to certain members wearing a uniform.⁹¹⁰

The parity of power between the Home Secretary and Chief Constables allowed the Chief Constables decision to be sufficient to prevent an acquiescence at this time. Despite the claims of the CPGB representative to ‘challenge the provisions of the Public Order Act all along the line’, there was little recourse the Home Office had to reverse the Chief Constables decision.⁹¹¹ The Chief Constable of Sheffield corresponded with the Home Office regarding the request of the Sheffield branch of the CPGB, stating the reasons for his refusal; however, the Home Office response to the Sheffield branch highlighted that even if the event was ‘ceremonial’ without the consent of the Chief Constable, there would be ‘no action which the Secretary of State’ could ‘take in the matter’.⁹¹²

Although the exchange between the Chief Constable of Sheffield, the Sheffield branch of the CPGB and the Home Office illustrates the necessity of the Chief Constable’s consent regarding the wearing of uniforms, the role of the Home Office was of equal importance. In June 1937 the Chief Constable of Peterborough requested permission to allow the members of the Labour Male Voice Choir to wear a uniform.⁹¹³ The Chief Constable supplemented his request by stating that all of the choir members

⁹⁰⁹ The District Secretariat of the Sheffield District Party Committee of the CPGB to the Home Secretary, 19 January 1937, TNA, HO 45/24999.

⁹¹⁰ Chief Constable, Sheffield to Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, 21 January 1937, p. 2.

⁹¹¹ Chief Constable, Sheffield to Under-Secretary of State, Home Office, 21 January 1937, p. 2.

⁹¹² Home Secretary to The District Secretariat of the Sheffield District Party Committee of the CPGB to the Home Secretary, 19 January 1937.

⁹¹³ Chief Constable of Peterborough to Home Secretary, 1 June 1937, TNA, HO 45/24999.

are also members of the Labour Party, but are all 'very respectable, decent working men'.⁹¹⁴

Although the Chief Constable believed the risk to public order to be minimal and inclined to give his consent to the wearing of uniforms, the Home Office declined to give their consent. The response from the Home Office emphasised that the Public Order Act only allowed the Chief Constable to 'grant permission, subject to the consent of the Secretary of State'.⁹¹⁵ Possibly hoping to remove the likelihood of a precedent being created, the Home Office declined to consent to the wearing of the uniform. It was the opinion of the Home office that 'if the Labour Party can form a choir and wear uniforms, there is no reason why the fascists cannot form a totalitarian choir'.⁹¹⁶

Further evidence to support the view that the Public Order Act created a parity of power between the Home Office and the Chief Constables is contained within correspondence between the Chief Constable of High Wycombe and the Home Office in June 1938. The Chief Constable of High Wycombe informed the Home Office that he had obtained the consent of the neighbouring Chief Constable of Buckinghamshire to permit the annual march of the Greenshirt movement, and that both believed that the chance of public disorder was minimal.⁹¹⁷ Despite these assurances, the Home Office replied with a refusal, stating: 'We hope that on further consideration you will feel able, in the exercise of your discretion, to decide (without giving reasons) to that you are not prepared to give the necessary permission under the provision of Section 1 (1) of the Public Order Act'.⁹¹⁸

⁹¹⁴ Chief Constable of Peterborough to Home Secretary, 1 June 1937, TNA, HO 45/24999.

⁹¹⁵ Home Secretary to Chief Constable of Peterborough, 15 June 1937, TNA, HO 45/24999.

⁹¹⁶ This statement is contained within a correspondence which followed the official reply cited above. Home Secretary to Chief Constable of Peterborough, 15 June 1937, TNA, HO 45/24999.

⁹¹⁷ Chief Constable of High Wycombe, W. T. Jones, to Home Secretary, 'Public Order Act, 1936', 2 June 1938, TNA, HO 45/24999.

⁹¹⁸ Home Secretary to Mr. Jones, 3 June 1938, TNA, HO 45/24999.

Although the Home Office had been inconsistent with its efforts to exert greater degrees of control over Chief Constables, the latter example illustrates that Chief Constables still maintained a degree of autonomy. The perception of the relationship between the Home Office and regional Chief Constables, in terms of policy deliberation, was relatively equal, is supported by the Home Office debating utilising the methods of the Chief Constable of Liverpool in order to counter the disorder in the East End of London.⁹¹⁹

The great increases in public order incidents, and amendments to legislation are two characteristics of British security in the 1930s that are used to display that fundamental change occurred. However, the previous analysis has displayed that, while significant change did occur, the relative responsibilities and freedom of action remained the same.

One significant characteristic of this period is the continued importance of Special Branch. While MI5 did obtain similar responsibilities for analysing fascism, as it did communism, it did not take any of the intelligence collection, or public order responsibilities from Special Branch or the regional Chief Constables. The continued role of Special Branch adds further credibility to the notion that Britain's security apparatus contained numerous departments operating as a network, with mechanisms to collect intelligence and respond to emergencies.

The freedom of action of Chief Constables was somewhat curtailed by section one of the Public Order Act; however, Chief Constables maintained their freedom of

⁹¹⁹ Wilson to Brook, 27 June 1938, Wilson to Dixon, 29 August 1936, and [unknown] 'minute', 25 July, 1938, TNA, HO 144/21037, pp. 1 – 2.

action in all security related matters outside of public demonstrations and marches. The minor alterations to the freedom of action of Chief Constables, highlights that the steady expansion of Home Office control, was also not complete by the end of this period. Instead, the latter part of the 1930s represents a peak, in both the threat perception of politicians and security officials and sophistication of the security apparatus.

Conclusion

Between 1909 and 1939, Britain's security apparatus developed significantly. Rather than a collection of organisations, intermittently cooperating and pursuing independent objectives, there were identifiable networks and mechanisms which cooperated to ensure the maintenance of British security. Each of the constituent components of the security apparatus played an integral role in the collection, analysis and dissemination of intelligence on the perceived threats to the realm. They also responded accordingly to mitigate the negative impact of those threats.

The preceding chapters have identified a series of interconnected themes intertwined with the development of Britain's security apparatus. Some of the themes, such as the existence of networks, are more prominent than others, but each theme provides further detail on the maintenance of British security and how the apparatus as a whole operated.

The themes examined can be identified as: the security apparatus, networks, mechanisms, and the police. Each theme highlights certain features of Britain's security apparatus which have been overlooked in other studies. These themes have facilitated a greater appreciation for the development of Britain's security apparatus, and highlighted certain qualities of intelligence theory beneficial for the future application of theory to historical case studies. In addition to moving the history of British security out of the institutional shadows, it has also demonstrated areas that could benefit from a similar approach.⁹²⁰

⁹²⁰ 'News Transcript: DoD News Briefing – Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers' 12 February 2002, <<http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>>, (Accessed 20 July

One of the most prominent features of this thesis is the assertion that British security was not dominated by institutions but was an apparatus, consisting of interconnected networks. At numerous points throughout the period, there is a volume of evidence which supports the equality of the various components within the security apparatus, and undermines the superiority of MI5.

The apparatus approach to British security is supported by the recognition of the broader threats to Britain in the years preceding the First World War. The fears of policy makers regarding political activism, Indian Nationalism and industrial disputes was solely a focus of regional Chief Constables in areas affected, and the Special Branch, with MI5 having no input into these investigations unless there was a connection to espionage.

The reliance placed upon Special Branch and regional Chief Constables during counter-espionage investigations further support the notion of a security apparatus. The importance of the broader security apparatus is evident during the surveillance, and arrest of suspected German spies in the year preceding and during the First World War. Despite increases in staff during this period, MI5 did not possess sufficient manpower to collect intelligence and discern whether Germans living in the UK posed a threat to British security.

The reorganisation of Britain's intelligence and security apparatus between 1918 and 1931 further reinforces the role of MI5 as part of a broader security apparatus. The delegation of intelligence analysis and dissemination duties to the

2017). See also: Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 103; Treverton, 'Addressing "Complexities" in Homeland Security', p. 348; and Graham, 'Rumsfeld's Knowns and Unknowns'.

Directorate of Intelligence and the Special Branch, and MI5's counter-sedition focus during these years, supports the view of each department fulfilling specific roles to ensure British security.

Following the 'transfer of power' in 1931, when MI5 was alleged to have ascended to its grand position above the other components of the security apparatus, there is ample evidence that MI5 did not 'take control of Scotland Yard Intelligence', or that Special Branch were relegated to the 'foot soldiers' of MI5.⁹²¹ The active involvement of Special Branch during investigations into suspected communist organisations, such as the YCL and the NUWM supports the continued involvement in the counter communist intelligence efforts. Moreover, the importance of Special Branch and the regional police constabularies in response to the broader threats throughout the 1930s emphasises that British security was an apparatus. MI5's brief role as intelligence disseminator of fascist threats highlights its minimal involvement in the increasingly violent public order incidents that occurred between 1933 and 1937.

The broader appreciation of what was considered a threat, as well as who collected, analysed and disseminated intelligence reveals that there were numerous organisations vital to the maintenance of British security. Although MI5 played a vital role, the importance of Special Branch, and the UK's police forces were equally integral to the maintenance of British security.

⁹²¹ Holt Wilson, 'Security Intelligence in War', 1934, Imperial War Museum (IWM), The papers of Sir Vernon Kell, MSS. See also: Andrew, *Secret Service: The Making of the British Intelligence Community* p. 362; Gill, *Security and Intelligence Services in the United Kingdom*, p. 269; and Wilson and Adams, *Special Branch*, p. 70; Thurlow, *Secret State*, p. 143; Porter, *Plots and Paranoia*, p. 169; and J. Callaghan and M. Phythian, 'State surveillance and Communist lives', p.136

The prevalence of security networks during this period has also highlights a flaw within current perceptions of British security. Rather than a hierarchical focus, this thesis has identified a hierarchy of networks.⁹²² These networks consisted of policy makers and intelligence officials, occupying the uppermost networks: the political and the intelligence. While networks focussed on intelligence collection, such the regional military commands, the police, Thomson's agents, and the civil commissioners occupied lower networks. Hierarchical relationships existed between superiors and subordinates, but adjacent relationships between those collecting, analysing and disseminating intelligence are more accurately described as networks.

The existence of this web of networks had a negative as well as a positive impact upon British security. The intelligence policy maker relationship displayed between Thomson and Lloyd George in 1917, and between Thomson, Long, and Churchill in 1919 displays an ability for either party to negatively impact the other. In the former instance, Thomson can be interpreted as providing intelligence to please, while in the latter, Thomson can be interpreted as manipulating the fears of policy makers to increase his power within the security apparatus. A similar impact is also present between Churchill, Wilson, Thomson, Sinclair, Chamberlain, and Shortt and their pursuit of the expulsion of the Russian Trade Delegation in 1921.

Although the membership of political and intelligence network fluctuated throughout the 1920s, equal negative impact was caused by the Zinoviev letter and the ARCOS raid. In both instances, intelligence officials and policy makers can be interpreted as transgressing the typical boundaries of their role and overreaching their position. The latter examples had significant impact upon the Labour Party's

⁹²² See Appendix A: A Hierarchy of Networks, p. 312.

view of the intelligence and security apparatus, and the ability of British SIGINT to decrypt Soviet communications.

As well as the negative impact which the political and intelligence network could have upon British security, it also had many positive effects. The all source collection ideals embodied in the recommendations of Macready in 1910 and the pooling of intelligence collected by the police greatly enhanced the ability of policy makers to accurately assess a situation.

The proficiency of the police, military networks during the South Wales Miner's and the Transport Worker's Strike in 1909 and 1911 laid the foundations for what became the emergency mechanism. The approach advocated by Macready was measured and involved carefully assessing a situation prior to the despatch of resources. These networks were essential in alleviating the fears of policy makers during the increasingly disruptive Police and Railway Strikes between 1918 and 1919. The value of the intelligence provided by these networks, as well as the Civil Commissioners, greatly increased the desire of policy makers to centralise the control of this intelligence. The sophistication of the intelligence product that resulted from these networks led to these networks being formed into an intelligence mechanism.

The primary feature of the mechanisms employed during this period is centralised control. Although increases in centralised control can appear to rise consistently, they peaked and troughed according to the threat perception of policy makers. Because of the connection between threat perception, and centralised control, the first aspect of British security to become centralised was intelligence collection. This was followed by an emergency mechanism following the First World

War to centralise control of civil resources in times of emergency to maintain the 'essentials of life'.⁹²³

The origins of the centralised control embodied in the intelligence mechanism can be traced back to Churchill's intervention during the South Wales Miner's Strike, and Transport Worker's strike. In response to complaints about the Home Office assuming control of the despatch of military forces, Churchill commented that regional control of such matters was common when the threat was localised. However, when the threat was national, the central government had a responsibility to intervene.⁹²⁴ Churchill's comments reaffirm that as the significance of a threat increased, so too did centralised control.

The need to gather intelligence to determine whether central government was required to intervene became increasingly more important during the increase of the disruptive effects of industrial action following the First World War. The police were a particularly important component within the intelligence mechanism, through their role as intelligence collectors. However, the Directorate of Intelligence, Special Branch, also served as a 'clearing house' for the intelligence collected.⁹²⁵ The centralised receipt and assessment of intelligence collected was essential in disseminating intelligence to policy makers.

The requirement to maintain 'essentials of life' during these disputes led to a parallel mechanism, the emergency mechanism to coordinate civil resources and mitigate the disruptive influence of industrial action.⁹²⁶ A primary achievement of the

⁹²³ Jeffery and Hennessy, *States*, p. 3.

⁹²⁴ Troup to G. R. Shepherd (Organising Secretary, Dundee Labour Representation Committee), 6 October 1911, TNA, HO 45/10657/212470, pp. 1 – 2; see also: 'Employment of Military without Requisition', 21 October 1911, 'Home Office: Railway Strike of August, 1911. Confidential Memoranda and Reports'. TNA, HO 45/10658/212470, pp. 3 – 5.

⁹²⁵ Russell, 'Achieving all-source fusion', p. 189.

⁹²⁶ Jeffery and Hennessy, *States of Emergency*, p. 9

emergency mechanism was a further development in the response of the security apparatus to industrial disputes and public order incidents. This development revolved around managing the resources of regional police forces, and allocating areas extra police officers from neighbouring forces. This approach had been utilised by Churchill in 1910, but the development of this approach allowed Anderson to conclude in 1927: 'the police had undergone sufficient centralisation in recent years to act effectively as a single service' rendering the employment of military forces that much more remote.⁹²⁷

The third mechanism, the oversight mechanism, was an attempt to formalise the supervision of the intelligence and security apparatus. However, from the beginning of the Secret Service Committee in 1919, it was beset by the influence of the political network. Although the influence of networks upon the oversight mechanism declined throughout the 1920s, there were definite political motives behind the attempts at intelligence reform. Conforming to the 'fire alarm' approach, the SSC only met in response to a crisis or significant event, and was regularly delegated a narrow task which prioritised short term resolution over long term efficiency.⁹²⁸

Through the development of the intelligence, oversight and emergency mechanisms, Britain's security apparatus was able to collect intelligence and assess threats to security in a proactive manner. During times of emergency, the mechanism was better equipped to manage civil resources and prevent the need for military intervention. During times of shock, which typically accompanies efforts to

⁹²⁷ Anderson to Hankey, 10 June 1927, TNA, HO 144/20058.

⁹²⁸ Johnson, 'Governing in the Absence of Angels', pp. 60 – 61; Mc Cubbins and Schwartz, 'Congressional Oversight Overlooked: Police Patrols and Fire Alarms', pp. 196 – 179; and L. Johnson, 'A Shock Theory of Congressional Accountability', pp. 343 – 360.

increase oversight, there was the basis of an effective oversight function to bring the members of the intelligence and security apparatus to account - albeit in a primitive form.

The police were an essential component of Britain's security apparatus. Performing a variety of 'High' and 'Low Policing' roles, the police can be described as the front line in the effort to maintain British security.⁹²⁹ The combination of intelligence collection and public order roles involved the police in the broad range of threats facing British security.

The police informed approach to intelligence is evident in the early portion of this study. As well as their involvement in the counter-espionage effort, the police were engaged in the investigations into political activism and Indian Nationalism. During the investigations into the former, the police proved themselves to be integral in employing techniques to minimise public awareness of the invasive nature of some of their surveillance methods. The public order function of the police is also evident in the investigations into political activism and industrial disputes. Significantly, the role of the Chief Constable to maintain the security of their jurisdiction remained prominent throughout the period.

The dual role of the police throughout the period has been displayed through the examinations of the networks and mechanisms which maintained British security. However, the police were also central in the adaptation of the security apparatus to respond to the growing public order disputes in the 1930s. The amendments to the security apparatus in the 1930s involved changes to the law. These changes altered

⁹²⁹ Brodeur, 'High Policing and Low Policing', p. 507.

the parameters within which the security apparatus could operate. Through the 'Disaffection Act' and the 'Public Order Act', the police were given enhanced powers to investigate sedition, and prevent public order incidents before they could escalate to a threat to British security.

The centrality of the police in the granting of enhanced powers is also visible in the Emergency Powers Act. Together, these legal amendments illustrate the importance of the role that the police played within Britain's security apparatus. Not only were they integral to the collection of intelligence, but they were also responsible for preventing public order incidents.

Adding further to the importance of the police is the extension of Home Office control over their actions. At the beginning of the period, Home Office control was limited, each Chief Constable outside of Metropolitan London maintained responsibility for their jurisdiction. Even the accountability of the police was delegated to regional Watch Committees rather than the Home Office. However, the successive legislative changes, particularly the 'Public Order Act' permitted greater degrees of Home Office control.

By 1939 Britain's security apparatus had undergone significant development. There was a number of networks and mechanisms which were organised to investigate and mitigate the perceived threats to British security. In addition, the Home Office had exerted considerable control over the maintenance of the prominent threat: public order. Although the security apparatus was far from perfect, the political network maintained the ability to negatively impact intelligence, and officials within the intelligence network were still capable of overreaching their position, it was far adept at maintaining British security than it was in 1909.

The theoretical foundations of this approach also have an applicability to the broader study of intelligence. Of critical importance is the approach to the definition of intelligence, and the study of intelligence history. The fluid approach to intelligence definition allows a more adaptable approach to compensate for differences between current intelligence definitions and those of contemporaries. The prevalence of superimposing intelligence definitions onto historical periods is a prominent reason why institutions such as MI5, MI6, and the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) have come to dominate intelligence historiography. This approach is, in essence, the result of intelligence historians mirror-imaging their own understanding of intelligence onto historical actors.⁹³⁰ Considering the great differences that a contemporary security environment can have upon the definition of intelligence, and how definitions have developed over the previous twenty years, to superimpose a modern definition of intelligence onto a historical period is flawed.

The then and now, fluid, approach to intelligence allows differences between those being investigated, whether individuals within successive governments, intelligence organisations, or political activists to be fully appreciated. The fluid approach to intelligence definition has also allowed the individual components within the security apparatus to be appreciated, the role of the police has been illuminated, and the existence of networks and mechanism has been explored. However, there is still potential that aspects of British security are still an unknown quantity.

Expanding upon the contribution to the definition of intelligence, is the approach taken to terminology more broadly. The most important factor when using

⁹³⁰ Jackson, 'On Uncertainties and the Limits of Intelligence', pp. 456 – 453; Lowenthal, *Intelligence*, pp. 120 – 122; Gill, 'Knowing the self, knowing the other', pp. 82 – 90.

theory is an appreciation for how individuals may have viewed the terms being used. Terms such as network, oversight, notional cover, intelligence collection need to be examined critically. This is not necessarily to establish more intricate definitions, but to be conscious of early developments that display the origins of these terms, such as the examination of oversight throughout the thesis.

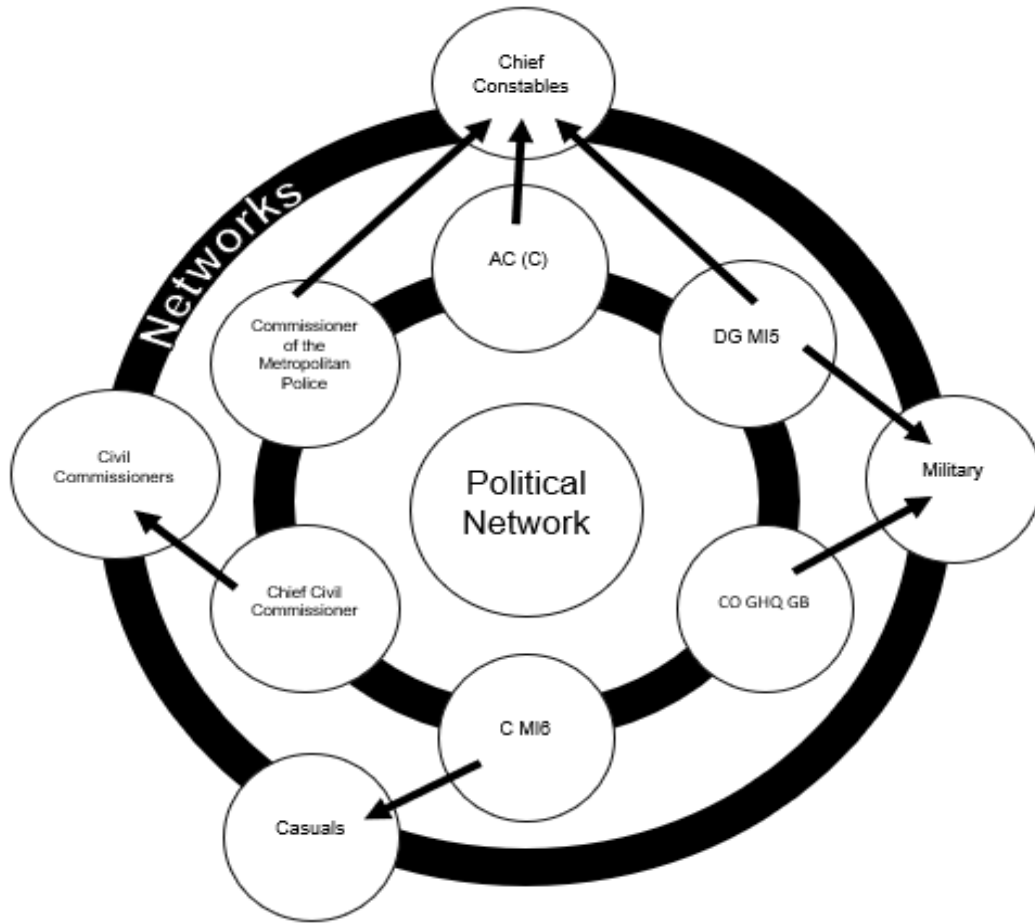
It is difficult to determine the extent to which British security could still be in the shadows. Although great efforts have been made to explore the known secrets of British security history, there are a plethora of areas that could be potential unknown secrets. These unknown secrets revolve around the prevalent secrecy of Special Branch and Home Office records.⁹³¹

The approach of the Metropolitan Police's Freedom of Information department to the release of historical Special Branch records has been highlighted previously. Despite unprecedented access to some of their records, there still remains a volume of records detailing the broader enquiries made during this period. Notable absences include the investigations conducted prior to the First World War, and those conducted in the 1930s. Similar is true of Home Office records relating to the surveillance of perceived threats within this period. With regard to the approach of the Home Office, its retention of records detailing the surveillance of political protest during the 1920s and 1930s is a prominent area that reveals greater detail of the innermost workings of the security apparatus during this period. The above does highlight a dependency on the release of further documentation. While the dangers of this dependency have been

⁹³¹ 'News Transcript: DoD News Briefing – Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers' 12 February 2002, <<http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>>, (Accessed 20 July 2017). See also: Gill and Phythian, *Intelligence*, p. 103; Treverton, 'Addressing "Complexities" in Homeland Security', p. 348; and Graham, 'Rumsfeld's Knowns and Unknowns'.

stated elsewhere, further revision of the British government's secretive attitude towards security, could shed more light on the hidden aspects of British security and how Britain's security apparatus operated. There is also the potential for the same approach to be applied to other periods. The application of this explanatory framework to the history of British security, during the Second World War and the Cold War, may yield similar insights into the role of networks, mechanisms and the police in maintaining British security. A crucial period which would benefit from a similar reappraisal is the early Cold War period, particularly 1960s. An appraisal of the use of invasive and unethical surveillance practices by Special Branch, principally the Special Demonstration Squad, is essential to a broader appreciation for the role of Special Branch as an intelligence collector.

Appendix A: A Hierarchy of Networks



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The National Archive (TNA): Public Records Office (PRO), Kew

Records of the Admiralty

ADM 1

ADM 116

ADM 131

Records of the Cabinet Office

CAB 16

CAB 24

CAB 27

CAB 45

Records of the Foreign Office

FO 1093

Records of the Home Office

HO 45

HO 144

HO 199

HO 317

HO 329

HO 351

HO 384

HO 532

Records of the Security Service.

KV 1

KV 2

KV 3

KV 4

KV 5

Records of the Metropolitan Police

MEPO 2

MEPO 3

MEPO 5

MEPO 10

MEPO 13

MEPO 38

Records of the Public Record Office

PRO 30

British Library

India Office Records

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Greater Manchester Police Museum

GMP miscellaneous papers and correspondence

Metropolitan Police Freedom of Information Department

MEPO 38

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