

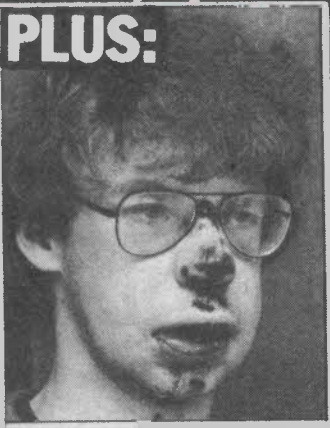
New
Statesman

17 February 1984 70p IR £1.07 US\$1.50 By Air

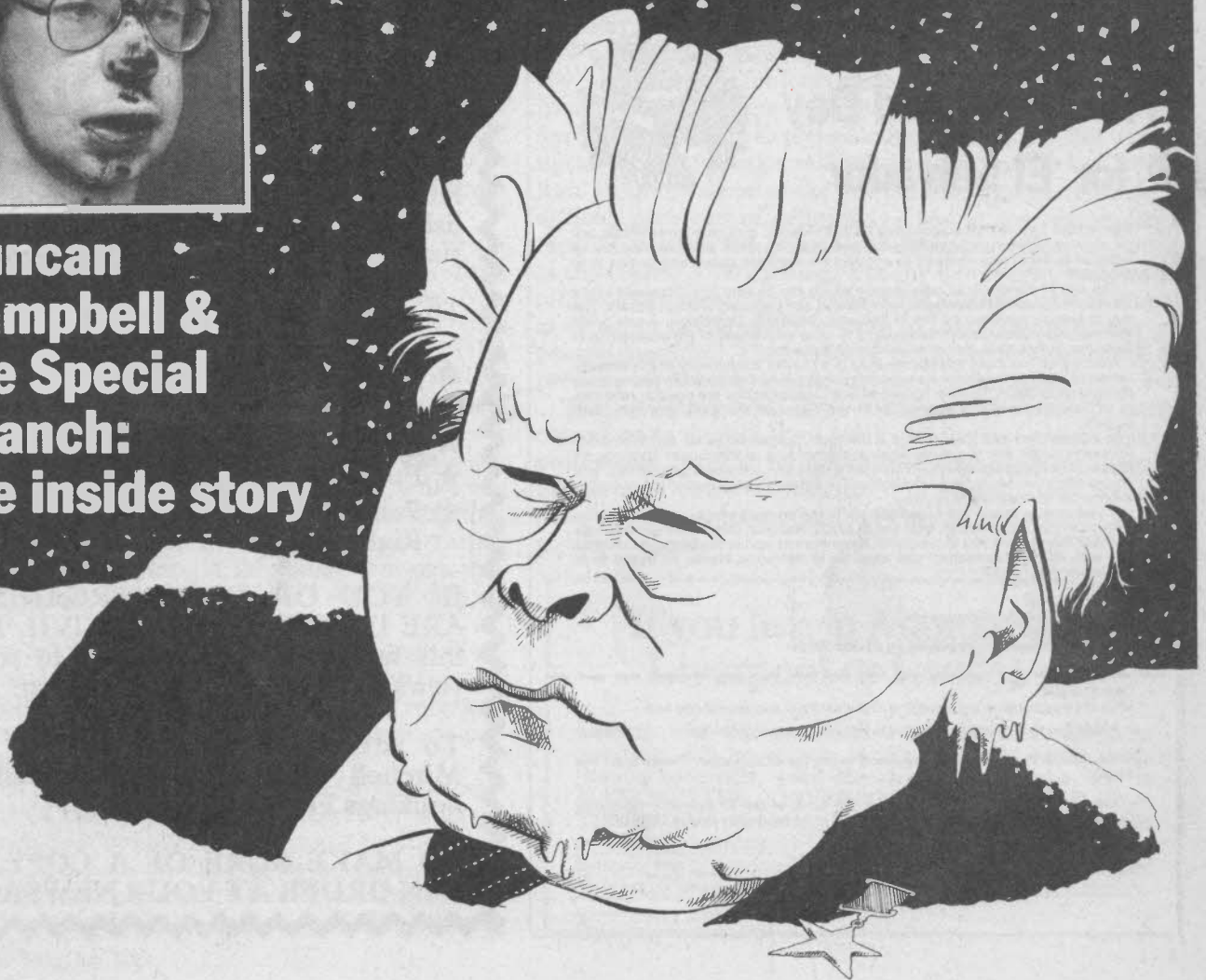
CHERNENKO

From cold war to deep freeze

PLUS:



**Duncan
Campbell &
the Special
Branch:
the inside story**



JOHN MANNING

Bike bag secrets

Duncan Campbell gives a personal account of events and police actions against him following a bicycle accident last Thursday

FEW POLICE RAIDS can have been conducted as punctiliously and politely as that nearly seven-hour-long trawl through my home in Stoke Newington, north London, last Saturday. I was present throughout – ill and injured, just having been released from hospital. Special Branch men (and a woman) scrupulously put every book, paper and file back in place, asked repeatedly and concernedly after my wellbeing, helped me up and down stairs, brought glasses of water, and tidied away the mess occasioned by their visit.

With my face bleeding from a cycle accident just 36 hours before, I could reflect that the British political police force are clearly a much pleasanter and more orderly bunch than could be expected in South America, South Africa or places of that sort. Throughout the long afternoon it was possible for long periods to forget that the whole unforgivable event had arisen from their plundering what was left at the scene of a traffic accident. As the search proceeded, their own eyes and tired manner showed a growing uncertainty of purpose.

The Special Branch team left bearing only the most trivial 'finds'. The first was a 'restricted' Army Manual on 'Personal Protection', which has already gained a certain notoriety for the section it contains instructing squaddies in the complicated arts of urinating and defecating in the Arctic – in 56 separate steps. It was described at length in the *NS*'s Miscellany column on 6 January. We received no official complaint then that the article had contravened secrecy rules. The copy that the Special Branch made off with this weekend had, in fact, just been posted to me by the BBC's *Jasper Carrott* show. (Carrott's comedy-writing team had been planning since October to use the manual for a joke sequence in the popular off-beat show.)

The largest of the Branch's 'finds' was two folders of photographic contact prints. 'These,' pronounced Superintendent Thomson (who headed the search), 'appear to be concerned with prohibited places'. They were seized. The Post Office Tower in London, and other similar towers, are among many sites shown in the prints. The Special Branch last had these pictures in their possession during 1977 and 1978, when they were actually produced in evidence as part of an unsuccessful charge against me, during what became known as the ABC trial, of illegally 'collecting information'. The charge was dropped by the prosecution; and the use of such charges was later described by the judge as 'unjustified and oppressive'.

The second set of contact prints, as the Special Branch will doubtless soon discover, are *their own* copies of the first set – which they made for the ABC trial. There are a few other, newer prints – most of which, such as aerial pictures of the Greenham Common silos, have been published in the *New Statesman* – without any official objection.

It was not a successful search for the Branch, and it was not worth the more than ten person-days of costly police overtime pay involved: one Army Manual, one scrap of paper from my bin, two folders of photographic contact prints, and parts of two folders of research notes on nuclear weapons – with no government secrets or moles' revelations within.

Each of the files' contents was duly noted by an exhibits officer: notes from the 'Military Balance' annual of the Institute for Strategic Studies; letters and notes from distinguished Professors and academics at Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Lancaster, Sussex and Southampton Universities about the British nuclear programme; notes from books; a letter from the Telford Anti-Nuclear Group and so on. Nary a mole in sight – except for one *CND* campaigner signing him-, or herself, as 'Manfred Mole'.

Exhibit RN/20, for example, was identified as a 'Sheet of white *New Statesman* paper – PRIOR thereon'. I can reveal to the Special Branch a time and money-saving secret. Mr Prior is a civil servant. He does (or did) work for the Ministry of Defence.

He was (and probably still is) one of their Press Officers.

Another note in the same file purported to impart secret information about a nuclear test site from an official source. It clearly attracted the Branch's attention. The letter was about 'Mururoa Atoll'. It is in the Pacific and is used only for *French* nuclear tests.

THIS UNSUCCESSFUL fishing expedition arose from my accident, late last Thursday night. I have amnesia, and the police have as yet given me no account of what happened. But it appears to have been caused solely by a mechanical failure on my bike. I flew over the handlebars and was knocked unconscious for more than five minutes.

On the back of my bike were two bags or 'panniers' – one of them empty. In the other were *New Statesman* files and correspondence, several copies of last week's *NS*, and my address book, diary, wallet and trousers. These were all held by the police.

My papers, about which they have still asked me nothing, included three files and a smattering of loose papers. The files concerned last week's *NS* story on the 'Legion' private army, next week's planned *New Statesman* supplement on civil liberties (!), and my current 'projects' file. This listed my proposed future work, and will doubtless now enable the security services to cover up over more than a dozen stories on which I had proposed to work during the coming months. Some of the stories concerned the Special Branch itself and those who work with it. The stories ranged from the use of National Front members as Special Branch agents in Manchester, to a murder committed by an SAS officer.

Doubtless there were some interesting-looking papers in the files – such as those on GCHQ radio tracking techniques used as evidence in a closed session of a recent spy trial. The papers were confidential. But did the police tell the magistrate – or even know – that I had been employed by defence solicitors as an expert witness in the case and had the papers in that capacity.

There were two notes, marked 'restricted', referring to civil defence planning, which I had, quite officially, from the GLC, where I am a co-opted committee member. Did the police bother to tell the magistrate that? There was a long list of telephone STD codes for army and government exchanges, suitably lengthy, incomprehensible and thus indubitably sinister. I doubt if the police even knew what the list was; still less would

New Statesman

Annual subscription rates*

*6 months & 3 months subscription pro rata

UK £32; Overseas surface mail: £36 (US \$59)

Overseas airmail: Europe £36; Middle East £41; S. America, India, Africa £45; Australasia, Far East £49; USA, Canada £45 (US \$79)

Student subscription rates available on request

Please note: payment by cheque in Sterling or US Dollars, or International Money Order only

Please complete this form and post to:
NS Subscriptions, 14-16 Farringdon Lane
London EC1R 3AU

Name

Address

(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

I enclose £/\$



The Observer

Duncan Campbell at the front door of his home in Stoke Newington, north London, during last Saturday's police raid.

they have known that the codes can be used from London; or even, with a bit of difficulty, from Eastern Europe.

After getting the warrant, SB officers went down to pull me out of St Bartholomew's Hospital – but I had already been let out. After waiting until a solicitor arrived, they began the search – in my living room, and with meticulous care. They searched inside cushions, lifted every apple out of the apple bowl, and checked the signature on every Christmas card. They checked between the page of every one of hundreds of books, newspapers and magazines. Nothing, not even the potted plants, was left undisturbed.

Four long hours and three rooms later, the Special Branch had a different attitude. They had found one unexciting Army manual, and nothing more. Searching the third drawer of the first of five filing cabinets, Woman Detective Constable Norwell now came to a bulging yellow file marked 'Secrets – Leaks'. Inside the file, on top of the file, was a secret Cabinet paper, one grade more highly classified and eight years more up to date than the silly Army manual. It was marked 'Property of Her Britannic Majesty's Government'. The Superintendent was eagerly summoned up the stairs.

He turned it over and told Ms Norwell to put it back. 'It is a secret cabinet thing', he said, 'but it's only about pay negotiations. Leave it'. The Superintendent may not have known that the 'Confidential' Cabinet paper he held had been leaked *in toto* to *The Times* in 1978 and published.

By the time they got onto the later rooms, the searchers were so tired that any excuse

not to search an area seemed to suffice. Whole piles of magazines were left untouched, and many files on defence topics given only a cursory flick.

As the hours went by Superintendent Thomson rather touchingly confided to us that he and his wife were due to attend their school PTA dinner that night and it would be the second time he had failed to show up for one. We had a vision of the poor man getting hell from his wife that night.

The entire Stoke Newington haul was one flimsy and laughable army manual. The former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Robert Mark, in his autobiography *In the Office of Constable* wrote:

I would like to see the repeal of Section 2, but in the event of that not being forthcoming, I would hope for its increasing disregard by civil servants in particular and anyone feeling that secrecy on any issue was harmful to the public interest. Convictions under Section 2 would nowadays be difficult to obtain except in cases clearly motivated by self interest.

'Unauthorised revelation of maladministration', he has pointed out '... would almost certainly not involve any real risk these days' for three reasons:

First, ... the Attorney General would not risk a prosecution; *Second*, ... a jury would be unlikely to convict; *Third*, ... in the unlikely event of a conviction, the judiciary, if satisfied of the disinterested motives of the accused, would be unlikely to impose any penalty.

Sir Kenneth will no doubt be reflecting that every official secrets case in the last 20 years involving journalists and/or the public interest has indeed ended just as Sir Robert Mark describes. □

Noises off

Refining crude oil tends to be noisy business. It involves acres of sophisticated plant, generators and processing equipment working constantly – 24 hours a day, every day.

At Mobil's Coryton refinery in Essex, however, all extraneous sound is kept to an absolute minimum. Noise can be harmful. To protect both the community and employees from its effects, we strive to do even more than the stringent requirements laid down by government and local authorities.

But relative peace and quiet are not achieved easily. Construction of elaborate noise baffle systems, other protective measures, equipment and improved manufacturing methods all come at a price. In fact, they account for part of some £12 million Mobil has spent on environmental programmes for the refinery.

Mobil's concern for the environment doesn't stop at the refinery gates, however. For a free booklet focusing on some of our other environmental activities, simply telephone (01) 828 9777 ext. 2608, or write to Room 210, Mobil House, Victoria Street, London SW1.

Mobil