

METROPOLITAN POLICE

SPECIAL BRANCH

Special Report }

3rd day of February 1981

SUBJECT

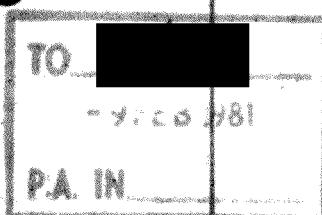
1. This report deals with the conference on 'Racism and the Police' which was held on Saturday 31st January, 1981 between 11am and 4.30pm at Cenway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. The conference was organised by the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and was attended by about 200 persons of whom approximately forty percent were coloured.

2. The morning session was chaired by Ron HALVERSON who introduced the main speaker of the morning, Stuart HALL. HALL began by emphasising the fact that even if Police were to pledge to stop practising racism, there would still be the basic question of racism within society. He then continued by pointing out the problems facing the conference which are summarised below:-

- i) Within the last 15 years society had, overall, become more policed, blacks receiving increased adverse attention.
- ii) During this period the 'left' had failed to realise that Law and Order must now be politicised per se.
- iii) Through economic reasons, many blacks had been driven towards crime and had now been stereotyped as endemically criminal by nature, and, as a result, Police had responded by policing in a stereotyped manner.
- iv) The Police, although a militaristic organisation, seemed unable or unwilling to control their racism.
- v) The official view of the Police was that society had been allowed to get away with too much and, in order to redress the situation, Police were required and expected to be heavy-handed. This had, in effect, institutionalised racism within the Police.
- vi) Police were now the most effective lobby for expanding Police powers; no longer just enforcing laws but actively involved in their formation.

Reference to Papers

'Racism and the Police'
Conference -
31.1.81



4. Following HALL's speech the remainder of the morning session was devoted to speakers from the various organisations present. Most reiterated what HALL had already said but certain points of interest emerged from the following speakers:-

Avtar JOUHL

(Gen. Sec. Indian Workers Association (GB); member of the Campaign Against Racist Laws) stated that his I.W.A. would not talk to police from now on. What was required was not consultation but organisation of local community self defence groups. (This proposal was well received by the audience.)

Ian MARTIN

(Gen. Sec. of Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants) stated that to decriminalise Immigrant Laws was the only way of getting Police out of the racial problem. He also expressed his fears of the big extension of powers within the Nationality Bill regarding the naturalisation interviews conducted by Special Branch.

Tony BUNYAN

(Council and Institute of Race Relations) put forward figures to show that the number of racist attacks on blacks equalled the number of muggings, yet there were no special squads for the former. He added that the Police were no longer operating by consent, a fact supported by their constant requests for more powers.

Trevor CARTER

(Chairman of the Caribbean Teachers Association) stated that parents' attitudes had changed and they no longer accepted that Police behaved impartially towards their children.

Steven SEDLEY

(Barrister for Blair PEACH's family) warned of the dangers of actively supporting crime amongst blacks, for crime was a cause of division within the working class. He mentioned the disturbing consensus of opinion among the establishment that Police needed more powers, and was well received when he expressed how refreshing it was to hear no suggestions of recruitment of more blacks into the police.

5. HALL closed the morning session by again emphasising the urgency of this problem. He said that the institutional role of the Police as defenders of the 'State' and the status quo could not be changed. What was required was real mobilisation of local communities and the acceptance that Law and Order must become the prime 'arena of struggle'.

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6. The afternoon session was chaired by Asquith GIBBES who introduced Dave COOK, a member of the National Race Relations Committee of the Communist Party. COOK's speech basically centred on the "Charter of Demands" put forward for discussion. (A copy of the charter is attached). COOK laid particular emphasis on the section regarding the need for community policing with democratic accountability and control, and the urgency of protecting black communities under racist attack.

7. The meeting was then thrown open for comments and the following salient points emerged:-

i) A female from the Lambeth Police Report Committee explained how overwhelming the anti Police feeling was in Lambeth, describing the police presence there as an 'army of occupation'.

ii) Privacy (first name) of Brixton Black Women's Movement and Privacy of East London Workers Against Racism (ELWAR), made stirring and articulate speeches regarding the need for immediate practical assistance on the streets in various communities which were threatened. Examples were given of work already being carried out in Brixton and East London.

Privacy proposed non co-operation with the local authority in the form of withholding rates unless Police co-operated. Privacy advocated reliance on self defence as she could see no possibility of changing the way that police operated. Both received good support from a large section of the meeting, although ELWAR's doctrinaire approach did not enamour the members of the Communist Party present who preferred a more subtle approach.

iii) Privacy (African-Caribbean Association) advocated that pressure should be put on the Police Federation to stop it 'pontificating'.

iv) Privacy proposed that infiltration of the legal system might mean that the system could be changed from within.

8. COOK then terminated the conference by stating that the Communist Party pledged to collate all that had been stated and to issue a paper on the subject which would be circulated to all organisations present. In the meantime, he exhorted all present to encourage as much support for the C.A.R.L. demonstration against the Nationality Bill, due to take place in March.

9. To sum up, it can be stated that the conference was equally divided between those broadly supporting the proposals of the Communist Party and those who supported the more direct approach of ELWAR. However, the Conference seemed to support a policy of non-co-operation with the Police on matters affecting racial problems.

10. Attached herewith is an appendix to this report which lists the persons present and organisations represented at the conference.

[1]

Trevor Butler

CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT

APPENDIX

Organisations represented at the conference.

African Caribbean Association	N/T
Brixton Black Womens Movement	N/T
Campaign Against Racist Laws	400/79/167
Caribbean Teachers Association	mentions
Communist Party of Great Britain	400/78/151A
Council and Institute of Race Relations	400/74/65
East London Workers Against Racism	400/80/42
Lambeth Police Report Committee	N/T
Indian Workers Association (GB)	400/80/110
Indian Workers Association Southall. (The 'other' Association)	400/79/151
Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants	400/72/162
Kashmiri Workers Association (Birmingham)	mentions
Revolutionary Communist Tendency	400/80/42

Persons identified as having attended

Tony BUNYAN	RF 405/	
Dave COOK	RF 402/	Privacy
Trevor CARTER	RF 402/	

Privacy		
Asquith GIBBES	RF 402/	
Stuart HALL	piw RF	Privacy
Ron HALVERSON	RF 402/	

Privacy		
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Ian MARTIN

RF 408

Privacy

Privacy

Steven SEDLEY

RF 402
piw 40

Privacy

Privacy

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An outline "CHARTER OF DEMANDS" for discussion at the Consultation
Conference on RACISM AND THE POLICE", on 31st. January, 1981.

The Communist Party's National Race Relations Committee puts these proposals forward to help discussion at this Conference. They are not intended for voting or endorsement. This is a consultation conference, at which we hope the different experiences related and views expressed will deepen our, and everyone's, understanding, so that unity grows in action.

The black community suffers with all working people from every abuse of police power. But there are certain respects in which black people are particular targets for police malpractice, and it is to these police actions with a racist component that the demands below are directed.

This Conference takes place in the context of the powerful reinforcement of police powers recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission, and many of these will bear down particularly heavily on black people.

PROTECTION OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY

- * The local supervision of police forces and the adjudication of complaints against the police to be placed in the hands of accountable and democratically constituted bodies, independent of the police and with a substantial element of black representation.
- * Proper consultation between the police and genuine representatives of black communities, not with hand-picked individuals invited to the police station.
- * An end to the designation of "high-crime" inner-city areas, where many black people live and where policing is seen not as a question of protecting the community, but of keeping it under control. "High Crime" areas are "high stress" areas. They need community policing with democratic accountability and control, not saturation policing.
- * This means an end to "fire brigade" and "saturation" policing of areas where many black people live. We need community policing under community control in every locality. However, little work seems to have been done on what this would actually mean in practice. It means far fewer pandas prowling and far more home beat policing. It should mean the police becoming more linked to the Social Services, as already happens with juvenile bureaux. Community control should mean the local authority discussing local police policy in the council chambers. It should mean proper consultation with local organisations by the police for example, with black people's organisations, trades councils, trades unions, tenants and residents, women, local businesses, etc.

- * The highest priority must be given to protecting black communities under racist attacks. This is not so much a question of more police, but of a different sort of policing, especially in speed of response. It means that places where racists are known to assemble should be rigorously patrolled. The racist character of many attacks, often denied by the police, must be clearly recognised. Many attacks on black people are not random acts, but indicate a pattern of racist violence. These attacks should be regarded as a specific crime.
- * Existing race relations and public order law must be firmly enforced against racists (see accompanying evidence, "C.P. Submission to Home Secretary on the Green Paper on Public Order Act"). These laws must be given more teeth to outlaw the advocacy and practice of racism.
- * A difficult question is the growing use of racist chants and racist violence at football grounds. The club should ban supporters who chant racist slogans, and the police should enforce that ban - this is one approach. On the other hand, this might encourage racist fans to taunt the police by being still more blatant.
- * Black people are often denied justice because of their (often justified) fears of reporting crimes against themselves to the police. These fears are based on the black communities' experiences of harassment and intimidation. To overcome this the police should make arrangements with community organisations to provide facilities for interviews where those reporting a crime or making complaints can feel secure from possible harassment and intimidation.
Set up "Help on Arrest" schemes in every police area - in liaison with the local community relations council or similar body, so that every person held at a police station has access to a civil rights advisor. "Rights on Arrest" cards to be made widely available, printed in the main minority languages. Immediate access to a solicitor is a basic right in which all demands are united.
- * Stop using black people as guinea pigs for new eaves-dropping techniques, e.g. video-photographing. No surveillance of community leaders.
- * On the issue of immigration, anti-racists are united in demanding repeal of the present racist laws. We are totally opposed to any involvement of the police in enforcing them. End "fishing expeditions", searching for "illegal" immigrants. Disband the Illegal Immigration Intelligence Unit. Similarly, as a consequence of the new Nationality Bill, the likelihood is a major increase in the involvement of the police in enforcing what could easily become a "pass law" situation for many black people. Our opposition to both these proposals and such policing is equally clear. These racist laws must be repealed.

- * Keep riot shields out of carnival and community protests and actions.
 - * Tighten the control of all weapons to police officers and apply stiffer penalties to all offenders.
- Disband the S.P.G. Keep it out of our communities.
- * No use of SUS, and no replacement by new "updatings".

CONTROL OF THE POLICE

- * Attitudes on race to be taken into account in police recruitment and selection.
- * Initial police training and regular in-service training should contain an anti-racist syllabus, including racism awareness training to be worked out with black community organisations. The national training of police needs the active involvement of organisations like the Commission for Racial Equality and the National Association of Community Relations Councils, as well as national black people's organisations. Regular seminars and discussions should take place, led by local community leaders, involving all police ranks.
- * A continuing campaign of anti-racist education to be carried out in every police force.
- * Racism to be treated as a serious breach of police discipline.
- * In particular, disciplinary investigations to be set up whenever
 - a) any policeman or group of policemen are found to have arrested or questioned a greater proportion of black people than is to be found in the local community;
 - b) the proportion of black people questioned or arrested on particular grounds exceeds the proportion of black people in the local community.