

APRIL 1981

A comprehensive account of the year's work would be a huge task. What follows is intended to give some indication of the scope of S.C.C.L.'s work.

The flavour of the day to day work in the office - and of S.C.C.L. as an emergency service can be represented by a single case. During the writing of this report, at 8 o'clock in the evening a man phoned the office in great distress. A chair-bound sufferer from multiple sclerosis, he had twelve weeks previously taken an overdose of 100 sleeping tablets. In consequence he had been charged with committing a breach of the peace, and immediately before his phone call he had been visited by the police with a warrant for his arrest for non-appearance at court that morning. In fact he had received no notification of the court hearing. The police had gone away again because he was alone in the house with his two children, but they had promised to return between 9 and 10 that night when his wife would be home. He had been unable to contact his solicitor. We contacted the police and got the warrant stopped.

#### Battered Women

S.C.C.L. jointly organised a conference called "Battered Women and the State" in Edinburgh in December. This was very successful with over 120 people attending.

#### Court Facilities

S.C.C.L. publicised the sordid facilities for the public in Edinburgh Sheriff Court. It drew attention to the absence of cafeteria, creche, and the generally low standards of cleanliness. The authorities had to accept that our criticisms were legitimate and steps have been taken to improve the facilities.

#### Criminal Justice

Shortly after the publication of the Criminal Justice Bill S.C.C.L. produced a 40,000 word analysis and commentary which was the acknowledged basis of opposition to the Bill by a wide impressive variety of organisations. Thanks in great measure to the work of S.C.C.L. members in parliament many of the worst aspects of the Bill were tempered. What the effect of this will be in practice is yet to be seen, but there is some reason

to think that the effects of many of the provisions of the Act will be rather different from those intended by the Government. S.C.C.L. is currently pressing the Secretary of State to honour his virtual undertaking to introduce tape-recording of police interrogations under the new detention powers.

#### Citizenship and Nationality

S.C.C.L. has prepared a briefing paper on the Government's proposals for British Nationality. It states our opposition to the proposed three-tier citizenship on grounds of racism. We also campaigned against the deportation of Norma Bernardo, one of the 200 Filipino workers declared retrospectively as an "illegal immigrant", and Norma has now been allowed to stay in the country.

#### Children's Hearings

The compilation of research statistics which confirm S.C.C.L.'s observations about widespread lack of fairness in the children's hearing system has led to renewed pressure from S.C.C.L. for reform. At the Annual General Meeting of the Association of Reporters to the Children's Panels in Scotland S.C.C.L. called for a complete reorientation of the selection and training of hearing members and for a new criterion - that of 'the best interests of the child under law'. When the Secretary of State proposed a number of substantially harmful and dangerous changes in the Children's Hearing Rules, S.C.C.L. responded with one of the most comprehensive memoranda on the subject to be received by the Secretary of State, to which it appended a number of very positive proposals for change. This memorandum is available under the title "Young Justice", which has received substantial and impressive support from a number of people within the children's hearing system.

#### Education

S.C.C.L. has continued to campaign on a number of educational issues. In March of this year it produced a (duplicated) factsheet on truancy, and will shortly publish a comprehensive pamphlet on rights in education.

#### Gaelic Language

Following the failure of Donald Stewart's Bill on linguistic rights, and the similar failure of Dennis Canavan's amendment to the Education Bill, both of which S.C.C.L. supported, there is a clear need for us to devise a campaigning policy.

## INFORMATION COMPILED FROM REPORTS OF CHIEF CONSTABLES 1980

FORCE	WAR DUTIES/'HOME DEFENCE'	SPECIAL BRANCH (Training)	(Mention)	FIRE-ARMS TRAINING
Central	8 officers on courses		Nil	10% of force trained
Dumfries & Galloway (308)	3 Inspectors, 2 Constables to course (E); 1 Insp., 1 Sgt., 1 Const. & ALL probationers given training. 1 Const. on Air Observation Course*	1 Insp.(E): 2 Sgts., 1 Const.(E): 4 Consts. to Port Training Course, London. (Insp. 2 Sgts. 15 Consts. at Stranraer Port Unit)	Yes	'Regular'
Grampian	1 Super.,(E); 2 Sgts., 1 Const. giving training to officers. 1 Sgt. Air Obs. Course*	2 officers to detective training in London **	Nil	7% of force in regular training
Lothian & Borders	9 Sen. officers; 5 Sgts. and 181 Probationers given training. 6 Sgts. to Air Obs. training.		Yes (no details)	No mention.
Northern Course	1 Super., 1 Ch. Insp., 1 Insp. to courses (E). 1 Sgt., 1 Const. on Air Obs. Course	2 Sgts., 3 Consts. allocated from CID. 1 Insp., 2 Sgts., 6 Consts. on training courses.	Yes	1 Sgt. on instructors course. 1 Insp., 2 Sgts., 35 Consts.(initial) 2 Ch. Insp., Insp., 47 Sgts., 88 Const(refresher)
Strathclyde **	Only warning and monitoring installations mentioned - 8 new, 12 re-sited.		Yes (in command table only)	No mention
Tayside	No mention		Yes (in command table only)	
Chief Insp. of Constabulary (Scotland) 1979	Courses: 1 Ass. Ch. Const., 1 Dep. Ch. Const., 9 Ch. Supers., 9 Supers., 6 Ch. Insp., 62 Insp., 272 Sgts & Consts., 412 Probationers. Air Obs: 17 Sgts., 1 Const.	"Still less than 1% of establishment"		

(E) indicates course in England.

\*\* Detective training is normally carried out at a special college in Ayr.

## Notes:

- (1) The target figure for fire-arms training appears to have been set at 10% of each force throughout Britain.
- (2) The present system of sending senior Scottish officers to Easingwold and other defence establishments in England appears to have begun in 1967 when civil defence was placed on a 'care and maintenance' basis. The Police Home Defence Manual published in 1974 outlined the special role of the Police Support Units in a nuclear alert, but said that no special training would be given for this. It seems highly unlikely that recent changes in orientation have not been profound.
- (3) There have been several reports of police complaints about the number of officers injured in the course of riot training in Strathclyde.