

RED SQUADS

“In the United States, Red Squads were police intelligence units that specialized in infiltrating, conducting counter-measures and gathering intelligence on political and social groups during the twentieth century. Dating as far back as the Haymarket Riot in 1886, Red Squads became common in larger cities such as Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles during the First Red Scare of the 1920s. They were set up as specialized units of city police departments, as a weapon against labor unions, communists, anarchists, and other dissidents.”¹ “Since 1978, the term Red Squad has resurfaced repeatedly to describe any action by police or Federal agencies that are deemed to be oppressive to a social or political group.”²

The red squad in Los Angeles (at least from the 1970s) was the Public Disorder and Intelligence Division (PDID).

Origin: The official website of the Los Angeles Police Department states ‘With his return to office in 1933, Chief James E. Davis deployed a "Red Squad" to "investigate and control radical activities, strikes, and riots." By today's standards, the Squad's tactics were intolerable, but its members had the blessing of government officials and the business community. In referring to individuals deemed subversive, one Police Commissioner voiced his views by declaring: "The more the police beat them up and wreck their headquarters, the better. Communists have no Constitutional rights and I won't listen to anyone who defends them.’³ “July 1970 saw restructuring which resulted in Organized Crime Intelligence Division (OCID) and Public Disorder Intelligence Division (PDID) that eventually became Anti-Terrorist Division.”⁴

Function: “In a depositions taken by attorneys with the Southern California American Civil Liberties Union as part of a class action suit against the LAPD and the City of Los Angeles in the early 1980s, ... young Red Squad spies had been discovered infiltrating over 200 peaceful organizations in Los Angeles ranging from our newspaper to the local chapters of NOW, the Peace & Freedom Party, and even the office of City Councilor Zev Yaroslavsky.... we learned that the PDID was gathering dossiers on literally thousands of local political activists, infiltrating and spying on protected political activities like peace demonstrations, anti-nuclear demonstrations and even political campaigns, and also engaging in provocateur activities, trying to encourage peaceful groups to cross the line into criminal actions.”⁵

Harm they did: “Gathering dossiers on literally thousands of local political activists, infiltrating and spying on protected political activities... and also engaging in provocateur activities”⁶

¹ “Red squad”, Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_squad

² Ibid

³ “The LAPD: 1926-1950”, The Official Website Of The Los Angeles Police Department
http://www.lapdonline.org/history_of_the_lapd/content_basic_view/1109

⁴ The Official Website Of The Los Angeles Police Department

http://www.lapdonline.org/detective_bureau/content_basic_view/1987

⁵ “I’m not Shedding Any Tears for Former LAPD Chief Daryl Gates”, Dave Lindorff <http://www.thiscantbehappening.net/node/8>

⁶ Ibid

Interfered with freedom of the press: “We had, after about six months’ operation, hired a person at a considerable cost to sell advertising space in the paper. We learned from this person, only much later after the paper had to shut down, that she had been told by her boss, an advertizing agency executive, to only pretend to try and sell ads. It turns out that the executive had a son who had been busted by the LAPD for drugs, and the police had extorted the father, saying if he prevented our paper from getting advertising, they’d get the charges dropped against his son.”⁷

Data-collection + sharing : “A subsequent lawsuit filed with the help of the ACLU of Southern California, eventually settled for a payment of \$1.8 million by the City of Los Angeles, disclosed that the PDID had for years been using as many as 20 undercover cops to infiltrate and spy on over 200 legal political and activist organizations in the Los Angeles area, gathering rooms full of files on everyone from members of the National Organization for Women to the staffs of certain members of the city council. We also learned that the LAPD was providing those files to a shadowy private outfit in San Francisco called Western Goals, which had links to the ultra-right John Birch Society. Western Goals was apparently seeking to serve as a private repository of dossiers on leftists and political activists collected by local police all around the country in a kind of end run around the restrictions on domestic spying by the FBI that had been imposed after the post-Watergate revelations about the abuses of the COINTELPRO era.”⁸

Spied on and threatened public figures: “The 1970s-era Public Disorder Intelligence Division, disbanded in 1983 after newspapers reported it spied on celebrities and public figures including Mayor Tom Bradley, then gave the information to a private, right-wing group.”⁹

“Gates had more than 200 officers as analysts and supervisors in the Public Disorder Intelligence Division, or PDID. When Zev Yaroslavsky, then on the City Council, finally worked up the nerve to ask at a hearing how many undercover political officers the LAPD had, and how much they cost, the response was not subtle. A deputy chief told the councilmen that if he did that and any undercover officer turned up dead, the council members would all become murder suspects.”¹⁰

Abolished: Over two dozen individuals and organizations sued the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) on First Amendment grounds, exposing unlawful harassment, surveillance, and infiltration of the progressive movement in Los Angeles by LAPD agents. In January 1983, a Police Commission voted to abolish PDID¹¹. In February 1984, an out-of-court settlement awarded \$1.8 million dollars to the plaintiffs who had sued the City of L.A.¹²

⁷ Ibid

⁸ “A nation of snoops”, Dave Lindorff, <http://infowars.net/articles/october2009/091009Snoops.htm>

⁹ “LAPD: FACT AND FICTION”, Deborah Hastings, <http://community.seattletimes.nwsources.com/archive/?date=20000312&slug=4009555>

¹⁰ “Daryl Gates real legacy”, David Cay Johnston, http://www.laobserved.com/visiting/2010/04/daryl_gates_secret_legacy.php

¹¹ “Charges of Spying Close LAPD Unit”, RICHARD A. SERRANO, http://articles.latimes.com/1992-07-10/news/mn-1849_1_police-commission

¹² “Cases entitled Coalition Against Police Abuse, etc., et al. v. Board of Police Commissioners, etc. et al., LASC Nos. C243458, C317528, C374660, C381339, C399552 and C413904 (hereinafter referred to as CAPA). These cases were ultimately consolidated and for all purposes were settled by an out of court settlement and the issuance of a Stipulated Consent Decree.” Gates v. Superior Court, 178 Cal. App. 3d 301, 304, 223 Cal. Rptr. 678, 680 (Ct. App. 1986)