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## WHAT PEOPLE HAVE SAID ABOUT STATE RESEARCH

'I recommend this publication to all those concerned with civil liberty and the growing power of the state.' *Jo Richardson, Member, National Executive Committee of The Labour Party.*

'State Research gives a chilling account of how the facts of a totalitarian future can be slowly constructed within the framework of a relatively liberal society.' *Noam Chomsky.*

'If Government refuses to enlighten the people, then such private initiatives as *State Research* must supply that want.' *E.P. Thompson.*

'*State Research*, a highly readable and very professional bulletin . . . is performing a valuable public service by keeping an eye on the threat posed by the forces of law and order to the democratic freedoms.' *Tribune.*

'It is useful to know that the decisions by politicians, the police and the military . . . are being logged by a group which, every two months, brings out a bulletin in which the connections which most of us omit to make, are made and a comprehensive picture on the erosions of freedom are charted.' *The Guardian.*

' . . . contains a wealth of information on the job you are doing or failing to do.' *Police Review.*

# STATE RESEARCH

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CHRIS DAVIES (REPORT)



we uncover  
the facts you need...

We are entering a period when the democratic rights of citizens are coming under even greater attack than in the past.

Troops have been used to break strikes; there have been many deaths at police hands which have not been satisfactorily explained; para-military Special Patrol Groups are increasingly used against demonstrators and pickets; the Special Branch is larger today than ever before; record-keeping extends to large sections of the community – many of whom have never been convicted of an offence; and in urban areas policing has come to rely more and more on the use of force.

This Conservative government seems set on course for conflicts in which the police, the Special Branch and the armed forces will play an increasing role.

### Gathering the information you need

Without adequate information it is difficult to combat effectively the growth of the power of these state agencies. State Research was started in 1977 to do just this.

State Research is an independent group of journalists and researchers working to uncover information about the police, the military, surveillance of legitimate political activity, the links between state agencies, employers' organisations and the political right. We publish a regular bi-monthly Bulletin, which has looked at all these areas of state activity.

We have also examined the way in which the police, the security services, and the army form a secret state within the state, even less open to examination and control than the average government department. A whole structure of 'emergency planning' has been created for breaking strikes; in Northern Ireland, the army is telling the politicians how the situation should be handled while admitting privately that it cannot win a military victory; the myths which justify defence spending and the necessity of British membership of NATO

are rarely challenged in public.

Other key areas we have looked at include –

- \* the Prevention of Terrorism Acts
- \* the Police National Computer
- \* official secrecy
- \* the police complaints system
- \* jury-vetting
- \* European co-operation
- \* public order
- \* positive vetting
- \* telephone-tapping

And on the political right –

- \* the Economic League
- \* the Institute for the Study of Conflict
- \* the Freedom Association (formerly NAFF)
- \* Truemit
- \* the National Front

State Research, despite its slender resources, has produced reports and analyses on all these fields.

### The political police

In our bulletins, we have examined at length the changes in policing which have become obvious in recent years. The gradual increase in policing by resort to force, especially against less influential sections of the community, has culminated in the creation of para-military police units like the Special Patrol Groups in city areas.

Police information-gathering has also reached new heights. The Special Branch now has over 1,300 members in Britain, whose responsibility is principally the surveillance of legitimate political and industrial activity. One person in five has some sort of police record, and much of the information is inaccurate, based on hearsay and opinion. None of it can be corrected. Computerisation means that these records can be used as the base of political policing.

There is growing awareness of the political role of the police and the security services (the Special Branch and MI5). The Trade Union Congress has called for the disbanding of the London SPG. The Labour Party has established a study group on the

security services. And an unprecedented number of local inquiries and campaigns have been set up to look at specific instances of police excesses.

The use of troops and the police in strikes provides governments and employers with an extra weapon against wage demands. State Research has established that troops were used illegitimately in the 1977 firemen's strike, and that there are no restrictions whatsoever on the use of the police to replace striking workers.

### Why we need your help

More and more trade union, political and community organisations are finding the Bulletin useful in their work. We also offer a service to activists and researchers alike.

State Research has an extensive library of books, pamphlets and cuttings which is available for the use of anyone seeking an independent source of information on the police, the military, security and related areas. In addition, we answer many enquiries from groups and individuals who come to us, and send information to those who request it. We also supply speakers for union branches, and political and community groups.

To do this work – bringing out the Bulletin and maintaining an information centre – *we need money*. We were established with the aid of a few small grants, but this will not continue to support our activities for ever. State Research Bulletin now covers its production costs, but it cannot subsidise the other activities of the group, or help us expand.

**So we are asking all those people and organisations who have an interest in the preservation and extension of basic democratic rights and civil liberties to back us by sending a donation, either individually, or on behalf of their organisation (form overleaf). The money will be used to continue and extend our work.**

**The response we have had makes us sure that our work is useful. Help us carry it on.**