

# **Holding the Mirror Up to Hatred: Establishment Accounts of Radical Subversion after 1968**

*G. D. White*

## **The Left, Seen from the Right**

As the radicalism of countercultural groupings in Western Europe and the United States developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, so the organizations and individuals who were responsible for protecting the targets of their anger and opposition, or who found themselves the targets, began to search for ways of understanding and combating these new movements. This essay seeks to examine the construction of activist writings and thought by their opponents and the circulation of these versions of what radicals were thinking and doing during this period, primarily in the United Kingdom, but with some reference to other areas of Western Europe and North America. It will center on the process of translation, whereby the reading, both literal and metaphorical, of documents and activities led to the coining of new models through which the emergent forms of radicalism in the period after 1968 might be understood and their supposed subversive tendencies countered.

My specific focus will be on the transition in the UK from the Establishment's monitoring of the activities of a broadly 'traditional' Left to the anatomization of these novel and complex patterns of dissent. In this period, the British Establishment grew increasingly concerned and bewildered by the appearance of a new form of Left politics that seemed neither to advocate the social democratic amelioration of capitalism (the outlook of the mainstream Labour Party) nor to adhere to the Soviet vision of revolutionary socialism (familiar as the territory of the Communist Party of Great Britain). Instead, this new configuration was a bewildering array of groupings, theories and loyalties—Marxist, Maoist, Trotskyite, Anarcho-Syndicalist, Hippie, Yippie, Black Panther, White Panther, Situationist, etc.—and it demanded, in the famous slogan of the Situationists, that not only the workers, but everyone, "take their desires for reality." For the Establishment and those on the political Right, the Left itself, post-1968, became a text which required new,

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dogged and resourceful study, and its self-articulation in literature and theory was the primary means through which this “reading” could be undertaken.

The challenges of the countercultural Left, not only to the ways in which social relations were organized but also to the ethos behind such organization, were seen to emerge in large part from intellectual and cultural work and from writing and its dissemination in literature, education, and performance. Commentators concerned with the threat the countercultural Left posed viewed its radicalism as a product of certain forms of cultural activity – teaching (in particular the discipline of sociology), journalism, civil liberties and human rights legal work, media and arts production, the activities of unions and non-governmental organizations, the proselytizing of those elements in the church which aligned themselves with pacifist and anti-nuclear movements. The Establishment’s mapping of the post-1968 Left emerges in part in response to the perceived subversive potential of these spheres of cultural activity. They identified it as the province of a dissident class-fraction of middle-class intellectuals busily undermining the liberal state that allowed them to flourish (see in particular Richard Clutterbuck’s work later in this essay).

However, while the novel formulations of the countercultural Left demanded a new and complex response, the dominant military-and-intelligence-agency-led understanding of subversion, which suggested that the institutions of Western capitalist democracies were being undermined from within by agents of foreign Communism, maintained its purchase on the Establishment imagination. Although the emergent forms of cultural dissent proved difficult to comprehend in these terms, the desire to respond to all such ‘liberated’ activity as somehow contributing to the encroachment of foreign powers remained remarkably resilient.

The definitions of subversion which emerged from the reading of the post-1968 Left in Britain generally struggled to account for its particular styles, forms and concerns, but they did pathologize the field of broadly countercultural attitudes as the host body in which the germ of violent political revolution could breed.

### Defining Subversion

In the context of an early 1960s Cold War UK, the dominant understanding of subversion was of actions which might endanger national security through 1) exposure of Britain to possible direct attack by the Soviet Bloc; 2) threats to and destabilization of British colonies overseas; and 3) threats to British economic interests such as the nationalization by Egypt’s President Nasser of the Suez canal in 1956.

In his 1994 study of the relationship between the security services and liberal democratic governments, *Policing Politics; Security, Intelligence and the Liberal Democratic State*, Peter Gill discusses the evolution of a semi-official definition of subversion in UK security circles. He suggests that this dates publicly from the point at

which Lord Denning, reporting on the 1963 Profumo scandal (in which a government minister was found to be having an affair with the same call-girl as a Russian military attaché), described the existing governmental definition of subversives as people who “would contemplate the overthrow of government by unlawful means” (Gill 119). Later, as Gill identifies, a development of this definition intended to account for the post-1968 picture was produced by the appropriately named Brigadier (now General) Frank Kitson who in 1971 published an extraordinarily open account of military and civil approaches to counter-insurgency. This was in part developed from British Army experience in Malaya, but was also largely shaped by the Cold-War trope of pan-Soviet influence. Here the operational military model is exemplified and revealed to a public gaze which may have been blissfully unaware of its presence and of the applicability of techniques designed for anti-colonial episodes to ‘home’ politics. *Low-Intensity Operations* describes subversion as follows:

Subversion, then, will be held to mean all measures short of the use of armed force taken by one section of the people of a country to overthrow those governing the country at the time, or to force them to do things which they do not want to do. It can involve the use of political and economic pressure, strikes, protest marches, and propaganda, and can also include the use of small-scale violence for the purpose of coercing recalcitrant members of the population into giving support (Kitson 3).

This modeling of subversion as activity that is motivated by a goal beyond its immediate manifestations – the march, the strike, the development of ‘pressure’ – has implications for the development of criteria by which other forms of activity might be characterized as subversive. It allows for the modeling of agency and influence as in the hands of small groups, but as then being made concrete in activities—such as writing, teaching, and theorizing—undertaken by individuals, groups and organizations who cannot be directly linked to the originators. The mere imputation of a subversive motive, revealed in writing or speech, might become the means by which such a connection is implied and, evidently, the definition of such motives and links is largely in the eye of the monitoring body. Certainly, through the post-war period in the U.K., the concern about subversion by insurgents linked directly to the Soviet Union had provided a rationale for detecting motivating links between diverse and distinct parties and groups. In the Soviet bloc an *eminence grise* existed which allowed for the suspicion and detection of revolutionary motives behind a range of activities and attitudes. However, Kitson’s model also allows for the translation of colonial models of subversion into the domestic politics of the U.K.

Gill illustrates how other liberal states provide a definition of subversion which contrasts with Kitson’s, often requiring the presence of direct foreign state influence or serious political violence

to invoke the category. However, in the discussion of these definitions in Canadian law, Gill shows how the model of subversion also creates a continuum involving the unwitting and the unconscious as well as the determined and deliberate. He indicates how Canadian law defines 'active measures' as the means by which foreign powers might advance their interests and undermine those of the nation that they wish to subvert. In the case of Soviet subversion this might involve attempts to deceive or distort the target's "perceptions of reality," creating the possible existence of unwitting agents of foreign influence unable to convince the security services of their good faith. Gill goes on:

At this point we truly enter the 'wilderness of mirrors', because the very lack of evidence as to, for example, the existence of foreign-inspired or home-grown subversion will be taken, not as disconfirmation of the hypothesis that subversion is a real problem, but as an indication of the extremes of deception and subtlety the subversive and/or the controlling state will go to in order to maintain secrecy (Gill 122).

This tendency in the defining of subversion, to place into a continuum all activity which might be defined as culturally antagonistic with that which could be defined as militarily threatening, is the repeated strategy of a range of commentators in the period after 1968. Again and again the desire to delegitimize that domestic activity which may be seen as countercultural through a militarized model of Left subversion would produce a version of Left activism or thought which caricatured the progressive or radical ideas as subversive elements in a military/security paradigm.

In the UK, the supposed continuum of Left subversives which the state found itself aligned against after 1968 would make bedfellows of strange, disparate and even directly hostile bodies. This suggested that the attempts by Kitson and other commentators to 'translate' the crisis were being repeatedly impacted by the shifting identity of the supposed causers of that crisis, leading to the misattribution and misinterpretation of groups and organizations and their activities.

Describing, as Kitson does, the counter-subversive role of the armed forces in neutral tones and with reference to a range of political scenarios leaves the issues surrounding the definition or evidence for the existence of domestic subversion neatly to one side. As a springboard for his analysis of possible domestic discontent, Kitson writes of insurgency in Aden, Malaya, and Cyprus in the context of post-war British colonialism, presenting as unproblematic the presence of the British army in these locations (i.e., it stands as the legitimate military force of the governing power). However, apart from mention of peace-keeping in the context of Northern Ireland, a conflict which had yet to directly impact on the rest of the UK at the time of Kitson's writing, he deals with domestic politics only through the projection of possible scenarios in which law and order has broken down – perhaps in the aftermath

of nuclear war – and military force is required to maintain order and discipline. In doing so, he translates a military model of resistance to subversion into the domestic scene, one which, it has been suggested, may have influenced army policy and attitude around the Bloody Sunday shootings in Derry in 1972 in which 13 people died when Paratroops opened fire on a Civil Rights march by Catholics in the Bogside area of the city. Certainly the emergence of the book at a time of supposed national crisis fomented by post-60s revolutionary pressures drew attention to it as a blueprint for military involvement in the UK.

While being concerned to analyze the ways in which subversion spreads, Kitson has some reassuring points to make for the Establishment in a liberal democracy such as the UK. He makes mention of the forces behind the key revolutionary moment of the May events of 1968 in France to show how, in his views, incendiary, subversive ideas may, in fact, fail to ignite wider rebellion. In this case he suggests that the disturbances might have been a success for the participants but not for the organizers. In a chapter that deals with the “Non-Violent Phase” of insurrection, he suggests that both workers and students were given misrepresentations of the aims of the subversives at their heart—the overthrow of the French government to “substitute for it a non-bureaucratic form of revolutionary communism” (Kitson 86). In fact, the benighted body caught up in the protests was led to see it as a demand for more pay or for university reform, the satisfaction of both of which demands brought the insurrection to an abrupt end. Kitson concludes from this that, “in short, except where the real object of the campaign is related to the expulsion of an occupying power, it carries the seeds of its own destruction within it” (Kitson 86)—a thoroughly reassuring thought for any suitably constituted state, suggesting that the elasticity of democracy is almost infinite.

#### **Subversive Influences in the UK**

The careful rhetorical structuring by which Kitson maintains an apparent distance from the discussion of the specifics of subversion ‘at home’ while developing a military model through which to counter such activity, was not shared by a number of other commentators of the period, although the suggestion that subversion is a process of influencing by stages certainly was. In his introduction to a collection of “Studies of Left-Wing Subversion” written in 1970, Brian Crozier, a conservative commentator who has published widely on the international Left, suggests that Soviet-inspired subversion—both through theoretical writings, industrial agitation and the use of front organizations—is a constant process which has grown so insidious as to be largely undetectable. “Today, the bombardment of our minds with subversive poisons of one kind or another has become so massive and so constant that many have long ceased to be aware that it is taking place” (Crozier vii). This subversion is read as directly Communistic, although the forms it takes are hydra-headed. The analysis provided by the volume is at

least subtle enough to register that the official ideology of the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB)—a party whose links with Moscow would be self-admitted—is no longer dominant. What has taken its place is difficult to define, though it clearly emerges from a range of Left groupings which have appeared in the period after 1968. Crozier's volume is a general alarm call on the perceived threat offered by the wider Left. One essay in the volume, titled "Competitive Subversion," uses the plethora of Left groupuscles to persuade its readership that the apparent fragmentation of the extra-parliamentary Left is in no way reassurance, because the phenomenon described in the essay's title merely ensures the need for greater vigilance as literature and ideology spreads across the nation. Describing the "proliferation of extreme Left-wing publications," the essay's author, Harry Welton, indicates that these journals and their subversion-spreading contents are only the visible tip of an iceberg of extremism:

This figure of 'more than 150' Left-wing journals *as quoted by the director of a radical London bookshop* is an inadequate guide to the number actually in circulation. It takes no account of the much larger number of extremist publications issued throughout the country by groups based upon industries as a whole, individual factories, educational establishments and localities (Welton 103, my italics).

To Welton, this range of significant and influential publication is reflective of the number of groups – all directly subversive in intent, but variously deceptive in their operations – which constructed fronts for themselves in the aftermath of a CPGB-dominated Left scene.

Other smaller but no less virulent groups include the International Socialists (Trotskyist in origin); the Revolutionary Workers' party (Trotskyist); the International Marxist group (pro-Cuban); the Communist Party of the UK, Marxist-Leninist; the Anarchist Federation of the UK; and the Syndicalist Workers' Federation. Such organizations, and there are many more, can fairly be described as parent bodies. They not only carry out activities in their own right, so to speak, but their members and supporters either control, or are active within, "front" organizations operating in the nation's industrial, commercial, political, cultural and social life (Welton 104).

Welton's parade of hostile forces ignores the utter hostility between these various groupings and avoids a description of the range and tenor of their political programs and the minute scale of some of their operations, although it provides a neat summary of the Right's dominant sense of a traceable line of subversion from the subversives with their hands on the levers of theory to the ignorant but manipulated members of their front organizations.

However, Welton's desire to construct a picture of the geography

of subversion leads him to ignore many of the specific processes of political activism. The reading of a contagious threat by Welton from the appearance of a range of symptomatic journals is contradicted by the nature of political journalism, the setting up of even the most agitational Left-wing journal being – as any hardened politico would testify – very different from the wielding of any direct influence. At the 1972 trial of the British urban guerrillas the Angry Brigade, one of those convicted, who maintained his innocence, told of their collective work on an underground publication, called *Strike* – very likely one of those stocked by the radical bookshops which Welton investigated – and of its “failure”. It may well have been the frustrations and apparent limitations of devices such as print and radical bookshops as mechanisms for the promulgation of radical ideas that led, in the case of the Angry Brigade, to a short and scattershot campaign of revolutionary violence. In the case of the defendant James Greenfield, this frustration was attested to in court as an example of the ways in which a group seeing themselves as involved in libertarian politics might find an ideal realization of their desire to construct and disseminate a radical agenda in the creation of written material – associates of the group were also known to have participated in the editing of a women’s edition of the underground periodical, *Frendz* (Green 356-362). The agitational newspaper, written by a collective of informed activists and distributed through bookshops, rallies, and meetings, became both the emblem of the Left’s desire to analyze and correct the failings of the current system, and the mechanism by which the Right might anatomize the Left’s apparent program and discover its lines of community and communication, although the mismatch between the appearance of radical ideas in print and their translation into activity and organization is often left unremarked in this context; rather, the mere existence of a periodical such as *Strike* becomes, in the terms of the analysis offered by texts such as Crozier’s, the proof of a contagious threat and the means by which to define and delegitimize it.

While Welton’s analysis sticks to the modeling of subversion by thought rather than deed, Frank Kitson also provides an additional illustration of the process by which revolutionary organizations might infiltrate the institutions of urban democracy. In this an ‘overt’ political party is shadowed by a ‘covert’ subversive organization which infiltrates members into each layer of the political organization and which has direct links to the “city terrorist groups” (Kitson 128), the urban guerrillas who would, in Kitson’s thinking, operate as the advance guard of the revolution. This model suggests that legitimate political activity and subversive violence are inescapably linked, with only the ignorance of those members of the ‘overt’ party who are not also members of the ‘covert’ organization separating the political organization from its terrorist roots (Kitson 128).

If Welton suggests that Soviet and far-Left subversion is rife in the groups that agitated for revolution, so Kitson provides a further indication of quite how disguised the process of subversion might

be and how closely linked the apparently democratic and the terrorist could become. Both Welton and Kitson are characteristic of a deeply paranoid mindset in the political commentary of the era. Through their literature and infiltration of 'front' organizations, subversive groups are read as constantly active and infectious, as agents who can never be wholly guarded against, whose ultimate aim is violence. Ideas which might indicate the amelioration or reorganization of existing social relations, or merely the demystifying of power structures in capitalist democracies—or which may only be the expression of the convoluted and utopian countercultural project which publications like *Oz*, *International Times*, and *Frendz* represented in the London bookshops of 1970—are all characterized as contributory elements to this continuum of extremism.

### Theory into Practice

Given the existence and significance of this model of subversion, and of this method of reading the crisis, it is no surprise to find that particular ideological formations are constructed as the keys to its wider international operations. Writing in his 1973 book *Subversion, Propaganda, Agitation and the Spread of People's War*, Ian Greig published an account of the growing threat of "People's War" which he saw as a form of catch-all revolutionary warfare that represented the pursuit of political goals through the emergence of a new unifying philosophy which was uniting and rapidly furthering the cause of that splintered and fragmented political mass described by Welton. By the end of the 1960s, in Greig's eyes, the major Communist parties had been "outpaced" by a body of less well organized but often more passionate and militant organizations, "a jumbled pattern of Maoists, Trotskyists, anarchists, 'Revolutionary Socialists' and pro-Cuban elements strenuously competing for the allegiance of the discontented, the embittered or the young and idealistic" (Greig 95).

These apparently splintered factions are then re-read as an homogenous mass in relation to their subversive objectives and their tactics, which, according to Greig, adjusted to the failings of May 1968 by recognizing the need for a more carefully planned and instigated campaign to "undermine the whole structure" of "the social and governmental machine of a major Western capitalist state"; this form of campaigning is identified by Greig as an intensive program of "propaganda and psychological warfare...directed at...softening up 'the establishment'" (Greig 96). Subversion here combines the setting up of "red universities," the turning of trade unions into revolutionary instruments, and the infiltration of industry, education, local government, and journalism and the media, as well as the creation of international links. The International Socialists and the International Marxist Group are identified as the two key subversive organizations busy establishing 'front' operations, and many individuals are named, including BBC Producer Stuart Hood and Gus (now Lord) Macdonald, then editor of Granada TV's current affairs program *World In Action*.



These two are presented as members of a front organization for the International Socialists called the Free Communications Group (partly funded by the highly respectable Rowntree Foundation). According to Greig, this group “has made no bones about its belief that the press, radio, television services and the cinema industry should be controlled by the employees who actually work for these concerns” (Greig 100). On the face of it we are here some distance from the terroristic undermining of power, the FCC seeming to represent an ameliorative operation rather than a subversive one, but the rhetoric of Greig’s text works to position it within the new ‘post-Communist’ continuum of revolutionary agitation.

Having established the presence of Left organizations which campaign for their beliefs and ends in industry and the media and in the world of the claimants’ unions and benefits agencies, Greig makes a further step to establish how close such legitimate political practices are to terroristic violence. In a section entitled “Theory into Practice,” he presents an analysis of the short and, to him, inevitable step from political organization to armed insurrection – making quite clear that any organization which is playing a part in the critical analysis of existing capitalism is itself linked to this process. The example Greig uses is “the Black Power groups of the United States” (Greig 106). Here, Greig establishes that a new tactic of sabotage and insurrection has emerged in the US, attested to both by splinter groups like the Revolutionary Action Movement and the dominant bodies such as the Black Panthers, although he also declares that

at the present time the movement has in fact become deeply split between those who wish to continue concentrating upon preparations for launching a campaign of guerrilla warfare, and those who believe the best way forward lies in working within ‘the system’ for the time being (Greig 108).

From such disputes Greig continues his survey by linking in the Weathermen, the French-Canadian Front de Liberation du Quebec, the German Baader-Meinhoff group, the Basque ETA, and the Uruguayan Tupamoros. Whatever the actions and attitudes of these particular groups to the post-1968 moment, there is no adequate case to be made for their combining, other than that they are all broadly of the Left. In fact, any close analysis begins to reveal the fractures and disturbances between those groups which saw their political role as agitation and persuasion for change (the British groups to which Greig refers) and those which were prepared to use violence directly as some form of short order revolutionary transcendence and whose actions and motivations, while undoubtedly being analyzed in the organs of theory and comment on the Left in the UK would equally undoubtedly have been condemned as Left-wing communism – Lenin’s “infantile disorder.” The British New Left, which first broke away from Communist hegemony over the invasion of Hungary in 1956, was always keen to employ the ideas and teachings of Marx and Lenin while keep-

ing a distinct distance from their supposed bastardization in the shape of "Actually Existing Socialism" and its critique of the moribund Soviet model extended to those who saw "direct action" as an instant solution. For the Right to read the advocacy of violence as a shared characteristic of the disparate groups and aims of Left organizations, and to suggest that the countercultural forces of the day were all linked by this desire for revolutionary transcendence was to create a kind of wish-fulfillment fantasy of Left illegitimacy, in which all dissenting or non-normative action necessarily played host to the virus of violent revolution.

### Situationism and Situationists

The need to find a unifying signifier which might allow commentators to hold on to this particular model of the homogeneity of subversive ideas arising from the post-1968 continuum appeared to have been satisfied in the aftermath of the appearance of the Angry Brigade, the ambitious and idealist Anglo version of the European urban guerrillas of the early 1970s .

By 1977, Richard Clutterbuck, an ex-British Army officer turned political commentator, is reading the proliferation of political violence as a symptomatic signifier of a "terrorist international," the final point on the familiar continuum. This international, born out of the left wing movements previously defined as subversive, has now found its theoretical underpinning in a previously unexamined body of ideas:

These international terrorist movements are initially formed by people who seek revolutionary change inside their own countries but become frustrated by the inability of other Marxist movements, whether orthodox or extreme, to bring it about by political or industrial action. They believe that such movements must fail because the overwhelming majority of people do not want their lives to be disrupted by revolutionary change. They therefore aim to bring their society into such a state of chaos that the people will cease to believe that the existing system can maintain an orderly life for them in any case. Most of them would subscribe to the philosophy of 'Situationism' (Clutterbuck 85) .

In fact, Situationism developed from an art critique into a form of political philosophy that provided models for action that were certainly subversive, but far from terroristic. As Andrew Hussey suggests, it was a negationist movement, intending to provoke progression through a scornful antipathy to dominant notions of contemporary social organization. However, Clutterbuck reads Situationism as the sine qua non of countercultural politics – extreme, irrational and absolute:

Devotees of this philosophy believe that the whole pattern of civilized life...is artificial and unnatural and that if people can

be made to realize this they will begin spontaneously to take their lives into their own hands without regard for the remainder of the community and its laws...the community would crumble into chaos, at first gradually, and then accelerating towards a galloping collapse. It is fruitless to look for logic in this plan...Those who genuinely believe in it can only be described as mad (Clutterbuck 85-6).

This requires little annotation, other than to say that the reading of Situationism as a key to a hostile meta-Left which emerges in antipathy to both Western and Soviet models of political economy is evidently mistaken. Neither the material nor the theoretical links can be consistently established between Situationist ideas and the forms of terrorism which erupted internationally in the 1970s, and although there were undoubtedly groups who did adopt aspects of Situationist thought and analysis in their self-articulation (in particular the link has been made to the rhetoric and concern with spectacle of the Angry Brigade), the suggestion that the Situationist was the key revolutionary guru who had nothing but nihilism in mind bears no relation even to the most indirectly Situationist program—witness the Angry Brigade's constant referencing of the industrial and social struggles which were a key component of more conventional Left politics.

Clutterbuck's reading of Situationism never approaches the theory directly, preferring instead to see the term as the name badge of a new collective revolutionary consciousness which he furnishes with a moral corrective:

Very few international terrorists have known real want and deprivation as children; nor have they been brought up in the harsh school of a poor industrial neighborhood, where the boys (and girls) settle their quarrels with fists (Clutterbuck 87).

Clutterbuck's model references theory as the great contagious agent in the spreading of revolutionary terrorism, and finds it a useful metaphor for explaining the process of international subversion. However, the corrective he offers is of an empiricism and a 'natural' state upon which theory is a disfiguring parasite, and his parenthetical inclusion of girls as figures who get involved in the corrective university of life leads into further reflections on the presentation of the make-up of the continuum of subversion and terror.

### **Subversive Women**

Other models of the post-Soviet subversive continuum also focus on a terroristic international, but attribute its existence to less specific forms of theoretical contamination. A further analysis of the subversive threat in the UK—this time written from a managerial perspective—sought to establish the kinds of illegitimate womanhood which provided a sub-continuum all their own. Today, Peter Hamilton's *Espionage, Terrorism and Subversion: An Examination*

and a *Philosophy of Defence for Management* reads almost as a caricature of a certain right-wing mindset, desperate to make sense of the confusions presented by the Left movements of the day. In a chapter titled "The Female Terrorist," Hamilton analyzes the presence of women (or, for the most part, girls), within the key incidents and groupings, which might have been labeled terroristic in the previous decade. These again include the Angry Brigade, whose Anna Mendleson and Hilary Creek the author admits "are not strictly speaking terrorists" but who are part of a gallery of familiar figures including Ulrike Meinhoff, Leila Khaled and Patty Hearst. Hamilton's thesis is that "maladjusted" women become part of political violence, a symptom of a society in which the rejection of norms leads directly to extremism. After suggesting that, in childhood, girls are overindulged and might suffer acute emotional withdrawal if an authority figure tells them "no." Hamilton draws in Charles Manson's apparent control over his female followers as an example of the possession which can take hold of the misdirected young woman. Somehow this becomes an element in the shaping of women terrorists, along with "the Women's Liberation Movement itself"; "The farther one delves into the cause of this problem, the more the evidence seems to point to a sexual one" Hamilton suggests (108); and, he concludes,

It must not be forgotten...that female terrorism is but one symptom of a massive syndrome of female unrest and discontent with the male, whose vitality and confidence the Women's Liberation Movement is sapping...Management...must be aware of this, and become conscious of the fact that crimes and misdemeanors, which hitherto have been considered as solely part of male behavior, are now being committed by women (110-111).

For Hamilton, the female stationery thief exists on a plane with various other representatives of the permissive society from the hippie decadent to the hard-core, pro-Soviet revolutionary. And if the activities of such figures seem not to fit into the dominant model of crypto-Marxist subversion, Clutterbuck's readings of Situationist theory and its followers stands as an appropriately scarifying manifestation.

### **Low-Intensity Solutions**

However, if the continuum model could be seen to co-opt so much varied activity, how could the concerned parties construct a response to it? Two approaches seem particularly crucial in the period. The first was to act in the manner advocated by Frank Kitson in the UK and paralleled by developments across Western Europe and America. This was to create agencies which were active in the overt pursuit and sabotaging of any actions, groups, or individuals seen as part of an internally subversive force while also building covert operations—at the level of the conflict and at the

level of the peace-time propaganda exercise—which might destabilize such subversives and their organizations. Into this category I would place the development of state agencies such as MI5 and the Special Branch in the UK. The latter's Bomb Squad, so significant in combating the activities of the IRA, was established in direct response to the Angry Brigade's appearance. The second process was to establish a rhetorical response to the subversives that might match, in proselytizing influence, the apparently rich and effortlessly infectious circulation of theory and agitational material of the kind whose proliferation so alarmed Harry Welton. This would build a discourse of 'security' which would work to legitimize increased political and cultural control.

Part of this latter process was the development of the kinds of conspiracy overview which I have already identified, linking a variety of organizations and motives into a block of hostile agencies whose aims were all broadly the same. Particular organizations came to specialize in the wake-up call analysis of this landscape of subversion. An example would be the kind of single-issue pamphlet produced by the Foreign Affairs Research Institute in the 1970s, a body that sought to highlight threats to the nation state. In Anthony Burton's *The Destruction of Loyalty*, a paper addressing the evidently alarming targeting of the West's armed forces by peaceniks, the continuum of subversion runs from well-meaning and concerned parents of soldiers gathering petition signatures to present to the government via named Members of Parliament who seemed less than sympathetic to the armed forces role in Northern Ireland, through the pamphlets of organizations such as the pacifistic British Withdrawal from the Northern Ireland Campaign, to the criticism of Frank Kitson and Richard Clutterbuck's ideas in the pages of *Socialist Worker*. The step from speaking against the army's presence in Northern Ireland to outright treasonable subversion of the army's readiness to fight is a short one in Burton's view. The pressures directed against the armed forces are taken as evidence of revolutionary intent, although the specifics of the complex situation into which the army was being placed in fact seem to suggest an inevitable tension.

Extremists can also be expected to attempt to set class, racial, local or even family loyalties against the requirements of duty. It is today impossible to use units of Irish origin...in Northern Ireland. Individual Irishmen can also be excused service in Northern Ireland where this might pose problems of divided loyalty. Should the Army be used more widely in dealing with civil unrest, this problem will become critical and the opportunities for disaffection will increase (Burton 46).

However, within existing models of policy the relationship between the civil and the military is revealed – not least by Kitson – to be a pressing concern. Kitson's model suggests that the army must operate in tandem with civil authorities, but that, in the 'non-violent' phase of social unrest, the attitude of the population to the

military, and the degree to which the troops mixed with the population, will be crucial – suggesting that contact should be restricted on the grounds of the possible subversive indoctrination of soldiers, except where information was vital and the soldier represented a key agent in obtaining it, in which case their employment and leisure should be directed with this information-gathering in mind. Equally, command and control of counter-subversive operations may be hampered in a worsening situation.

Where the official local government leader would be the part time elected Chairman of the Council concerned...[he] might be totally unable, unsuitable or unwilling to act as the chairman of an operational committee...For these reasons military commanders must be prepared to make ad hoc arrangements which might include the setting up of committees consisting of military and police officers only (Kitson 92-3).

Such an open presentation of the modes and methods of counter-insurgency provided by Kitson proved embarrassing to say the least, and the Left went to town on what was perceived to be the secret state revealing itself. In the context of the declaration of a series of States of Emergency by the UK government in the period between 1972 and 1974 in response to various large-scale industrial disputes, Tony Bunyan, in an analysis of *The History and Practice of the Political Police in the UK*, identifies Kitson as a key ventriloquist of a developing state concern with the nature of subversion. He discusses the close links between military and police in the preparation of a National Security Plan, intended to provide a response, along the lines suggested by Kitson, to the threat of home-based insurrection, and suggests that the publication of Kitson's book "really signalled to outsiders that the state's plans were in earnest" (Bunyan 277). However, if the Right and the security forces had tended to see continuums of conspiracy and a close link between disseminated theory and radical activity everywhere they looked, then the Left's response was equally ready to point to conspiracies of a form of inverse subversion. Bunyan identifies a statement made at a Royal United Services Institute Seminar held in 1973 by its Chairman, as illustrative of the climate of concern which was leading the state to increasingly authoritarian methods. In quoting it, Bunyan both identifies the Right's own continuum at work, and establishes his own perceived network, in which government, academics, arms traders, police, and military are allies in the escalation of anti-libertarian security measures:

[W]hat happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London, and if we lose in Belfast we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham. Just as Spain in the 1930s was a rehearsal for a wider European conflict, so perhaps what is happening in Northern Ireland is a rehearsal for urban guerrilla war more widely in Europe and particularly in the UK (287).

Clearly the rhetorics employed by the Right to present the coherence of an analysis often strayed beyond the evidence, establishing false and mystified targets in order to bring a whole range of politically, morally, or culturally unacceptable practices and behaviors into the frame of the security risk. In doing so, the translation of ideas from received Left theory into Right security-management rhetoric was moving on from baiting the Left into attempting to articulate an emerging model of how a security overview might operate, and against what it might define itself. We might describe this as Post-60's New Right Paranoia. By 1985, Chapman Pincher, reviewing the nature of Left subversion in the whole post-war period in his foam-flecked *The Secret Offensive. Active Measures: A Saga of Deception, Disinformation, Subversion, Terrorism, Sabotage and Assassination* is able to construct a vast spectrum of activity as part of post-war attempts by Moscow to destroy the UK, and much of his ammunition is directed at the familiar target of the 1960s:

The 1960s saw a proliferation of 'social science' departments in universities and teaching institutions which attracted Marxist staff and have produced many more Marxists for similar posts. They have been a vocal source of continuing criticism of the evils of capitalist society which must have been music to the Politburo's ears (173).

In the chapter from which this quotation is extracted, educationalists became part of a continuum with the most successful Soviet spies in the UK, the 'Cambridge Five' of Burgess, Philby, Maclean, Cairncross, and Blunt as "Agents of Influence" with Left subversion as their only goal.

### **Making Sense of the Counterculture**

In the range of post-1968 articulations of a counter-cultural Left I've examined, Pincher's is the rabid extreme. However, like the work of other Right commentators in the period, it struggles to find substance in its versions of the post 1968 Left, substance which might legitimize the dismissal and distrust of the range of ideas and challenges arising from the post 1968 movements. For the Right, the "making sense" of post-1968 attitudes and their possible influence led to a consistent fear of radical theory and of its potential as the infectious colonizer of the legitimate aspects of protest and dissent in liberal democracies. By demonizing a range of Left tendencies, from schoolteachers to anarchists, from union representatives to female office workers, the Right commentators of the post-1968 period sought to present legitimate activities as shadowed by the forces of violent insurrection.

Right suspicion of the attitudes, behavior and ideas which represented the body of countercultural thought and activity became bound up in the dominant Cold War binary divide, with absolutist Communism or, worse, nihilistic Situationism shown as waiting to

exploit misguided young radicals. The rhetorical maneuvering which sought to construct lines of influence and to identify and translate into more familiar discourses the catalytic theoretical material found within the counterculture's self-articulations undoubtedly addressed significant and influential bodies of dissenting thought. However, the caricaturing of the countercultural Left's thinking tended both to overstate and to deliberately misrepresent this material, encouraging the development of a discourse of security management in which military models of subversion might be employed to define and delegitimize cultural activity. The resultant polemics represent a significant body of commentary on the distance between post 1968 countercultural impulses and the targets of their Utopian challenge, and on the processes whereby the new wine of cultural and political radicalism was siphoned into old bottles of subversion.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The Situationists were widely credited—though this view is not without its dissenters—with a catalytic role in the Paris events of May 1968; for further information see Hussey, Viénet, Rohan.

<sup>2</sup>The events of “Bloody Sunday”—in which the British Army maintain that they were fired on first—is the subject of an ongoing public inquiry in the UK set up in the aftermath of the Northern Irish Good Friday peace agreement and the devolution of power to the Northern Ireland Executive. Kitson held senior roles in the British Army in Ireland in the 1970s and 80s, and Simon Winchester's *Guardian* newspaper report on his own testimony to the Bloody Sunday enquiry illustrates something of Kitson's influence on events. Kitson has recently (October 2002) testified to the inquiry, claiming that he had little or no role in the army's response to rioting in Derry.

<sup>3</sup>See White, *The Trial of the Angry Brigade*. For a patchy contemporary record of the trial, see *Time Out*, London, 1971-72.

<sup>4</sup>See Fountain, Nelson. Titles amongst the plethora of publications circulating at the time, particularly in London, include in addition to those mentioned, *Nasty Tales*, *Ink*, *Red Notes*, *Suburban Press* (based in Croydon, South London), *Peace News* (journal of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), *Freedom*, and, enduringly radical in the period between 1968 and 1978, *Time Out*. For a comprehensive list, see Noyce.

<sup>5</sup>See Carr, Bright.

<sup>6</sup>From whence Clutterbuck's version of Situationism emerges is unclear, although Carr: 1973, may be the base source. Certainly it is a caricatured version both of the nature of Situationist ideas and of their influence. For some of the extensive range of more considered overviews of the body of thought produced by the Situationist International between 1958 and 1972 and its two leading theorists, Guy Debord and Raoul Vaneigem, see Plant, Gray, Debord's key work, *La Société du Spectacle*, and Vaneigem; the



latter are available in a number of translations from the original French.

<sup>7</sup>For further discussion of the reading of Situationism in relation to the Western European experience of terrorism – and for details of Debord's dismissal of the Red Brigade's actions, see Andrew Hussey's 2001 biography of Guy Debord, *The Game of War*, in particular the chapter titled, "Terrorism and the State." See also, Len Bracken's *Guy Debord, Revolutionary* and Debord's own *Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition of the Society of the Spectacle*.

<sup>8</sup>For a more contemporary account of the ways in which the extra-parliamentary Right apparently prepared itself against Left-leaning subversive influences in mid 1970s Britain, and of the organizations such as the National Association for Freedom, Aims of Industry and founder of the SAS David Stirling's proposed private army which were established for this purpose, see Paul Routledge's 2002 biography of wartime Colditz escaper, intelligence agent, Conservative MP, shaper of Margaret Thatcher's accession to the Conservative Party leadership, and victim of an Irish National Liberation Army car bomb, Airey Neave, *Public Servant: Secret Agent. The Elusive Life And Violent Death of Airey Neave*.

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